



GUINEA BISSAU

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 635,000**

Appeal number **MAAGW002**

In support of the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau



56

National Society branches



16

National Society staff



3,000

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



4,000

Ongoing emergency operations



3,000

Climate and environment



16,000

Disasters and crises



125,000

Health and wellbeing



500

Migration and displacement



500

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Longer term needs

- Disaster risk management
- Health • Water, sanitation and hygiene
- Climate change adaptation and environmental protection
- Protection, gender and inclusion

Capacity development

- Communications
- Youth and volunteering
 - Partnerships
- Digital transformation

Key country data

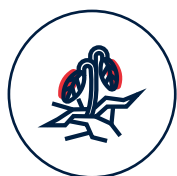
Population **2M**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **109**

Human Development Index rank **177**

Population below poverty level **47.7%**

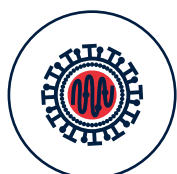
Hazards



Drought



Floods



Disease outbreaks



Wildfires



Strong winds



Political instability

Funding requirements

Total 635,000 CHF

Through the IFRC

585,000 CHF

Host National Society

→ **50,000** CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

- 105,000** CHF
Climate and environment
- 135,000** CHF
Disasters and crises
- 135,000** CHF
Health and wellbeing
- 30,000** CHF
Migration and displacement
- 35,000** CHF
Values, power and inclusion
- 145,000** CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

Belgian Red Cross

British Red Cross

Italian Red Cross

Red Cross of Monaco*

Portuguese Red Cross

Spanish Red Cross

Turkish Red Crescent Society

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau was officially established by decree in 1977 as a voluntary relief society. It was created to assist the public authorities in the humanitarian field and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1986. It has its own legal personality and administrative and financial autonomy.

The National Society was created with the aim of preventing and alleviating, with absolute impartiality, the suffering of vulnerable people, without discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, class, religion or political opinion. It strives to promote and strengthen universal humanitarian law and principles.

In its 45 years of existence, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau has helped strengthen the capacity of communities to deal with crises and disasters, supporting the most vulnerable people to access shelters, livelihoods, water and sanitation. With its 11 regional committees, 56 local committees and 3,000 volunteers in communities, the National Society has been able to provide timely support to the most at-risk groups. This has enabled them to mitigate and respond to emergencies and disaster outbreaks, and support people with rehabilitating their lives and livelihoods afterwards. These interventions build on recognition of the National Society as an auxiliary to the Government, and as a support system for communities and vulnerable people.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is located on the west coast of Africa, bordering Senegal to the north, Guinea to the east and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west. In addition to the mainland, there are approximately 90 islands and islets that make up the Bijagós Archipelago, occupying a total area of 36,125km². There is a very dense network of rivers across the country, including the Cacheu, Mansoa, Geba, Corubal, Cumbidjam, Cacine and Rio Grande de Buba. Maritime transport around the archipelago is under-developed, which hampers the mobility of island inhabitants and limits access to basic essential services such as health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene.

It is estimated that there are 1.8 million people in Guinea-Bissau, according to 2021 data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The country is also host to a large variety of ethnic groups, languages, and religions. Like most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Guinea-Bissau population is characterized by a preponderance of young people (nearly 50 per cent of Guineans are aged between 0 and 17 years) and has a high growth rate of 2.4 per cent. Just three per cent of the population were aged 65 years and over in 2021.

Political overview

Guinea-Bissau has a history of political and institutional fragility dating back to its independence from Portugal in 1974. The politico-military conflict of 1998 and the democratic fragility of the past 20 years have created

an unstable political environment, with a proliferation of political parties, lack of trust between these parties and changing motivations among them. It is one of the most coup-prone and politically unstable countries in the world. Since independence, four successful coups have taken place, with another 16 attempted, plotted or alleged.

Some progress has been made with the previous President, José Mário Vaz, who became the first to complete a full term since independence. The 2019 presidential elections were followed by a political crisis that ended in April 2020 when the Economic Community of West African States recognized Umaro Sissoko Embalo as the President. Although 2021 was characterized by relative political stability, a renewed episode of political violence in February 2022 inaugurated a new period of political crisis.

