



EUROPEAN UNION

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF CHIARA ADAMO, ACTING DIRECTOR INTPA.G1

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP Guinea Bissau

The CLIP for Guinea Bissau is based on the first Gender Country Profile commissioned by the Delegation of the EU (EUD) with the intention of having a gender analysis and presenting adequate recommendations for the implementation of the GAP III - EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment- targets in the 2021-2027 programming¹.

For the preparation of the Gender Country Profile, an extensive desk review and primary research was conducted, together with CSOs and institutions and a final report was approved in April 2022. A presentation was done at the EUD with the participation of CSOs and members of the Government, allowing a discussion on the main recommendations and the preparation of the CLIP.

The CLIP is aimed at fast-tracking gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in all thematic areas of the EU-Guinea Bissau 2021-2027 Multi-Annual Indicative Programme, promoting economic, educational and social rights of girls and women, addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by new programmes.

In the following chapters, the CLIP presents a brief context description on gender equality in Guinea Bissau, the areas of the MIP and the gender equality priority objectives that the EU will pursue, the political and policy dialogues that the EUD will prioritise to engage with the government and other relevant stakeholders, foreseen public diplomacy events on gender equality and other activities to be undertaken with the cooperation facility support.

The EU wants to be at the forefront of fighting for gender equality and women's empowerment in Guinea Bissau using a wide range of instruments including policy dialogue where gender will be reflected as a key priority in all sectors.

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Although Guinea-Bissau (GB) has demonstrated commitment to promoting gender equality and women empowerment with a number of recent legislation, gender inequality persists in all thematic areas, at all levels of society, including the executive, legislative and judicial spheres.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

The country's context, shaped by over forty years of cyclical political instability, has not allowed the creation of institutions that can sustain development. Despite its natural rich habitat and social fabric, women face challenges especially in rural areas due to the lack of infrastructure and basic social services in the areas of health, education, and justice. Poverty is persistently high, with an estimated 70 per cent of the population (50 per cent women) living below the poverty line, and a Human Development Index ranking Guinea Bissau 175 out of 189 countries. It is estimated that two of every three citizens suffer from multidimensional poverty. Youth makes up at least 50% of the population, representing an opportunity for social and economic development.

The socio-economic situation of Guinean women is challenging. The country is characterised by a high rate of maternal mortality and illiteracy among women. Traditionally, most ethnic groups do not allow women to own agricultural land, despite the fact that they are the hardest workers in agriculture. Early and forced marriage, sexual and domestic violence, and female genital mutilation are other gender-based violence practices in the country. Furthermore, the high rate of illiteracy among women, around 84% in the countryside, is a major obstacle to achieve transformative gender changes that the ambitious goals of GAP III aim to realize.

Gender norms, which are based on deeply rooted beliefs in the different groups of Guinea Bissau's ethnic mosaic, regulate the daily lives of men and women. However, in the last decade, gender protection laws progressed towards a more current vision of gender equality and empowerment, including as a priority the protection of women and girls against gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of violence. The country's legal framework has improved, mainly through laws criminalizing Female Genital Mutilation (2011), Domestic Violence (2014); and Trafficking of Persons (2011) which includes the prohibition of sexual exploitation, prostitution, child labour, and forced marriage; the law of Reproductive Health (2010); the Basic Law of the Education System (2011); the National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (PNIEG) (2012), and the Parity Law (2018) (establishing 36% quota in women's representation in parliament). However, these laws are waiting for application: there is a lack of resources for dissemination and a poorly operational justice system. The meshing between customary law and modern state laws, and the lack of access to justice, constitute serious barriers for the realization of women's rights.

Poverty rates amongst women is one of the highest in the world despite country's rich agriculture and fisheries resources. While 80% of women work, the majority of them work in insecure, poorly paid jobs with few opportunities for advancement. The Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the gender inequalities experienced in all sectors and between advances and setbacks, poverty, food insecurity, the lack of basic social services, discrimination and violence against women are gaining ground, within a framework of almost no administrative services - other than the regional governmental headquarters - and of weak institutional capacities to respond to the demands of the people and in particular of women in the economic and social sectors.

Gender inequality is based on various social, cultural and institutional factors. It is illustrated in figures: for example there are clear differences between women and men in employment, income, mortality, school drop-out rates and in the number of women occupying appointive

and elective positions within government. Gender inequality is worsened by a legal and governance system which is not effectively enforced.

