

# Country Profile On Nutrition

04/2024

## GUINEA-BISSAU

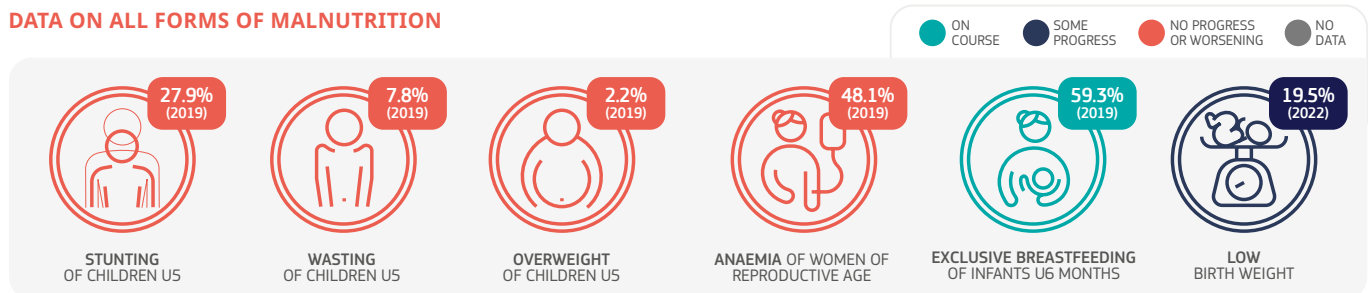
### Nutrition situation in Guinea-Bissau

#### AT A GLANCE

Guinea-Bissau has a population of 2.1 million, which is estimated to reach 2.5 million in 2030<sup>1</sup>. The country has been plagued by political instability since independence in 1974. It has set ambitious targets to tackle high levels of undernutrition, while also facing the triple burden of malnutrition including anaemia, overweight and obesity. The main causes of malnutrition are related to low-quality diets, inadequate access to food, infectious diseases, poor hygiene and inadequate health care for mothers and children as well as inequalities (including gender<sup>2</sup>). Widespread food insecurity and economic vulnerabilities are compounded by a marked seasonality

and price volatility (imported rice and local cashew nut production). The COVID-19 crisis risks further deteriorating food and nutrition security, especially in the agricultural sector, the main income and food source for the most vulnerable. About 21.8% of households are affected by food insecurity (SISSAN 2023) and Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has caused soaring prices in all sectors, preventing access to basic goods. Malnutrition comes with a high social and economic cost, disproportionately affecting the poorest households. Undernutrition alone was estimated to cost Guinea-Bissau up to 9.4% of annual GDP<sup>3</sup>.

#### DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



The data reported in the 2023 EU Nutrition Country Profiles is drawn from the UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates and the Global Nutrition Report (GNR).

#### NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Guinea-Bissau signalled its commitment to nutrition in 2014 by joining the Scaling Up Nutrition movement.
- A strategic plan on nutrition has been drafted in 2014 with the support of UNICEF and WB. The development of the Strategic Nutrition Plan 2016-2020 was intended to be an important step towards preparing the implementation of the national nutrition policy over the next 5 years, however it was not implemented.
- UNICEF is currently supporting the government in defining a multi-sectoral approach based on communication for behavior change and increased use of local products.
- The institutional coordination of the nutrition sector is under the direct authority of the Prime Minister, assisted by the Ministers of Health and Agriculture.
- A multi-sectoral coordination framework for nutrition with 5 strategic axes has been established.
- Several specific policies, which relate to the promotion of good nutritional practices have been introduced, such as the School Canteens, Act and food fortification laws. Salt iodisation has been mandatory since 2004 and a National Network of Iodized Salt Producers was established in 2016.

#### Example of EU support

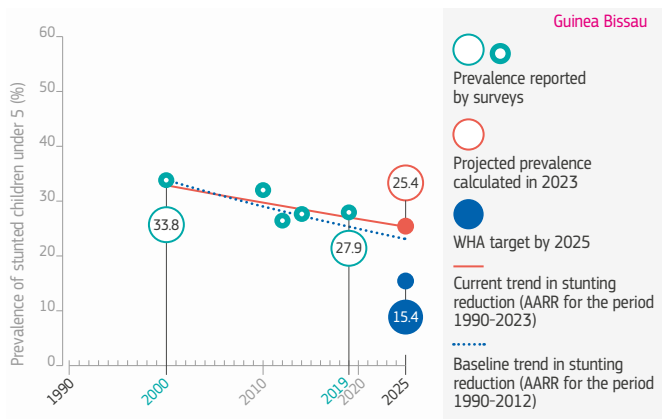
The EU-funded 'Ianda Guiné' programme (2018-2024) to build resilience and create economic opportunities in Guinea-Bissau is aimed at reducing food and nutrition insecurity and promoting sustainable agriculture. Several components are integrated through a multi-sector approach including support for improved agricultural production and diversification (through recovery of mangrove rice production areas and development of horticultural production), increased income generation (through diversification of economic opportunities), rehabilitating access to water and energy infrastructure and better access to the domestic market (small feeder roads).