A lack of institutional cooperation over the interpretation of the Constitution of the Republic (Magna Law) led to the recent dissolution of the National People's Assembly and, consequently, the scheduling of early legislative elections. The escalation of accusations between political actors and their supporters in the run-up to legislative elections has been very worrying for most people in society. Governmental institutions have been left unstable by the ongoing changes of officials, which has constrained the present Government's ability to strengthen the state, guarantee social stability and economic recovery, or implement poverty reduction measures.

Economic outlook

Guinea-Bissau is economically vulnerable due to its strong dependence on exports of walnuts and cashew nuts. Cashew nuts represent more than 90 per cent of total exports and about 17 per cent of revenue.

About 80 per cent of the country's population depend on agriculture to survive, given the limited possibilities of access to other sources of income. Rural food producers are faced with a lack of technical and financial support, a low valuation of national products, and low levels of industrial development.

The private sector is weak and consists mainly of informal activities, with little capacity to generate new jobs. Access to banking services is limited to less than 10 per cent of the population. The main obstacles to economic development in Guinea-Bissau are deficiencies in the business environment, particularly a severe shortage of basic infrastructure, including energy and transport, as well as weak capacity in the public sector.

The economy contracted 1.4 per cent in 2020, down from real GDP growth of 4.5 per cent in 2019. This was caused by measures and policies intended to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, that disrupted supply chains and reduced economic activity. Inflation increased to 1.5 per cent, from 0.3 per cent in 2019, and is projected to rise to 1.9 per cent, remaining steady in the medium term. A recovery in international cashew nut prices, strong preliminary domestic production and strong export figures are likely to close the fiscal deficit.

The pace of poverty reduction was expected to be slow in 2022, in line with slow economic growth and high

inflation. Using the international poverty line of US\$2.15 per day, poverty was expected to decline from 19.9 per cent in 2021 to 19.2 per cent in 2022. That means that 4,000 fewer people are now in extreme poverty, but that figure is less than the 14,000 people lifted out of poverty between 2020 and 2021. The national poverty rate declined by only one percentage point between 2010 and 2018, from 48.7 per cent to 47.7 per cent. Recent political events and the pace of economic recovery present risks to poverty reduction. Furthermore, as the economy relies so heavily on cashew exports, any disruption to commodity markets is likely to affect the pace of poverty reduction – and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is likely to further affect food prices and disrupt commodity markets. Poor people, who spend nearly 60 per cent of their expenditure on food, remain highly vulnerable to rising food prices.

Vulnerabilities

Guinea-Bissau is one of the most fragile states in the sub-region, and is marred with intolerance, violence, poverty and an increased number of vulnerable people due to an environment of political and socio-economic instability. It is also affected by a range of natural hazards and environmental degradation. Weak infrastructures and a fragile political state make it difficult to provide affected populations with humanitarian support. The emergence of epidemics, and the re-emergence of COVID-19 and other diseases, has also affected the population. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated institutional weaknesses, exposing inadequate public services, a lack of safety nets and an over-reliance on cashew nut exports.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

Located between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer, Guinea-Bissau has a tropical climate with an average temperature of 27°C. The country experiences a six-month rainfall period from July to November, and rainfall increases from northeast to south, reaching between 1,200 and 2,400mm per year.

Rising sea levels caused by climate change affect Guinea-Bissau's coastal region, posing a serious threat to the 70 per cent of the country's population who live along the coast. Increased salinization from the ocean has caused coastal erosion and harmed rice production, and caused water in coastal aquifers to become salinated.

Changing rainfall patterns are increasing the risk of more devastating droughts, as well as heavier rainfall that can lead to flooding. In recent years, the regularity of rainfall has been low, causing insufficient agricultural production that has not been able to meet the growing domestic demand for food products. Combined with poor infrastructure and the low standard of rural equipment, this has had a negative impact on rural producers. In search of more prosperous livelihoods, young people have moved to urban areas, further reducing the available workforce in rural areas. This cycle of low production and loss of labour makes the countryside more vulnerable to unexpected shocks.

