

PROJECT DOCUMENT**Guinea-Bissau****Project Title:** The Community Support Platform**Project Number:** 00134047**Implementing Partner:** UNDP**Start Date:** Nov 2021**End Date:** Dec 2023

I. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Since its independence in 1974, Guinea-Bissau has been characterized by a chain of structural, conflict factors that generate a dynamic of 'endemic' instability. In turn, this generates a status of persistent political/institutional and socio-economic crisis, which has been exacerbated by the current COVID-19 emergency.

Such cyclical instability and inherent fragility descend from two major root causes: (i) a substantially unachieved state-building process and (ii) an economic system that marginalises entire sectors of the population perpetuating a status of inequality and geographical and social polarization.

The socio-economic conditions of the population continue to be extremely difficult, and because of the COVID-19 impact it has deteriorated further. Ranked 175 out of 189 countries in UNDP's 2020 Human Development Index, two thirds of its population live below the poverty line, 33% in extreme poverty. Although, Guinea-Bissau, showed an improvement in its HDI from 0.393 to 0.461 between 2005 and in 2018, mainly due to improvements in life expectancy at birth of 10.9 years, poverty levels remain high, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, the positive figure hides poorly performing individuals and households in comparison with the average of countries in the low development group (0.507) and in sub-Saharan Africa (0.541). This progress also hides a broad range of inequalities variables, including gender, age and geographic disparities.

Youth remain in large part excluded from employment opportunities, socially unprotected and confined to the informal economy (25.4% are NEET). Even though youth constitutes 65% of the population, youth do not participate in socioeconomic development and are excluded from exercising leadership positions.

The situation is even grimmer for young women, who face reduced incomes, higher rates of unemployment (32%, against 19% of men) and limited access to factors of production. The average years of schooling (1.4 women; 3.4 men) and illiteracy rates for women are considerably higher (58% women; 31% men). The continuous teachers' strikes result in an entire generation without adequate schooling and is cause of youth's grievances and lack of preparedness for labour market. A generation that loses faith in their future is a burden on societal relations, thus reduces trust in government.

The country is highly centralized and there are no local governments headed by elected officials. The country is divided in 37 sectors, which are constitutionally enshrined in articles 105 and 106 of the Constitution – stating that "the organization of the political power of the State comprises the existence of local autarchies, which enjoy administrative and financial autonomy". However, in reality, there is a de-concentration of basic functions to appointed authorities. The absence of local governments contributes to weakening the relationship between the state and citizens.

With the appearance of the first COVID-19 cases in the country at the beginning of March 2020, the socio-economic situation has deteriorated even further. The pandemic, which accentuates the

fragility of the public service provision to the citizens, is intertwined with a fragile governance system and political instability.

In this context, the socio-economic consequences may be devastating. The majority of Bissau-Guineans live on less than US\$ 1.90 a day. Due to the high informality of the economy, during the State of Emergency (March-August 2020), the curfew hours and the abolishment of public transport translated directly into a high economic burden for the poor population. Both in rural and urban areas, they find it substantially more difficult to sell their produce and earn their daily income.

According to a household survey carried out by UNDP in all regions of the country, less the Bijagós, between June and July 2020, in all regions 72% of households declared a decline in income, loss of employment temporarily and even permanently. About 72% small businesses' operations closed or decreased temporarily, and 12% closed permanently. The markets or stores for food or staple products were also affected, with prices increasing by around one third, decreasing the quantity of supply (15%) or stopping working (8.6%).

Income inequality in Guinea-Bissau is one of the highest in Africa. Especially in rural areas, the majority of Bissau-Guineans have no access to basic services (including health), clean water, and do not have adequate living standards. Lack of social safety nets and little opportunity to protect themselves during the health pandemic aggravates the situation of the most vulnerable.

The country strongly depends on the export of cashew-nut, and difficulties in the campaign and export can trigger increased food insecurity. Within two years, since its peak in 2017, the farmgate price of raw cashew has dropped almost 60% to XOF 351/kg (US\$ 0.58/kg) in 2019. Consequently, food insecurity rose from 20.0% of the population in rural areas in October 2017 to 34.2% around 368,000 people) in September 2019. In 2019, the export volume was fortunately high, above 2017 and 2018 levels. In 2020, however, despite a good production outlook, Guinea-Bissau looked at its lowest trade volume in years. Despite the announcement of a reference price of XOF 375/kg (US\$ 0.62/kg), producers were selling at prices down to XOF 200/kg (US\$ 0.33/kg), as a coping measure to address immediate food security needs. The risk of increasing prices in Guinea Bissau's markets is imminent and will be fueled by more expensive imports following the depreciation of the country's "export currency", the cashew nut.