Together, these contribute to increasing the purchasing power of families and nutrition education is promoting healthy eating habits. A technical assistance component (implemented by WFP) targets national government capacity by:

1. strengthening the quality and use of food security, nutrition, and market price information through the establishment of an enhanced information system; and
2. increasing awareness, knowledge, and political commitment for nutrition supported by social behavioural change communication initiatives.

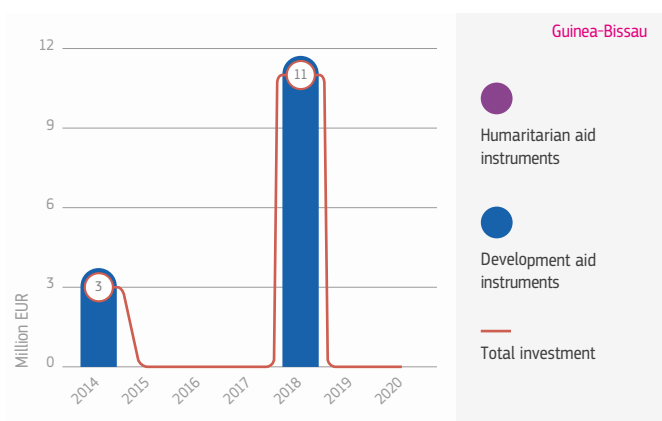


## Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



## TREND, PROJECTION AND TARGETS IN THE PREVALENCE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN (U5) STUNTED

Guinea-Bissau has experienced a marked decline in the prevalence of stunting since 2000, but only a nominal decline in the number of children stunted due to population growth<sup>4</sup>. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted has decelerated from 1.6% in 2012 to 1.1% in 2022. If this trend is maintained, then about 77 000 children are expected to be stunted in 2025.



## EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020 - TOTAL OF EUR 14 MILLION

The EU has been contributing since 2014 to nutrition through the different phases of a programme to support Maternal and Child Health (PIMI), aimed at reducing maternal, neonatal and child mortality in Guinea-Bissau. The nutrition component of PIMI has been also included in the second phase of the programme in 2018 (PIMI II), with an estimated amount of EUR 2 million. In addition, the EU is contributing EUR 9 million to nutrition under the EUR 44 million integrated programme 'Ianda Guiné' (2018-2024) (see example of EU support), notably by promoting food sovereignty, organic farming and nutrition education<sup>5</sup>.

## Planning for nutrition 2021-2027

Nutrition forms part of the 360-degree approach of the EU's Global Gateway. The EU is building on past achievements to support integrated approaches to nutrition. Through its human development (priority area one) and green and inclusive economy (priority area two), the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (2021-2027) is leveraging key sectors which address immediate and underlying determinants of malnutrition across the life cycle. Reducing gender and income inequalities constitute significant challenges to nutrition security.

The flagship on Transition towards Green Development, also in line with the Global Gateway, supports inclusive and green cities, notably through waste and WASH systems, and promotes sustainable and quality agribusiness and fisheries value chains with high potential to promote economic growth and create decent jobs.

This flagship programme offers several opportunities to integrate nutrition. For instance, it can support the development of sustainable food systems that enable healthy diets for all in rural and urban areas, reducing inequalities in access to basic social services, the diversification of economic opportunities (on-farm and off-farm) and job creation for youth and women. Protection of biodiversity and climate change adaptation also offer opportunities to contribute to strengthening the resilience of communities and reducing the vulnerability of ecosystems. Enhancing government capacities in monitoring and evaluation as well as multi-sectoral information systems and analysis related to nutrition remain crucial to strengthening nutrition governance and improving planning and mobilisation of resources across relevant sectors.

Under the flagship on Governance and Social Cohesion for Stability, the EU will contribute to strengthening the national health system towards universal health coverage, in line with the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package on health. In this framework, the EU launched a new phase of the PIMI programme (PIMI III) aimed at improving equitable access to Reproductive Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health services, including for people living in vulnerable situations. PIMI III supports research and statistics institutions focusing on women's health and nutrition, and national CSOs that advocate and promote women's wellbeing, thus generating socio-economic benefits. Under the flagship, another programme will strengthen leadership and governance in the health sector through increased capacity of the National Public Health Institute in managing the health and nutrition information system and enhanced public health and nutrition surveillance and follow-up mechanisms. Moreover, the regional EU programme on Sexual and Reproductive Health of vulnerable adolescents in West Africa will contribute to improve maternal and newborn health and foster disease prevention through the promotion of good nutrition habits.

1 - World Population Prospects 2022, estimated population for January 2023

2 - Teenage pregnancies are high (28% of early childbearing by age 18), female secondary education enrolment is low (6%), only 50% literacy rates in women 15-24 year (70% in men) (GNR 2019, MICS 2014). Guinea-Bissau has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.631 and is ranked at 159 of 166 countries (2022).

3 - Cost of Hunger in Africa Guinea-Bissau Study (forthcoming) supported by WFP and funded by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the EU.

4 - The last population census dates back to 2009.

5 - Data in this section excludes some regional, global and policy/research/information commitments that could not be disaggregated by beneficiary country. The European Commission applied the methodology of the SUN Donor Network for nutrition resource tracking 2014-2020 and the OECD DAC's nutrition policy marker from 2021 onwards.