Floods, wildfires, strong winds, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are on the increase, resulting in rising loss of life and property. Guinea-Bissau faces a breakdown of social structures and support systems as growing numbers of people migrate from potentially at-risk communities to safer areas. Increased environmental degradation, mainly caused by human activities, has reduced access to economic resources and activities.

Dense coastal populations have led to significant pressure on the environment and caused environmental degradation. A large proportion of this population have livelihoods in agriculture and fishing, using techniques that have led to deforestation, over-fishing, groundwater and soil pollution, rising water levels and soil erosion. For example, strong pressures are exerted on the mangroves because of the fish smoking process. Organic pollution caused by the fishing camps has contributed to modifying the physio-chemical parameters of the mangroves.

Between 30,000 and 60,000 hectares of tropical forest disappear each year in Guinea-Bissau. From 2000 to 2020, the country experienced a net change of -180kha (-7.6 per cent) in tree cover. In 2010, Guinea-Bissau had 1.13Mha of tree cover, extending over 33 per cent of its land area. In 2021, it lost 13.7kha of tree cover, equivalent to 6.36Mt of CO₂ emissions.

Climate change and environmental degradation significantly affect the resilience of communities by drastically reducing the options available to them to obtain subsistence.

Main actions and areas of support

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau is part of the IFRC [Global Climate Resilience Programme](#), which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led climate-smart disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related disaster impacts, and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and preparedness; (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change; (3) addressing climate displacement; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The National Society, with support from the IFRC network, aims to increase its efforts to preserve biodiversity and address rising climate risks. Over the years, the Italian

Red Cross has supported the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau in mitigating and responding to climate and environmental crises. This support has enabled it to implement a tree planting project in two regions (Oio and Bafatá). This is in line with the IFRC Pan-African Tree Planting and Care initiative, and the IFRC will continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Forestry and provide technical support to the National Society to implement climate change projects and programmes.

With support from the IFRC network, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau plans to:

- Work with communities to take urgent action to heed to the growing and evolving risks of climate and environmental crises
- Strengthen the capacity of communities to cope with the evolving consequences of climate change
- Encourage communities to take ownership of programmes that combat climate risks by giving them more opportunities to share their points of view, their knowledge and their ideas
- Adopt environmentally sustainable practices within the National Society that contribute to climate change mitigation
- Identify, prevent and reduce adverse environmental consequences of emergency operations and long-term programmes
- Integrate environmental solutions into all National Society practices and systems

Evolving crises and disasters

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page [Guinea-Bissau](#)

The [INFORM Country Risk Profile](#) ranks Guinea-Bissau as experiencing medium risk, at 3.8 out of 10, with a vulnerability level of 4.8 out of 10. The lack of coping capacity is assessed at 7.9 out of 10, with weaknesses identified at both institutional and infrastructure levels.

Guinea-Bissau has a countrywide chronic malnutrition rate of over 25 per cent. Overall, 11 per cent of Guinea-Bissau households are food insecure, rising as high as 51 per cent in some areas. Locust invasions are prevalent in the country, and severely affect agriculture. In addition to natural hazards influenced by climate change and environmental degradation, political and socio-economic conflicts, road accidents and shipwrecks pose threats to lives and livelihoods.

Weak infrastructure in Guinea-Bissau means violent winds can have devastating effects. In June 2018, winds of 80–120km/hour affected hundreds of houses and dozens of infrastructures, including 37 schools, as reported by the Ministry of Education. At least 2,000 families (11,541 people) were affected, and 420 houses were destroyed in the capital Bissau. Three people were reported dead, and 800 people were displaced to other regions. The storm affected families living in houses that are more vulnerable to winds, either because of their location or because of poor roofing. Houses in the area are largely homogenous and structured in a way that makes them vulnerable to strong winds.

Main actions and areas of support

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau responds to the multiple disasters affecting the country in close coordination with the Civil Protection. The National Society can rapidly mobilize its network of volunteers, offering a unique asset to both assess needs of those affected and initiate immediate response. The National Society has acquired experience in multi-sectoral responses, including shelter and non-food items, food security and livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, and cash and vouchers.

The Belgian Red Cross is supporting the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau to train volunteers in methods of disaster response. The National Society seeks to strengthen its disaster operations management, coordination and accountability. In line with the IFRC Pan-African Red Ready initiative, it will promote localization of humanitarian response by strengthening the capacity of local branches and volunteers.