In this context, the EU is committed to accelerate progress through concrete actions and the implementation of specific programs based on the country's context, increasing the number of literate women and promoting their professional and economic empowerment and decreasing the number of cases of harmful practices.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

The MIP for Guinea Bissau focuses on three interconnected priority areas: ‘Human Development’, ‘Green and Inclusive Economy’ and ‘Good Governance and Stability’. Through the implementation of the MIP the EUD will pursue several areas of engagement on the GAP III² on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Across all priority areas, the EU will emphasise a human rights based approach, ensuring ownership and accountability of authorities, encouraging a broader change in culture working with authorities but as well with CSOs, communities and its religious leaders.

To bring about the human capital transformation that is needed, Guinea Bissau must prioritise investment in youth, with a special focus on women and girls, to ensure that the next generations of all young adults are healthier, better educated and more able to contribute to decision making, economic growth and development. The EUD will continue to mainstream gender equality into all the policy dialogues held by the EU Delegation.

In the area **of human development** under the MIP, there is specific programme, PIMI III, looking at mother and child health, with a component related to sexual reproductive health and women empowerment through different activities. Guinea-Bissau is one of the countries benefiting of the EU funded regional Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) programme, “My Health, My Rights”, as adolescents, especially girls and young women, are strongly affected by this problem. Adolescent birth rate is 84% in Guinea-Bissau and 8% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 15 while 18% before the age of 18, resulting in a total early marriage rate of 26%. Early marriage rates are even higher for young women living in rural areas or poorer households. The prevalence of Female Gender Mutilation is 45% among women aged 15-49. Additional barriers to SRH service access for adolescents are provider bias due to the same social norms and values, financial unaffordability.

Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights and economic and social rights of girls and women through education could help support an enabling legal, political and societal environment helping to reduce gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education, strengthening skills development with an impact on improving nutrition levels of the most vulnerable.

The **EU for Education and youth employability** programme will not only mainstream gender equality in its governance section, through the collection of statistical data and school

² Presented in chapter 3 of the Joint Communication on GAP III

inspections that should promote better education for girls (as 25% of girls are out of school), but as well in the vocational training component will prioritise women and youth empowerment through increased vocational and education training, including functional literacy and entrepreneurial opportunities for women.

In line with the recommendations resulting from the Gender Country Profile and the analysis of the gender situation in Guinea-Bissau, the EUD commits to the key priorities:

Women's literacy activities will be mainstreamed, when possible, in programmes where the entry point is the community (education, agriculture), with a relevant content on human rights, as well as procedures for complaints of violence against women, which should increase the awareness of rural populations about the content of gender policies.

In the area of public finance management, the EU will carry out advocacy and will prepare a study to see how to **mainstream gender into the State General Budget**.

The EU will continue to support and expand **structures responsible for the reception of victims of GBV** to create a gender-based referral system as an integrated mechanism of essential support for victims, through which specific information and indicators would be collected and made available for the purposes of improving services, knowledge, and information sharing that would serve a better planning and evaluation of interventions in this area.

On **strategic partnerships**, the EU will engage in a dialogue, in the medium term, with gender related institutions and CSOs including the UN System and African institutions (AfDB, ECOWAS) that could lead to the design of a joint Program (EU/AfDB/UN/ECOWAS) for a holistic/integrated approach that is scaled up and better suited to the context of multiple fragilities of Guinea-Bissau.

In the area of women empowerment as part of the **Green and Inclusive Economy**, the EUD is planning to set up a functional credit system which will have a gender equality angle including functional literacy with content on small business management, human and women's rights, and awareness on roles and responsibilities in gender relations.

Regarding the promotion of a **high-level dialogue**, the EU is committed to promote the creation of an inclusive National Gender Forum (Government, CSO, Development Partners) as a space for discussions, exchange of experiences (through conferences and annual meetings), project design and fund mobilization. The EU could use the Cooperation Facility to support this initiative as well as to undertake quality research and studies.

The communication strategy will include a specific Gender campaign on Women's Rights, with a special focus on women literacy and girls' education linking the process of learning to read and write to women's rights. The overall objective will be to empower women and girls to take more leadership roles in their daily life and assume more responsibility on education. The EU Delegation will continue to mainstreaming gender equality in all communication, giving visibility to women and promoting changes in social norms (see point 5).

