

Strengthening Resilience and Socioeconomic Opportunities in Guinea-Bissau

1. Context and Program Overview

Budget:

EUR 44.5 million
(financed by
the European
Development Fund,
with co-financing
from implementing
partners).

Implementation Period:

2019 – 2025

Main Sectors:

Sustainable Rural
Development
and Environment
(50%), Democratic
Participation and
Civil Society (20%),
Water, Sanitation
and Energy (18%),
Health and Nutrition
(12%).

Objective:

Strengthen
the resilience
of populations
and increase
socioeconomic
opportunities
for the people of
Guinea-Bissau through
a multisectoral
approach.



The Ianda Guiné! Program was implemented by specialized NGOs and multilateral organizations to remain agile and close to communities. Despite a highly challenging context - marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic shocks and political fragility - the evaluation concluded that the program was highly relevant and overall satisfactory, producing tangible and transformative results for rural and semi-urban populations.

2. Key Successes and Positive Impacts

The evaluation highlights substantial socioeconomic transformations driven by the program:

Agricultural Productivity and Incomes:

The mangrove rice and horticulture components generated immense economic value. Rice production income increased significantly, with producers' annual gross incomes recording an average increase of about +140%. Beneficiaries adopted agroecological practices, substantially reducing chemical use and increasing food security.

Transformative Infrastructure:

Through Ianda Guiné "Roads", the program rehabilitated 100 km of rural roads (exceeding the 78 km target), reducing travel times on critical routes. This structurally improved access to markets, schools and health centers.

Access to Basic Services:

The Lus ku lagu component built the country's largest photovoltaic plant in Bolama and achieved the target of 100% access to improved drinking-water sources and renewable electricity in the intervention areas, drastically improving hygiene, reducing women's heavy workload and stabilizing the operation of small businesses.

Civil Society Empowerment:

The Djuntu action mobilized more than 8,000 citizens, financing over 450 community-based initiatives across the country. Almost 80% of surveyed beneficiaries confirmed that the program significantly improved local living conditions, boosting participation and community governance.

Strategic Milestones in Health and Nutrition:

The Saudi and Kume Dritu actions established lasting institutional assets, including the development of the National Health Development Plan (PNDS III), the National Human Resources Development Plan for Health (PNDRHS) and the progressive consolidation of the Food and Nutrition Security Information System (SiSSAN), essential elements for modernizing the country's public policy design.

3. Key Lessons Learned (what worked)

To inform future actions in Guinea-Bissau, the evaluation identified concrete lessons on the drivers of success in fragile contexts:

Lesson 1: Deep local rootedness is essential

Working through national teams and organizations with deep knowledge of the sociocultural and political context is the main factor in building trust and ensuring continuity of results. The flexibility and proximity of the implementing organizations kept the program operating during the pandemic.

Lesson 2: Integrated value chains generate the best results

Agricultural-sector interventions are most effective when they address the entire chain - from production to processing and marketing. Linking technical innovation to infrastructure investments (such as rural engineering works) ensures a much higher return on investment.

Lesson 3: Prior experience drives ownership

Selecting beneficiaries who already had practical experience in the supported activities (e.g., farmers and producers already active) resulted in exponentially higher motivation, strong local ownership and much lower dropout rates than among those starting the activity from scratch.

Lesson 4: Context-adapted engineering reduces costs and ensures results

Using locally available resources and materials, combined with engineering solutions perfectly adapted to the environment (for roads, water and energy), ensured excellent cost-effectiveness and enabled future management and maintenance of the works by the communities themselves.

Lesson 5: Promoting gender equality is transformative

When female participation was actively promoted (approaching parity in the program and reaching around 90% in horticulture), socioeconomic impacts reshaped family well-being. Vital improvements in access to water, energy and roads directly reduced women's physical burden and working time, freeing them for greater economic and community leadership.

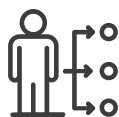
4. Capitalization and the Way Forward

The Ianda Guiné! experience offers highly replicable models that can be expanded, particularly in alignment with the **EU Global Gateway Strategy**:



Capitalize on Agroecological Innovations:

Technical innovations applied to bolanha farming - combining bioengineering with climate resilience - should be replicated and structurally integrated into major national policies, such as Guinea-Bissau's future Climate Adaptation Plan.



Expand Short Marketing Channels:

Innovative initiatives, such as the direct vegetable sales point linked to the Franco-Bissau-Guinean Cultural Center, proved effective.

Replicating this model facilitates links between local producers and urban centers, ensuring fairer prices, largely for women producers.



Programmatic and Institutional Support to Civil Society:

The program demonstrated that Organized Citizen Collectives (CCO) are resilient catalysts for grassroots development.

Future interventions should evolve from ad-hoc financing toward long-term programmatic and institutional support, focusing on the full capacity-building and technical autonomy of these institutions.



Anchor Infrastructure in Nature-Based Solutions (Green Engineering):

Future investments should capitalize on the successes achieved in rural mobility, ensuring systematic integration of "green engineering" from the design phase.

It will be critical to establish concrete tariff or self-financing mechanisms that ensure the autonomous conservation of these structures in the medium and long term.

Recommendations

- 1 Adopt a long-term programmatic financing model for civil society, focused on organizations and continuous State involvement.
- 2 Provide multi-year support to the health sector centered on strengthening the Ministry of Public Health, creating incentives to retain qualified technical staff and ensuring rigorous coordination among donors.
- 3 Future rural development programmes should prioritize commercialization, linking market access with climate-resilient irrigation infrastructure to strengthen autonomous national value chains.
- 4 Infrastructure investments should incorporate clear and sustainable models for long-term management, maintenance, and financial viability from the design stage, always prioritizing the integration of green engineering solutions.
- 5 It is essential to define clear governance mechanisms, with well-delineated roles and transparent communication, in order to align the expectations of beneficiary communities with the actual capacities of the projects.
- 6 Future interventions should build on the strong levels of efficiency, synergies, and cost rationalization already achieved and demonstrated by the organizations that implemented the landa Guiné Program!
- 7 Nature-based solutions and agroecological practices should be promoted as central strategic pillars to ensure climate mitigation and adaptation in infrastructure and sustainable local development.

Conclusion:



The landa Guiñé! Program clearly proved that **cooperation anchored in the field and in communities, with high adaptive capacity, can overcome systemic blockages to promote remarkable territorial development.** By capitalizing on the Program's most successful experiences and reinforcing the subsequent focus on long-term commercial viability and institutional anchoring, future actions in Guinea-Bissau are perfectly positioned to contribute to the country's prosperity and stability.