The IFRC is supporting the National Society to work towards achieving the goals set out in IFRC's Pan-Africa Zero Hunger Initiative, which aims to reach zero hunger for up to 25 per cent of vulnerable people in Africa by 2030. This will be achieved through investment in small-holder farmers, and scaling up cash assistance and support to youth entrepreneurs. The IFRC is supporting the National Society to improve the quality of its programmes and align them better with the Zero Hunger Initiative goals. It is also providing technical assistance to develop integrated interventions that address basic needs, prevent asset depletion, and restore or strengthen livelihoods.

The IFRC also supports the National Society to advocate with the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to develop and build capacity around disaster law.

With support from the IFRC network, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau plans to:

- Provide appropriate and timely assistance and support to communities affected by disasters and crises
- Systematically integrate measures to support the hardest-to-reach people and improve the approach taken to address protracted crises
- Use cash and voucher programmes as a flexible and adaptable modality that promotes human dignity, choice and community resilience
- Conduct capacity building activities to help improve evolving disaster plans, response and management, at community, regional and national levels
- Work collaboratively with cities on disaster risk management, and increase understanding of urban risks in order to build systems that strengthen local resilience
- Reduce incidences of internal and external migration caused by civil, political and environmental disasters
- Establish mechanisms for anticipatory response and the management of disaster and emergency responses – functioning at all levels and reducing people's exposure and vulnerability to hazards

Health and wellbeing

Health services in Guinea-Bissau continue to be seriously challenged across the 11 health regions, including the Autonomous Sector of Bissau. The country faces high rates of child mortality. The sixth Multiple Indicator Survey, carried out in 2018–2019, found that the probability of an infant dying between birth and their first birthday had reached 55 per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate for children under the age of five was 89 per 1,000 live births. Diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and malaria continue to seriously affect Guinean children, while children living in rural areas are at higher risk of infant mortality than those living in urban areas. Guinea-Bissau has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world, at 900 per 100,000 live births.

Guinea-Bissau also faces a high burden of life-threatening infectious diseases including malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, ischemic heart disease, measles and diarrhoeal diseases, as well as lower respiratory infections and strokes. The burden of HIV/AIDS in Guinea-Bissau is the highest in West Africa and disproportionately affects more women than men.



Although there is no catastrophic food insecurity, it is concerning that acute malnutrition persists in Guinea-Bissau. Almost one in six children under the age of five is moderately or severely underweight (16.3 per cent), and 3.8 per cent are classified as severely underweight. More than a quarter of children – 27.7 per cent – have moderate and severely stunted growth, and 8.7 per cent have severely stunted growth.

Around 60 per cent of households do not have access to drinking water in the home. This means that for most of these households (88 per cent), an adult woman is usually forced to fetch drinking water, sometimes taking more than 30 minutes in total. In terms of sanitation, only 25 per cent of this population live in households with improved sanitation facilities for the disposal of human excrement.

The cholera epidemic has been recurrent over the past decades, reappearing on average every two years at the national level, and in the border region of Tombali. There is almost one cholera outbreak every year, forcing the regional health authorities and National Team to take measures to prevent and combat this very deadly epidemic.

Guinea-Bissau's borders with Senegal and the Republic of Guinea are busy with cross-border trade activities, huge concentrations of people and massive public transport traffic. It is a hazardous situation that encourages disease outbreaks, and requires special attention from national health authorities, particularly after the emergence of the Ebola virus in neighbouring Guinea.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic further aggravated the already weakened national health system in Guinea-Bissau.

