



# National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from Guinea-Bissau



**The Republic of Guinea-Bissau** is one of the smallest countries in West Africa. It lies along the Atlantic Ocean, bordered by Senegal to the north and Guinea to the south and east. The country's coastline of around 270 kilometers is intricate with many inlets, and its territory is divided between its continental part and its islands, dominated by the *Bijagos* archipelago, which is comprised of 88 islands, 21 of which are inhabited. Its capital Bissau is the urban center of the country, and in 2018 was home to around 43.36 percent of the **total population**. Guinea-Bissau has a very young population; its 1.87 million people have a median age of about 18.8 years. Agriculture is its economic mainstay. In 2019, the sector employed more than two-thirds of the total workforce (67.85 percent), out of which a significant proportion is engaged in the production of cashew nuts, followed by rice and harvesting food crops for subsistence. Cashews represent around 90 percent of Guinea-Bissau's total exports and the most significant source of income, especially in rural areas<sup>i</sup>. After a recession between 2012 and 2014, economic growth recovered to 6.26 percent and 5.92 percent in 2016 and 2017, respectively<sup>ii</sup>. This can be traced back to high international prices for cashew nuts as well as increasing production efficiency. However, Guinea-Bissau is also one

of the poorest and most fragile countries in the world. The country experiences high infant and maternal mortality rates and around 70 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line. Chronic malnutrition affects more than a quarter of the population, and in some parts of the country, up to 51 percent of households are food insecure<sup>iii</sup>.



## Climate change risks

Almost 80 percent of Guinea Bissau's population is located along its coastline and are increasingly at risk from coastal erosion and flooding. Due to the country's low altitude, Guinea-Bissau is prone to intense increases in saline water intrusion and acidification as a result of global sea level rise, and it is forecast that it may lose significant parts of its territory including islands and coastal areas. The country is also vulnerable to other major climate-induced hazards, including tropical storms, floods, locust infestations, droughts, and fires. Between 1987 and 2009, tropical cyclones caused more than 2,700 casualties, while floods and droughts affected more than 57,000 and 132,000

people respectively. The country's substantial dependence on the agriculture sector creates major risks on income generation and food security for a significant proportion of the population. While the sector still predominantly relies on rainwater, the changing climate has caused temperatures to increase and precipitation rates to decrease over the last two decades, resulting in water shortages. Throughout July to September, storms and heavy rainfall increasingly cause floods, adversely affecting agriculture productivity through the loss of pasture areas and causing an increase in diarrheal and respiratory diseases<sup>iv</sup>.



# Groundwork for supporting the NAP process

## Policy, planning and budgeting

The Government of Guinea-Bissau is still in its early stages of accounting for climate change adaptation and integrating it into its development plans. The National Programme of Action (NAPA), published in 2006, concluded that to-date efforts in preparing for anticipated climatic changes have been predominantly ad-hoc, reactive, and insufficiently coordinated, leaving the country poorly equipped to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Although a limited number of climate change mainstreaming activities have been conducted, Guinea-Bissau lacks a national climate change policy framework and an established national adaptation planning process.

In the initial submission of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the government reported self-evaluated costs for the implementation of adaptation projects of around US\$0.042 billion<sup>4</sup>. The 2021 NDC updated, submitted in October 2021, identifies funding shortfalls for adaptation across numerous sectors, including fisheries, and ocean ecosystems, water resources, human health, capacity development, disaster risk management, infrastructure (roads, bridges, houses, etc.) and local adaptation<sup>5</sup>. While some of these sectors have received some international donor financial support, others, including human health and infrastructure have yet to receive any international adaptation finance.

Guinea-Bissau's development priorities are presented in its Vision 2025 and planning document 'Hora Tchiga' the Strategy for Development, Employment and Industrial Promotion. The National Program of the Development (PND) 'Hora Tchiga' aims to promote the sustainable economic and social development of the country based on six axes: (i) consolidate the democratic rule of law, reform and modernize public institutions; (ii) reform the economy and promote growth and employment; (iii) develop the productive sector and infrastructure the country; (iv) enhance Human Capital and Improve the Living Conditions of Populations; (v) re-energize foreign policy, promote regional integration and value the Guinean Diaspora; and (vi) preserving biodiversity, fighting climate change, and valuing natural capital.



## Preparing for adaptation planning

The impacts of climate change on various economic sectors and the environmental systems have been assessed throughout Guinea-Bissau's *First (2005), Second (2011), and Third (2018) National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*. They assess and present climate change-induced impacts and vulnerabilities and propose associated suggested adaptation measures for the critical sectors of agriculture and livestock, energy, forestry, biodiversity, fisheries, and water resources. Building on the 2006, NAPA, the NDC update refers to the Third National Communication to the UNFCCC in 2018, which identifies Agriculture & Livestock, Energy, Forestry, Biodiversity, Fisheries and Water Resources as adaptation priorities. The updated NDC also notes UNDP-implemented, LDCF-funded project focusing on the Coastal Zone to identify further adaptation priorities in the coastal area.

## Implementation of adaptation actions

Utilizing both national and international resources, the government of Guinea-Bissau has implemented various climate change-related initiatives that are relevant for the NAP process. These include:

- [Strengthen the adaptive capacity and climate resilience of Guinea-Bissau vulnerable coastal communities to climate risks, UNDP-GEF \(2018-2023\)](#): Developing the strong institutions and policies needed to improve risk management in coastal zones, protect investments in coastal infrastructure and diffuse new technologies to strengthen resilience within coastal communities;
- [Scaling up climate-smart agriculture in East Guinea-Bissau, WADB \(2017-Ongoing\)](#): Building farmers' capacity in smart agriculture and increase the capacity both for planning and for management of adaptation and climate risk at all levels of governance.