COVID-19 jeopardized the latest cashew campaigns and poses risks for the future. The shutdown of the two main export markets for cashews from Guinea-Bissau, India and Vietnam, put the cashew campaign under acute stress as demand for the nuts fell sharply. Like other international commodities, the price for raw cashew nuts dropped significantly. Despite some indication of a recovery, market uncertainty continues to be very high.

Under normal conditions, remittance inflows help alleviate negative income shocks, but forecasts say otherwise. Reaching 9.4% of GDP in 2019, remittances have become ever more important for household income during the past decade. A study conducted by UNDP and IOM indicates that remittances operate counter-cyclically, increasing in times of greatest need for families, either in times of strong political instability or in years of low yields from the cashew harvest. However, migrant workers in diaspora communities are especially vulnerable to the loss of employment and wages during times of crises. The forecast points at a decrease of remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa by around 23%, impacting especially the vulnerable rural population.

A drop in revenue reduces the government's ability to support the most vulnerable. Tax revenue in Guinea-Bissau is generally low – it has never reached 10% of GDP. In 2019, current government expenditure surpassed total revenue by 20%, leaving little space for fiscal maneuvers and causing delays in public salary payments and a fiscal deficit of 4.1%. In 2020, shop closures, a low performance of the cashew campaign, and less demand for imports are set to substantially further decrease government revenues, at a time when increased government spending for recovery is highly needed.

Finally, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss and an unprecedented **challenge to community life**, in terms of public health, food systems and the (formal and informal) economy. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating. These multiple elements are expected to have a major impact on Bissau-Guinean communities' life in the months to come, and hence it will be crucial to support communities as they are forced to develop coping mechanisms to meet their daily needs and ensure that livelihoods are sustained.

II. STRATEGY

The fragility, coupled with the spread of the virus, has exposed deep inequality and the impossibility by many to meet basic needs. The social impact of the outbreak and the state of emergency is expected to be much more devastating than the medical aspects in Guinea-Bissau.

In this context, it is essential to consider how social cohesion, embedded in actors, communities and institution, holds the society together and it is critical to ensure that the COVID-19 response is sensitive to community needs and supports cohesive strategies.

While several development partners have been using networks to provide support to communities, with the overall aim of responding to local needs and strengthening social cohesion, the efforts are often scattered and uncoordinated.

In this context, the UNDP has designed a community support platform as an online infrastructure to better plan and develop a response to communities' needs and priorities in a more coordinated way. Following the launch of the platform, the UNDP, the High-Commission for COVID-19, and the AfDB are joining forces to capitalise on the community support platform in order to connect communities with all territorial and development actors that are supporting local development in the territories in order to identify solutions, replicate innovation and ensure the interventions benefit the most vulnerable groups at the community level through a fund mechanism.

The platform is offered as a critical online infrastructure to connect Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), community members but also private sector associations and development partners in order to identify and share innovation and solutions, facilitate the sharing of good practices, but also creating a space for dialogue and reflection. **Ultimately, the platform should serve as a space for encouraging a dialogue about civic issues, policies, or decisions of consequence to people's lives, communities and society.**

In the short term, this virtual community support platform will offer the opportunity to develop and coordinate a **COVID-19 response and socioeconomic recovery** in the communities; however, the platform will be developed **considering longer term development objectives**. The overall aim will be of strengthening collective approaches for addressing issues identified by the communities. The set-up of the virtual platform will aim at gathering all territorial actors that need to cooperate and play a role in the definition of a local development process that responds to local needs and priorities.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's principle of **leaving no-one behind**, the community support platform will be designed to strengthen the voice of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the communities and to provide inputs into local and national development processes. In this regards, **targeted efforts will be made to facilitate the participation and connection of communities that are often isolated or hard to reach, including those that do not have access to the internet and whose participation and contribution needs to be supported and encouraged.**

The local level is a natural arena within which to rebuild bonds and links among groups, combat exclusion and rebuild state-society relations in fragile contexts such as Guinea-Bissau. Aware of the importance of working at community level, this exercise will also be accompanied by the collection of data on the most marginalized communities as a precursor to a vulnerability map for future, more targeted interventions at local level.

Moreover, the platform is expected to link participation and dialogue to the identification and activation of concrete local actions for the support of communities in the COVID-19 response and recovery plan.

As stated above, **the platform wants to contribute to a larger conversation about the future of development for the country** while giving a voice to those that need to be included with the aim of strengthening a different path towards community resilience, economic and social progress as well as building up trust between citizens, communities and the state.