Main actions and areas of support

The role in health of the National Society in Guinea-Bissau increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. It continues to support the COVID-19 response structure set up by the Government to manage the pandemic response. The Government has shifted its focus to vaccination and awareness raising on hesitancy, leading it to strengthen its partnership with the National Society to collaborate on raising awareness for the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

A vast national awareness campaign was organized to mobilize people to be vaccinated across the country. The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau activated 10 volunteers in each region to raise awareness by carrying out house-to-house visits, mass campaigns and focus groups, targeting densely populated areas such as markets, popular weekly trade fairs (known as Lumos), the port of Bissau, hospitals, health centres, churches and mosques, and soccer fields, as well as in traditional ceremonies and rituals. These campaigns followed a vaccination calendar jointly developed by the Government and partners in the COVID-19 coordination platform. As a result, Guinea-Bissau reported a significant increase in COVID-19 vaccine uptake. The National Society has also integrated the ambulance services to support the COVID-19 response, conduct surveillance and emergency responses to other diseases, and build the capacity of volunteers to be better prepared for future vaccination awareness-raising activities.

The fight against COVID-19 will be reinforced through a continent-wide initiative between the IFRC and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to invest in building resilient public health security infrastructure in Africa. Under the US\$39 million Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative funded by the Mastercard Foundation, the IFRC and African National Societies are building a programme that aims to ensure that 60 per cent of African people are vaccinated against COVID-19. The partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and Africa CDC will support the procurement and delivery of tens of millions of COVID-19 vaccines and hasten economic recovery on the continent. Under this programme, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau will deliver critical risk communication and community engagement activities to vulnerable communities, in support of COVID-19 vaccine uptake. Other programme partners will provide procurement and logistics services to a central warehouse (UNICEF), in-country logistics (World Food Programme), managing COVID-19 vaccination centres (Amref Health Africa and GHSS) and safety surveillance (Akros).

The IFRC will support the National Society to improve community awareness of epidemics and pandemics, and to promote good water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices and services. It will also support resource mobilization and advocacy efforts that increase opportunities and partnerships around better WASH practices, such as furthering the IFRC [One WASH initiative](#) to eliminate cholera.

UNICEF is also collaborating with the National Society to respond to and manage evolving public health challenges, including cholera and COVID-19. The National Society has also built a strong partnership with the Ministry of Health, which provides technical, logistics and financial support for its activities.

With support from the IFRC network, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau plans to:

- Respond effectively to mental health and psychosocial support needs in emergencies
- Provide, through trained first responders, quality first aid services to diverse groups ranging from vulnerable communities to public and private sector institutions, hard-to-reach communities and those experiencing high levels of violence
- Protect and enhance community health and well-being through access to sustainable, affordable, appropriate and quality health services across an individual's lifespan
- Help communities to identify and reduce health risks through approaches that promote local solutions to address unmet needs, and emphasize community mobilization, accountability and behaviour change
- Provide context-appropriate sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services
- Respond to the mental health and psychosocial support needs of communities, volunteers and staff
- Strengthen systems and mechanisms that support survivors and victims of sexual and gender-based violence in disasters and other emergencies
- Build referral pathways and systems for survivors and victims of sexual and gender-based violence at all levels
- Contribute to efforts to achieve and maintain national targets for the control of vector-borne diseases, including the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to ensure effective prevention of malaria
- Meet the needs of people living with communicable diseases, such as HIV and tuberculosis, through appropriate risk reduction approaches
- Improve community access to drinking water, and provide information on good practices regarding the treatment and reuse of wastewater
- Increase communities' access to affordable, appropriate and environmentally friendly water, sanitation and hygiene services
- Improve community awareness of epidemics and pandemics, including cholera, as well as ways to further reduce their impact, and measure progress made
- Develop a water, sanitation and hygiene strategy
- Increase the number of voluntary non-remunerated blood donations
- Contribute to efforts to achieve and maintain national immunization goals, and promote equitable access to new vaccines, including COVID-19
- Prepare for, and respond adequately to, the health consequences of disasters and crises, including epidemics and pandemics
- Strengthen and maintain the capacity of communities to carry out effective infectious disease outbreak detection, prevention and response activities

- Coordinate and collaborate with community networks, schools, health care providers and civil society organizations (at both regional and national levels) on evolving public health challenges
- Capitalize on the National Society's auxiliary role to ensure its position on its public health strategy is maintained, using relevant advocacy, policy platforms and mechanisms at the national level

Migration and displacement

The migrant situation is a concern for national authorities in Guinea-Bissau. There are gaps in data on migration, however it is estimated that in 2019, more than 100,000 people, or 5.39 per cent of the population, emigrated from Guinea-Bissau. Political instability, structural poverty, high unemployment, and difficulty in accessing education and health care are the main drivers of emigration. There is a lack of new job opportunities in Guinea-Bissau due to the country's high dependency on the cultivation and exploitation of cashew nuts, which has led to insufficient diversification of the economy.