3. Potential for synergies, cooperation, partnerships, training and joint implementation with EU Member States and other EU actors

Even though only 3 EU Member States (MS) are represented with an Embassy in Bissau, only Portugal's cooperation agency is based in Bissau and has an important cooperation portfolio that benefits not only of Portugal support but as well of EC funding as a result of bilateral, ECOWAS and PALOP programmes that are implemented by Institute Camões. Portugal has an education programme that specifically look at promoting girls education and Spain has two Spanish NGOs working on women literacy, one of them implementing a popular radio programme. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a key common agenda and there is willingness to share information and steer the political dialogue on these priorities.

The EU will continue to promote cooperation and synergies during key events and public diplomacy campaigns, including the International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The Team Europe Approach will be implemented in all events and policy dialogue with the Government.

As UN-WOMEN is not present in Guinea-Bissau, there is no Gender coordination group within the UN and with development partners but UNFPA has promised to set up one early 2023.

4. In what way civil society will be included in the design, implementation and monitoring

The EU is committed to supporting civil society and to ensure that they have a greater role in designing and implementing EU policies, CSOs have been consulted in the development of the MIP, the Country Gender Profile and other strategic documents, including the CSO Roadmap, to align priorities. Civil society is very vocal and has a very good understanding of the situation of women in the country where basic human rights are not respected.

In particular, in the CSO Roadmap 2021-2025 women and youth organizations have been included as the facto they are among the main beneficiaries of grants and are at the centre of some cooperation policies such as those relating to employment or GBV.

The EU Delegation will continue to consult women organisations to align the programming to the situation on the ground, including by ensuring that gender equality is targeted or at least mainstreamed before launching any call for proposals, as one of the GAP III target is also to increase funding for women's and feminist organisations and movements.

The MIP underlines the need to promote an enabling environment for civil society, to enhance their meaningful, continuous and structured participation in policies as well as their capacity to perform their roles as independent development and governance actors. Guinea Bissau's civil society is active, particularly on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, the EU will engage with CSOs in the wider sense to include youth organisations and traditional and religious leaders committing to ensure that gender is mainstreaming in all programmes and discussions.

5. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

GAP III aims at increasing the number and effectiveness of actions having gender equality as principal objective³ with a target of a least one G2 action implemented in each country by 2025.

For Guinea Bissau a G2 action has been identified and we will continue to address gender-based violence and women's rights building on the experience of past programmes and efforts.

Key considerations:

- Gender-based violence remains an issue affecting many women and children.
- Linkages can be sought between eradication of gender-based violence and MIP priority sectors (for example on Human Rights, women's economic empowerment, political participation of women, SRHR, education and the Women, Peace and Security agenda).
- The EUD has been able to establish a strong track record and visibility as credible partner on gender-based violence.
- There are opportunities for increased ownership and funding by the government.
- More support and continued political engagement remains necessary for these commitments to materialise.

6. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

The CLIP identifies the political and policy dialogues that the EUD will prioritise to engage with the government and other key stakeholders. The EUD will engage in dialogue at different levels, targeting senior government officials including the President, government ministers, parliamentarians and civil servants in senior positions. Dialogue will aim to assist in putting issues on the agenda, in promoting more government ownership and sustainability, in encouraging policy shifts and legislation, in ensuring implementation of laws, and for priority to be given to gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment in national development planning and resource allocation.

The Human Rights Dialogue provides a venue for open dialogue at a high political level to address key human rights issues including discrimination of LGBTI people, the rights of women and children, gender equality, freedom of expression and the rule of law, human rights and the challenges facing democratic governance. The EUD proposes to also host and support a wide range of dialogues between Member States, other embassies, multilateral agencies and partners to foster mutual understanding, facilitate the establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas, and strengthen cooperation between EU actors and partners. Regular dialogue is also foreseen in the framework of the CSO Roadmap, where gender equality and women's empowerment is both a stand-alone and a key crosscutting priority.

Sectoral dialogues to implement priority areas of the MIP will also take into account gender equality and women's empowerment as key crosscutting issues. In addition to line ministries,

³ Defined as G2 actions in line with OECD gender marker [G2](#). These actions should aim at achieving a long-lasting change tackling harmful gender norms and stereotypes, by implementing a comprehensive and gender-transformative approach.

these dialogues are held with other key stakeholders, such as relevant faith-based communities and private-sector businesses. Also regionally, the EU engages with actors including ECOWAS, AU and other key stakeholders. The High Level Meetings and events organised in the margins of our EU-funded programmes give a valuable platform for dialogue on how to achieve a greater gender balance, the roles of West African women across different areas of society, and enable female participants to become end-users of our dialogues or capacity building activities.