This will ultimately provide an enabling framework for building transformative partnerships in support of local development processes. The platform will support a network of communities, while fostering multi-actor initiatives to address local development challenges. This will offer an entry point to interested development partners to better harmonise and align their interventions at the local level towards catalytic territorial development opportunities.

The effort will be accompanied through the set-up of a **Small Grants Scheme** to support grass-roots initiatives and community organizations to identify a variety of challenges in the socio, economic and environmental sphere that they need to face for the COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and in support of the well-being of their communities.

The small grants will provide local change-makers with the opportunity to take action about the problems they suffer from. The initiative will be a learning-by-doing experience, allowing teams to learn in real time and in real circumstances. Built on the value of participatory democracy, the initiative will allow citizens to create a space to find collective solutions to complex social, economic and environmental problems.

The Small Grants Scheme will be designed to support grass-roots initiatives and community organizations. Priority will be given to projects that support the following objectives: (i) encouraging local change makers to develop initiatives that address social, environmental or economic challenges in their communities; (ii) raising ambition for sustainable development actions of local community members and organizations for delivering community activities; (iii) developing skills and volunteering opportunities for local people to become active members of their community; (iv) building the links between the local community and local businesses; and (v) fostering communications between local communities and authorities.

The grants can be used to fund projects along the following five main categories:

1. Building inclusive communities and leaving no one behind

The project focuses on building inclusive communities, addressing stigma, discrimination and ensuring that no one is left behind. The project shall propose innovative ways to promote the respect of all citizens, give them full access to resources, and promote equal treatment and opportunity. This entails working to eliminate all forms of discrimination, valorizing diversity and possibly engaging community members in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

2. Gender equality and women's empowerment

The project proposes innovative ways to understand the role gender plays in communities' lives and to advance gender equality for girls and women's empowerment. The project should contribute to build a community in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

3. Promoting peaceful and just societies

The project proposes the creation of mechanisms to solve conflicts, encourage dialogues, promote human rights and contribute to sustaining peace. This also includes initiatives that promote integrity and fight corruption with the aim of further supporting accountability and transparency.

4. Build resilient societies and economies

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of communities to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of shocks and hazards. Building resilience is understood as a multidimensional challenge and a cross-cutting issue that require interventions across multiple areas, including territorial planning and infrastructure, food security, economic structures, and the way health systems and public institutions are designed.

5. Creating inclusive and sustainable business opportunities

The project will propose ways of accelerating community members' engagement in economic activities that contribute to an inclusive and sustainable growth, creating opportunities for the most vulnerable groups while taking consideration environmental concerns.

Each project will be carefully reviewed by the UNDP, the High Commission for COVID-19, the AfDB and other possible partners of the Na No Mon community part of the support platform initiative as part of the Technical Review Committee. Preference will be given to those projects which present innovative ideas, contribute to the human development of local communities, illustrate a clear role for community members and last, but not least, will contribute to achieving the vision of the partners.

Theory of change

The project is built on the following theory of change:

Assuming community's participation is an essential condition for successful sustainable inclusive development and peacebuilding,

Assuming livelihoods and community resilience programmes can help individuals leading more dignified lives and relieving grievances,

Assuming local solutions that foster community engagement to address grievances are the building block of a more cohesive society,

Assuming local solutions addressing socio-environmental issues can improve the relationship between communities,

Assuming women, girls and gender minorities' meaningful involvement is a precondition for inclusive development and reducing gender inequalities,

if communities are provided with income generating opportunities and acquire stronger economic position,

if communities are equipped with tools and resources to lead entrepreneurial activities and create networks of supports,

If communities interact in a harmonious way, if young women interact on equal foot with young men, through collective intelligence activities,

then communities can actively participate in their own development, becoming not only stakeholders of their immediate future, but of communities' long-term sustainable development,

and

young women and men can benefit from an empowered position, and all can expand their participation in the socio-political sphere and contribute to peace ecosystem,

because the constraints of community participation in the economic life and in social dialogues are diminished, their decision-making power increases and they are considered trustworthy agents in solving societal problems, including in addressing grievances and exclusion, including vis a vis national and local authorities.

[Link to the UNDAF, CPD, National Development Plan, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda2063](#)

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Guinea-Bissau (2016-2021)

The project will contribute to achieving the following outcome from the newly adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (2022-2026): “Outcome 1: Transformational and inclusive governance encompassing respect for the rule of law and sustaining peace”.