Emigrants from Guinea-Bissau are principally young people, and the main destination countries are Senegal (29.5 per cent), Portugal (27.9 per cent), and Gambia (13.3 per cent). However, the figures do not account for non-registered movements through the porous borders. Young people face especially brutal situations when in transit, they are vulnerable to smuggling, and many die due to the extreme conditions while crossing the desert on the central Mediterranean route. In recent years, Guinea-Bissau has received many evacuees who have been assisted by rescue missions conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Libya. Sustainable reintegration of returned migrants is also a factor that needs to be addressed.

Guinea-Bissau features as a major centre of recruitment for child trafficking in the West African region, as well as a transit point for smuggled migrants heading to Europe and other destinations, due to the weak control of the authorities and the geographical location of the country. The most recent (2017) official data on migration puts the number of migrants, including refugees, in Guinea-Bissau at 22,700. This data found the principal countries of origin were Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, Liberia and Portugal. In 2022, Guinea-Bissau recognized 2,114 refugees, with the majority (2,075) from Senegal, and 37 asylum seekers. Senegalese refugees mainly come from the Casamance region of Senegal, between Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Other protection seekers came from countries such as Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Guinea.

Internal migration is mainly related to economic and climate factors, in particular storms and droughts. There were 4,112 internal displacements registered due to storms in 2018.

Land in Guinea-Bissau is not neatly split into usage for residential and agricultural purposes. This, along with high population mobility and frequent cross-border activity, leads to a major source of land disputes for agricultural exploitation, especially when it comes to cashew trees. Areas with high population mobility have also become vulnerable to the high risk of transmission of infectious diseases, such as sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, malaria and diarrhoeal diseases such as cholera.

Main actions and areas of support

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent Sahel+ Migration Technical Group, a network comprising the National Societies of Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, as well as the IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as observer members. The purpose of the technical group is to offer a framework for reflection, research, sharing experiences and information to better cooperate on migration issues. The group's main objective is to reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants and displaced persons in the Sahel region, mitigate the risks they are exposed to, address discrimination, and facilitate their inclusion and access to services – in view of building overall resilience.

The IFRC will continue to support the National Society to further integrate migration and displacement approaches in all its humanitarian activities. It will support resource mobilization and advocacy efforts to increase opportunities and partnerships to address migration, and increase joint awareness-raising activities on migration and displacement issues within the IFRC network.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau will also strengthen its partnership with the IOM, which is a principal UN agency for migration.

With support from the IFRC network, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau plans to:

- Ensure that assistance and protection services are promoted and provided in collaboration with local and national authorities, host communities and affected people

- Establish humanitarian services points at key stages along migration routes, and expand the range of services provided at these points in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
- Establish and strengthen systems and mechanisms that reduce rural-urban migration
- Integrate migration and displacement dimensions and approaches into all humanitarian work, including updating and contextualizing tools and methodologies for emergency preparedness, response and recovery
- Increase knowledge on migration and its effects among local populations through engaged and effective advocacy with stakeholders
- Strengthen the capacity of the National Society to engage in migration issues
- Establish coordination and collaboration systems within the IFRC membership, and with state institutions, the IOM and other international organizations and civil society organizations

Values, power and inclusion

Universal education and gender equality are progressing very slowly towards the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in Guinea-Bissau. In terms of access to education, the net primary school enrolment rate among seven to 12-year-olds is 68.7 per cent. This is even lower in rural areas, at 54 per cent, compared with 74 per cent in urban areas.

Young people under the age of 25 are a more vulnerable and marginalized group that faces social exclusion in Guinea-Bissau, despite making up 64 per cent of the population.