Once the Gender coordination group is set up by UNFPA in 2023, the EU will actively participate to ensure that the GAP III commitments and its 5 pillars are part of the discussion.

In order for staff to be better equipped to ensure gender is addressed in all EU dialogues, actions and programmes, the EUD will explore the possibility of organising a gender training for Delegation staff and implementing partners.

7. Outreach and other communication/public diplomacy activities

Over the past years, the EUD has been actively engaged in strategic communication and high level events on gender equality. This specifically includes key annual events such as the International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-Based Violence. Also other international days are celebrated, with a specific focus on gender equality such as the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia and the International Human Rights Day. Moreover, the EUD has been a key partner and sponsor of the annual program "Quinzena dos Direitos". It is a two weeks programme devoted to the promotion of human rights in Guinea-Bissau, which encompasses, inter alia, a number of activities devoted to gender equality and human rights.

These campaigns have raised the profile of the EUD as a frontrunner on gender equality and women's empowerment issues, and will continue to be key moments for outreach and public diplomacy. The public diplomacy events aim to raise awareness and conduct advocacy to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment issues remain high on the political agenda. More events with such aimed are envisaged for the upcoming year.

8. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

The cooperation facility will strengthen the EUD's capacity to deliver on and fast-track gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across all thematic areas of the MIP, by supporting the implementation of the CLIP. In particular, the cooperation facility will provide technical assistance for developing or updating Gender country profiles or Gender sector analyses, gender mainstreaming, trainings, reporting and communication.

Date: 13/12/2022

Signature by Head of Delegation:

[e-signed] Artis Bertulis

COUNTRY INFORMATION

		SOURCES/YEAR
Population	Total: 1,968,000 Man: 48.57% Woman: 51.42%	Multi-Indicator Survey (MICS) 6, 2018/19 www.worldometers.info/demographics/guinea-bissau-demographics/
Urban/rural population:	Male: 42.9% / 57.1% Female: 40.9% / 51.9%	MICS 6, 2018/19
% of population under 25 years old	60%	CIA World Factbook, 2021
GDP per inhabitant	727.52 USD	World Bank (WB), 2020
Absolute poverty rate (2 USD/person/day):	69,3%	ILAP, 2010 extreme poverty: 33% (People living on less than 1.9 USD per day)
Female-headed households	Man: 77.3% Women: 31% in Bissau, 20% in the rest of the country	MICS 6, 2018/19
Female participation in the workforce	80% (economically active)	ERI-ESI BAD, UN-Women Gender Profile (2015)
Percentage of women/men involved in agricultural work:	55%	Agricultural diversification project, integrated markets, nutrition and climate resilience (NETWORK)/IFAD, 2019
Basic education completion rate	Total: 27.2% Girls: 25.1% Boys: 29.2% Urban: 47.3% Rural: 14.3%	MICS 6, 2018/19
Secondary school enrollment fee	Girls: 38.5% Boys: 44.9% Total completion rate: 17.1%	MICS 6, 2018/19
Adult women/men literacy:	National: Men: 52.3% Women: 32.6% In rural areas: Men: 32.4% Women: 16.3%	MICS 6, 2018/19
Demographic growth	2,4%	https://databank.worldbank.org/
Fertility rate	National: 4.3 children per woman Urban: 2.7 per woman Rural: 5.3 per woman	MICS 6, 2018/19
Average life expectancy at birth (women/men)	58.63 years Women: 59.9 Men: 55.9	Banco Mundial, 2020 Data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN locations
Prevalence rate of contraceptives:	Family planning: 21.2%	MICS 6, 2018/19
Maternal mortality rate:	549 deaths/100,000 live births.	Relatório do Desenvolvimento Humano 2016, p. 216.
Child mortality rate:	56/1000	MICS 6, 2018/19
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS	Women: 5%	Country Profile GB, BAD, 2015
Female Excision Rate	52.1% (age group: 15-49) 29.7% (age group 0-14)	MICS 6, 2018/19
UNDP Human Development Index	175° de 189	UNDP, 2020