UNDP Strategic Plan (2021-2024) and Guinea-Bissau Country Programme Document (2022-2026)

The project is aligned to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2021-2024) and directly contribute to the main goal of the UNDP CPD: Output 1.1 The state and non-state actors have enhanced technical and operational capacities in an improved institutional framework to ensure democratic governance and to respond to all citizens' needs, and Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities of state and non-state actors to foster resilient, inclusive, and diversified economic growth and sustainable human development, leading to poverty reduction.

National Development Plan of Guinea-Bissau (2020-2023) and Government's Plan for Guinea-Bissau – 10th Legislature (2020-2023)

Entitled “Guinea-Bissau in light of COVID-19: A new opportunity for a new start”, the project would directly contribute to *Strategic objective 1* “Consolidate the democratic rule of law, reform and modernize public institutions” of the Government's Programme. It will also contribute to *Strategic objective 2* “Reform the economy and promote growth and employment” and *Strategic objective 4* “Valorise the Human Capital and improve living conditions of the population” of the Government's Programme.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The project is directly related and will contribute to the implementation of SDG 16 as an enabler for the whole 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project will also indirectly contribute to SDG 8 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.

Agenda 2063

The project also contributes to the priorities outlined in the African Union continental framework and its Agenda 2063 defining the practical and measurable actions for structural, social, economic and environmental transformation of Africa. The Agenda 2063 aims towards a continent that “integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful”. The seven aspirations of the agenda include socioeconomic development, culture, democratic governance and peace and security, while also emphasising inclusive societies and the empowerment of women and youth. Particularly, this project will cover the continental call for good governance, democracy, respect of human rights, justice and the rule of law.

III. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Expected Results

The main objective of the initiative is to:

Provide direct support to the communities by facilitating the identification of solutions according to community needs, the exchange of good practices and successful interventions, fostering new partnerships and a more longer-term civic dialogue on the future of development for Guinea-Bissau through an online community support platform.

The project outputs and activities are:

Output 1: Community networks and solutions mapped and involved

Activity 1.1: Map existing networks

Activity 1.2: Identify local innovation and solutions that can be replicated and scaled up

Activity 1.3: Raise awareness and support the local infrastructure for community participation, including for the communities without internet access

Activity 1.4: Collect data on the most marginalized communities as a precursor to a vulnerability map for future, more targeted interventions at local level, providing the basis for geospatial mapping of solutions at community level

Output 2: A virtual community support platform for dialogue and participation across various actors and groups is functioning and further developed

Activity 2.1: Feed and continue updating the online infrastructure for information sharing, dialogue and participation across various actors and groups

Activity 2.2: Encourage the creation of a civic space with a focus on the most vulnerable people

Output 3: Innovative solutions with social and environmental impact identified, supported and scaled-up

Activity 3.1: Link participation and dialogue to the identification of concrete local actions for the support of communities

Activity 3.2: Support community organization in the identification of local solutions and development of project initiatives

Activity 3.3: Select and create a network of local innovation and solutions for wider impact and scale-up

Partnerships

The project will be developed by the UNDP Guinea Bissau in partnership with government counterparts as well as a number of other UN Agencies and international partners. This includes:

The High Commission for COVID-19

The Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to respond to the crisis has established, within its Presidency, a High Commission for COVID-19. The High-Commission is in charge of developing and coordinating an integrated response to the multi dimensions of the crisis.

The United Nations Development Programme

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Guinea-Bissau is a key government partner. Since the start of the outbreak, the UNDP has developed a response to mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19 that considers strategic local action, while focusing on the furthest left behind and keeping in mind national development goals and long-term recovery scenarios.

The UNDP is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by helping Guinea-Bissau prepare for, respond to and recover from the health crisis, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable. The response is designed to help decision-makers look beyond recovery, towards 2030, making choices and managing complexity and uncertainty in four main areas including governance, health and social protection, blue/green economy, and digital disruption.

UNDP further believes that it is now the time to start a conversation around the path of the future development of the country. The pandemic exposes as no other event in the past the failures of

development of the past decades, both on the side of the domestic political elite as well as their development partners. Therefore, new platforms and spaces for both deliberation, inclusion and action are needed to jumpstart a new path to the mounting challenges that the Bissau-Guinean society faces.

The African Development Bank

Since the start of its cooperation with Guinea-Bissau in 1976, the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) has financed, excluding multinational projects, 38 operations (24 projects, 7 institutional support operations, 3 studies, 3 emergency assistance operations and one line of credit) representing total net commitments of UA 188.08 million (about CFAF 150 billion). This amount was provided in the form of loans (80.02%) and grants (19.98%).