Guinea-Bissau has a 25.7 per cent rate of child marriage prevalence, and a 52.1 per cent rate of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM). In 2021, UNICEF found that more than 400,000 girls and women in Guinea-Bissau alive today have experienced FGM, with ethnicity and location the main factors that influence the likelihood of it. The practice is more common in regions that are home primarily to ethnic groups who practice FGM almost universally, including the Fula, Mandinga and Beafada. UNICEF's research concluded that, regrettably, the SDG target of eliminating FGM by 2030 does not appear within reach for Guinea-Bissau. If current trends continue, half of the country's girls will still be experiencing this practice in 2030.

According to the latest (2021) UNDP data, there are 11,584 people living with disabilities in all regions of Guinea-Bissau. The highest number live in the Oio region (19 per cent), while Bolama-Bijagós is the region that represents the smallest number, with a total of 490 (four per cent). There are more men (54 per cent) living with disabilities than there are women (46 per cent).

Main actions and areas of support

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau strives to integrate protection, gender and inclusion considerations in all its interventions, and to ensure it engages with communities in an accountable manner. The National Society promotes education of humanitarian values, and intends to develop an income-generating project for the empowerment of young people.

The IFRC has supported the National Society to prioritize values, power and inclusion in its activities. This has built the integrity of the National Society, improved its engagements and established it as a support organization for vulnerable people, particularly women, people living with a disability, children and other marginalized groups.

The IFRC will support the National Society to run Red Cross youth programmes, and to expand the reach of awareness-raising activities on humanitarian education, youth action, and protection, gender and inclusion. It will also support the National Society to mobilize resources and advocacy efforts to increase opportunities and partnerships in these areas.

With support from the IFRC network, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau plans to:

- Ensure that programmes and operations guarantee the dignity, access, participation and safety of all affected people
- Promote and support the systematic application and integration of the IFRC's minimum standards on protection, gender and inclusion during emergencies
- Ensure systematic collection and analysis of data disaggregated by age, sex and disability, in risk assessment and programme design
- Take concrete steps to ensure that all programmes and services are inclusive and accessible to people living with disabilities

- Advocate for effective protection of children in disaster risk management laws, policies and regulations
- Increase efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence, and put in place systems for recording and monitoring activities to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence
- Ensure that disaster and emergency management plans and activities include measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence
- Promote the participation of women in disaster or emergency response teams, and involve community members, especially women, in decision-making processes around disaster risk management
- Institutionalize systems, processes and policies that enhance participation, protection and the inclusion of vulnerable persons and communities in National Society activities, and other social and economic services
- Increase understanding, ownership and practical application of humanitarian values and fundamental principles, including knowledge, views, values and behaviour of vulnerable people and groups
- Work to reduce and eliminate all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and psychological abuse, through developing and sharing information materials for vulnerable groups and communities, using culturally appropriate information and methodologies
- Establish and strengthen coordination and collaboration mechanisms and systems with state institutions, NGOs and other civil society organizations
- Form effective education partnerships with the Ministry of Education and other humanitarian actors, and meaningfully involve those affected – especially the education community and young people themselves – in decision-making processes related to education
- Carry out effective awareness-raising activities on the humanitarian consequences of interrupted education, and the importance of ensuring safe, equitable and continued access to education during disasters and crises
- Build and strengthen advocacy activities that further the development of policies, laws and regulations that will support vulnerable and marginalized groups during emergencies

Enabling local actors

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau is committed to institutional strengthening. It conducted the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2011, intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

With support from the IFRC, the National Society intends to use a more strategic approach for engagement, accountability, trust and volunteerism.

The IFRC will support the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau to:

- Increase its visibility and advocacy on key strategic areas of interest at national, regional and global levels
- Strengthen partnerships on key strategic areas of interest, including with the IFRC regional and global reference centres
- Strengthen humanitarian diplomacy through technical guidance and support
- Compile evidence, in particular data and experiences, that demonstrate the impact of the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy and behaviour change activities
- Invest in more forecasting analysis and activities to anticipate new challenges and opportunities
- Collaborate with new and non-traditional partners to build trust, and with communities for joint problem solving and innovation
- Increase investments, partnerships and collaboration in research, development and learning
- Equip technical teams and volunteers with resources to allow them to explore new approaches to improve their way of working
- Update and adopt policies and regulations that address current circumstances