# Challenges and successes

## Support programmes

The advancement of Guinea-Bissau's NAP process has been supported by numerous national and international partners, including the World Bank, EU, and IUCN, amongst others. Initiatives focused especially on the strengthening of critical institutional capacity for an effective implementation of national policies.

## Challenges

A great number of challenges threaten Guinea-Bissau's ability to plan for and adapt to climate change. Several key barriers were identified during various consultations. These concluded that the country lacks an effective national institutional framework for conducting climate change adaptation planning and mainstreaming climate risks into planning. Further, there is a lack of technical capacity within the government to mainstream climate change risks and adaptation considerations into national and sectoral planning. And finally, the

country gathers insufficient climate-related information to undertake adaptation planning and risk-informed policy-making processes. The Third National Communication to the UNFCCC further outlines that the country needs to establish an enabling environment through the development of a national climate change policy that can support and guide the sustainable implementation of past and future adaptation projects.

## Successes

The development of a roadmap for Guinea-Bissau's NAP has connected government, departments, stakeholders from across civil society, the private sector, and various branches of government. It outlines the processes and objectives needed to develop a NAP in the country. Further, a sensitization workshop with key stakeholders resulted in 38 specific adaptation priorities which will be considered in the formulation of the NAP. In addition, adaptation priorities were added to the 2021 NDC update, which gives further scope to the NAP formulation process.

**January 2014**

The government of Guinea-Bissau officially requested support from the NAP Global Support Programme to advance their NAP.

**April 2014**

A delegation from Guinea-Bissau joins the NAP-GSP Africa Regional Training Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**December 2016**

A stocktaking report and a preliminary roadmap for advancing the NAP process in Guinea-Bissau are developed.

**October 2021**

Updated NDC submitted to the UNFCCC.

**February 2014**

Guinea-Bissau initiates the NAP process and holds a workshop to introduce stakeholders and government representatives to the process.

**June 2016**

The NAP-GSP supports the government of Guinea-Bissau with a second workshop to further enhance stakeholders' understanding of the NAP process and to outline and prioritize the next steps.

**July 2018**

A Readiness and Preparatory Support Proposal is submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for potential funding to support the NAP process. Proposal is currently under final review.



## The process to formulate and implement NAPs in Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau's Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity is the national focal point for the development of environmental policies, including those on climate change. The MADS coordinates the activities of the Directorate General of Sustainable Development and the Directorate General of Environment. The latter hosts the National Climate Change Committee and holds the overall responsibility for the coordination and implementation of environmental policies through different departments, programmes, and projects.



## Opportunities and next steps

Supporting Guinea-Bissau access and process climate information that is understandable and actionable is vital to its current and future planning processes. This will contribute to more effective, risk-informed planning procedures. Further, assessing the institutional capacities, identifying capacity gaps and needs and thus design tailored capacity-enhancing programmes will be instrumental in the country's ability to mainstream climate risks across sectors and at various levels of government. Lastly, the establishment of a clear institutional framework for adaptation planning as well as a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating adaptation actions will provide Guinea-Bissau with an opportunity to tackle adaptation-related challenges in a coordinated, evidence-based and effective manner.

## Key documents

- [First National Communication to the UNFCCC \(2005\)](#)
- [National Programme of Action \(2006\)](#)
- [Second National Communication to the UNFCCC \(2011\)](#)
- [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions \(2015\)](#)
- [Updated Nationally Determined Contributions \(2021\)](#)
- [Third National Communication to the UNFCCC \(2018\)](#)
- [Initial Nationally Determined Contributions \(2018\)](#)

**67.85%** of the population is employed in the agriculture sector<sup>vi</sup>

**90%** of energy demand is provided using biomass<sup>vii</sup>

Mangroves form **9.37%** of the country's land area<sup>vii</sup>

**80%** of the population lives along the coastline<sup>vii</sup>

**90%** of export earnings derived from cashew nuts and fisheries<sup>vii</sup>

## List of References

- <sup>i</sup> Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2018. *Third National Communication to the UNFCCC*. URL: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN\\_Guinea\\_Bissau.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN_Guinea_Bissau.pdf)
- <sup>ii</sup> World Bank. *World Bank Data*. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=GW>
- <sup>iii</sup> World Food Programme. *Guinea-Bissau*. URL: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/guinea-bissau>. Accessed 29 January 2020.
- <sup>iv</sup> Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2018. *Third National Communication to the UNFCCC*. URL: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN\\_Guinea\\_Bissau.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN_Guinea_Bissau.pdf)

- <sup>v</sup> Guinea-Bissau, 2018. *First Nationally Determined Contribution*. URL: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Guinea%20Bissau%20First/GUINEA-BISSAU\\_INDC\\_Version%20to%20the%20UNFCCC%20\(eng\).pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Guinea%20Bissau%20First/GUINEA-BISSAU_INDC_Version%20to%20the%20UNFCCC%20(eng).pdf)
- <sup>vi</sup> Republic of Guinea Bissau, Updated Nationally Determined Contribution to the Framework of the Paris Climate Agreement, p. 36
- <sup>vii</sup> World Bank. *World Bank Data*. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=GW>
- <sup>viii</sup> Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2018. *Third National Communication to the UNFCCC*. URL: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN\\_Guinea\\_Bissau.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TCN_Guinea_Bissau.pdf)

## About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, are assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.



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