Risks and Assumptions

The scope of the project necessitates the identification of a few assumptions that inform the project and related expected results, including:

1. Spread of COVID-19. All activities will be implemented taking into account preventive measures to limit the spread and mitigate the impact of the virus.
2. Persistence of political instability. The project will support inclusive dialogues to support engagement and commitment towards the project.
3. Social exclusion. The project will aim to ensure the participation of a wide array of stakeholders, taking into consideration the leave no one behind approach with the aim of supporting the inclusion of the most vulnerable or at risk to be excluded young women and men.
4. The mobilization of the required resources. The UNDP will promote the initiative with the aim of mobilizing extra resources and activating strategic partnerships.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project mainly targets community and grassroots organisations, especially young organizations, young people from the informal sector in all social categories. Other potentially affected groups are government counterparts, especially local authorities that will benefit from further engagement with local stakeholders.

Knowledge

The project has a strong knowledge management component. The setup of the online platform will in fact serve as a solid infrastructure for facilitating dialogues and as a repository of knowledge. The project foresees the systematization of experiences and solutions in order to further facilitate replication, scaling up, but also the sharing of lessons learned.

Sustainability and Scaling Up

The project will be implemented in close collaboration with government counterparts, as well as youth associations and other stakeholders in order to ensure full ownership and that mechanisms, tools and resources developed in the framework of the project can be supported beyond its duration. The project will ensure that national capacities are strengthened to ensure sustainability of the interventions, but also to better include lessons learned into policies and strategies to be developed in support of community engagement.

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

The project intends to leverage the ongoing projects supported by UNDP Guinea-Bissau as well as the collaborations and partnerships to be built through various channels in order to ensure that all relevant actors are engaged and can work in a coordinated and effective manner. The UNDP in Guinea-Bissau promotes a portfolio approach with the aim of avoiding silos and disjointed initiatives.

Project Management

The project will be implemented through Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) by the UNDP office in Guinea-Bissau in collaboration with state institutions and stakeholders. The project will seek to tap into the knowledge and experience of UNDP in other contexts as well as of other international partners and regional organizations.

V. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN ¹²

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year		RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET	
		2021-2022	2022-2023		Description	Amount
Output 1: Community networks and solutions mapped and involved <i>Baseline: 50 community networks and solutions identified</i> <i>Indicators:</i> <i># number of networks identified and involved</i> <i>Targets:</i> <i>At least 110 community networks involved</i>	Activity 1.1: Map existing networks			UNDP	Grant to local CSOs Consultancy Travel	35,000 USD
	Activity 1.2: Identify local innovation and solutions that can be replicated and scaled up			UNDP		
	Activity 1.3: Raise awareness and support the local infrastructure for community participation, including for the communities without internet access			UNDP		
	Activity 1.4: Collect data on the most marginalized communities as a precursor to a vulnerability map for future, more targeted interventions at local level, providing the basis for geospatial mapping of solutions at community level			UNDP		
Output 2: A virtual community support platform for dialogue and participation across various actors and groups is functioning and further	Activity 2.1: Feed and continue updating the online infrastructure for information sharing, dialogue and participation across various actors and groups			UNDP	Consultancy HR	38,000 USD

¹ Cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness costs to be charged to the project are defined in the Executive Board decision DP/2010/32

² Changes to a project budget affecting the scope (outputs), completion date, or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that must be signed by the project board. In other cases, the UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied for example when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

developed <i>Baseline: 1 virtual community support platform</i> <i>Indicators:</i> <i># number of visitors of the platform</i> <i># number of exchanges on the platform</i> <i>Targets:</i> <i>At least 3,000 platform's visitors</i> <i>At least 10 external contributions to the platform per semester</i> <i>At least 20 solutions identified and supported</i>	Activity 2.2: Encourage the creation of a civic space with a focus on the most vulnerable people			UNDP		
Output 3: Innovative solutions with social and environmental impact identified, supported and scaled-up <i>Baseline: 10 communities organisations supported</i> <i>Indicators:</i> <i># number of local actions supported</i> <i>Targets:</i> <i>At least 20 solutions identified and supported</i>	Activity 3.1: Link participation and dialogue to the identification of concrete local actions for the support of communities			UNDP	Grant to local CSOs Workshop/trainings	170,000 USD
	Activity 3.2: Support community organization in the identification of local solutions and development of project initiatives			UNDP		
	Activity 3.3: Select and create a network of local innovation and solutions for wider impact and scale-up			UNDP		
Sub-total, including direct costs						243,000 USD
Indirect support costs (7%)						17,010 USD
TOTAL						260,010 USD