- Develop concrete measures to ensure that men and women are equally represented at all levels, and that women are supported to access governance and leadership positions
- Strengthen the capacity of the National Society governing board, staff and volunteers on protection, gender and inclusion in their ways of working
- Develop the role of volunteering for young people to become essential catalysts for behaviour change and instigate local action

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC Freetown cluster delegation is in the capital city of Sierra Leone and supports four National Societies including the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the Red Cross Society of Guinea, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau and the Liberian Red Cross Society. The IFRC supports the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau to strengthen its institutional and operational capacities. It also provides the technical assistance necessary to help the National Society fulfill its mandate as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. The IFRC provides capacity building support to the National Society, through the deployment of technicians and experts with sectorial experience mainly in health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and disaster risk reduction and management.

The IFRC will work alongside the National Society to further its organizational development priorities, including digitalization, capacity building for governance, development of key strategies and policies, humanitarian diplomacy, and to establish volunteering management systems.

IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, situation and needs; to agree common priorities; clarify consistent public messaging; and monitor progress. It also enables collaboration between members to develop common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; and mobilizing funding and other resources. This also means ensuring that the strategies and programmes that support people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action and of development

assistance, and reinforce the auxiliary role of National Societies in their respective countries.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau is part of the four IFRC Pan-African initiatives focusing on Tree Planting and Care, Zero Hunger, Red Ready and National Society Development. These initiatives are reflected under the relevant sections of this plan.

The National Society cooperates with the IFRC network through different working and sub-working groups, such as the Sahel+ group, the Abidjan commitments for the Association des Sociétés Croix-Rouge Croissant Rouge Francophones, Hispanophones, Lusophones d'Afrique (ACROFA), the National Societies of the African region and as a member of the Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau has established partnerships with, and receives support from, the following participating National Societies:

The **Belgian Red Cross** supports the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau on capacity building for disaster response and cash and voucher assistance. It delivers capacity building, mainly in training, to volunteers on disaster response, including how to implement preventative measures and prepare for floods and strong winds. Volunteer training on disaster risk and climate change will continue until 2025.

The **British Red Cross** supports recruitment and training of new volunteers, and risk communication and community engagement on disease prevention and potential epidemics. It also supports the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau with training on good hand washing and sanitation practices in local schools, and supports the planning of the cash transfer programme.

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
Belgian Red Cross						●			
British Red Cross				●	●				
Italian Red Cross				●		●			
Portuguese Red Cross						●			
Spanish Red Cross				●	●				
Turkish Red Crescent		●							

The **Italian Red Cross** has been supporting a climate mitigation tree planting project until the end of 2022, with prospects for further activities. Other support to the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau may include setting up a volunteer database, management system and related training.

The **Portuguese Red Cross** supports the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau with first aid training.

The **Spanish Red Cross** supports the inclusion of the Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles into

the education curriculum at primary school level. With Spanish Red Cross support, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau has started building water tanks and digging wells to improve access to water in remote communities and schools. Proposals will be presented for the continuation of this project in 2023–2025.

The **Turkish Red Cross Society** supports institution building through the purchase of computers and office equipment for the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau.

Movement coordination

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau maintains close coordination with the IFRC and the ICRC. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

Since 2010, the ICRC has provided support to the National Society in the areas of relief and first aid,

restoring family links and psychosocial assistance. It has also contributed to the motivation of salaries and subsidies for certain technicians, to capacity support (office equipment and vehicle maintenance), accounting and internal audits, communications, humanitarian diplomacy and resource mobilization.

Coordination with other actors

In line with its auxiliary role, the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau belongs to and participates in different national and regional emergency coordination structures, including the National Civil Protection Service and the Operational Health Emergency Centre. The National Society has been an advisory member of the National Civil Protection since 2011, and actively participates in disaster preparedness and response mechanisms at national level.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau works with various United Nations agencies (UNICEF, WFP, FAO,

WHO, UNFRA, UN-HABITAT), as well as national and international NGOs operating in the country, as part of its humanitarian mission. A partnership with UNICEF to run an awareness programme on disease prevention and vaccines is currently underway, and Plan-GB is supporting student and teacher training as part of the good school governance programmes on risks and disasters.

Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau website: (checking if there is a website – there is none listed in the IFRC directory)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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