



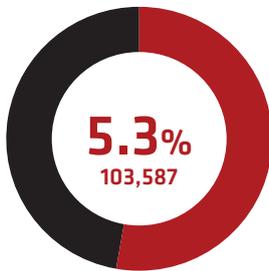
# Diaspora engagement mapping

## GUINEA BISSAU

### Facts & figures

#### Emigration

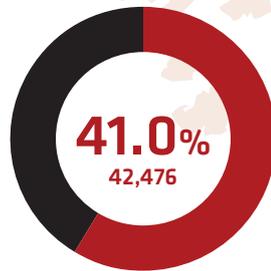
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 52.9%  
♀ 47.1%



% of which in the EU



♂ 58.7%  
♀ 41.3%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **3.1%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **47**



#### Top countries of destination

Senegal	30,570
Portugal	28,905
Gambia	13,792
Spain	5,563
Cabo Verde	5,263



#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



#### Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: Guinea Bissau refers to its diaspora as 'diáspora' (Portuguese) but also Bissau-Guineans abroad, or 'communities abroad' (*comunidades no estrangeiro*).

### Guinea Bissau does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

There is currently no publicly available diaspora or migration policy in Guinea Bissau, although international partners have sought to work with the government to develop one. The 2016 ICMPD/IOM/ECOWAS Survey of Migration Policies in West Africa notes that Guinea Bissau was planning to develop policies and programmes in relation to migration and development, but there has been no publication of any policy or other documents by the government on these topics since.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the Citizenship Law was changed in order to end the principle that the acquisition of a foreign nationality leads to the loss of Bissau-Guinean citizenship <http://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Guinea-Bissau-Lei-da-nacionalidade-2010.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Voting rights abroad pertain solely to legislative elections and do not extend to presidential elections <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voting-from-abroad-the-international-idea-handbook.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> ICMPD / IOM / ECOWAS (2016) A Survey of Migration Policies in West Africa, available at: [https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A\\_Survey\\_on\\_Migration\\_Policies\\_in\\_West\\_Africa\\_EN\\_SOFT2nd.pdf](https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf)

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2008** ● **Bilateral Readmission Agreement with Spain** to cover the admission of workers, assisted voluntary return, integration, migration and development, the fight against irregular migration, and readmission of Bissau-Guinean nationals.<sup>4</sup>
- 2011** ● **National Investment Code (2011)** includes general tax incentives to promote foreign investment that apply to all foreign residents, including members of the diaspora. However, it makes no specific provisions for this group.<sup>5</sup>
- 2011** ∨  
**2015** ● **National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2 (DENARP):** Guinea-Bissau's second National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper includes one sole reference to "mobilizing contributions from the Diaspora, and investing in infrastructure and vocational training," but it gave no detail on how this was to be achieved.<sup>6</sup>

### » Trends

In 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation changed its title to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and the Diaspora. The Ministry conducted some outreach and meetings with the diaspora in France in 2009.<sup>7</sup> In 2013, the Ministry changed its title again to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and Communities Abroad, which indicates that diaspora engagement was still a concern for the government even after the 2012 coup. However, there has been little, if any, action on diaspora engagement since then.

Brain drain of skilled staff, especially in the health and education sectors, has proved a persistent problem. The government has sought to address this through promoting temporary circular migration by members of the diaspora in some key areas, under the sponsorship of the government and IOM.<sup>8</sup> In 2007 there was an attempt to create a MIDA-type project, but this was halted by the coup in 2012.<sup>9</sup>

The Bissau-Guinean diaspora demonstrates a strong associative dynamism. A 2012 the Groupe de Recherche et de Realisation's (GRDR) mapping of Bissau Guinean organisations in Portugal and across Europe identified several diaspora organisations active in countries of residence and origin, especially at the local level.<sup>10</sup> It showed that Bissau Guinean diaspora groups were active in delivering projects across wide range of sectors, including health, education, agriculture and aquaculture. The same was found in the 2019 IOM study, according to which 92% of those surveyed in France belonged to an association and 64% in Portugal.<sup>11</sup> Many Bissau-Guinean diaspora organisations in Europe have strong regional connections and members therefore carry development activities benefitting their local region of heritage, albeit with little or no interaction with the government.<sup>12</sup>

4 [http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/legaldocument/wcms\\_380163.pdf](http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/legaldocument/wcms_380163.pdf)

5 <http://www.grupoformosa-gub.net/docs/Codigo.pdf>

6 [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/guinea-bissau\\_prsp\\_2011.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/guinea-bissau_prsp_2011.pdf) p72.

7 <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/guinea-bissau/>

8 Abreu (2012), Migration and development in contemporary Guinea Bissau: a political economy approach. PhD Thesis, SOAS, University of London. Available at: [https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/14243/1/Abreu\\_3401.pdf](https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/14243/1/Abreu_3401.pdf)

9 Ibid.

10 <https://grdr.org/Repertoire-du-co-developpement,739>

11 <https://www.iseg.ulisboa.pt/aquila/getFile.do?method=getFile6fileId=899494>

12 Ibid.

## Obstacles



- **Difficulties assessing diaspora size:** The GRDR mapping cited above highlights that Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and the Gambia are linked by a long tradition of mobility which, when added to the porous nature of the border, makes it extremely difficult to estimate the number of individuals of Guinean origin present in both Senegal and the Gambia.<sup>13</sup> It is also difficult to accurately estimate the Bissau-Guinean population in Europe because this diaspora has often settled in Europe after acquiring a different nationality.
- **Institutional fragility and lack of support for the diaspora:** Institutions in Guinea Bissau are weak and the country has faced persistent political instability. A lack of governance and political instability discourage both investment and the return of the diaspora.
- **Lack of diversity in economic opportunities:** Guinea-Bissau relies massively on growing and exporting cashew nuts and has not invested enough in diversifying its economy, which is a barrier in attracting diaspora investments in other industries.
- **Drug-related insecurity:** The country's increasing association as a narco-state involved in the trafficking of drugs into Africa and then Europe is a further barrier to diaspora return and investment.

## SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices



### Strengthening co-development initiatives in the Cacheu-Guinea-Bissau region (RICODEV)

This project funded by ECOWAS and AECID and implemented by the Groupe de Recherche et de Realisation (GRDR) focuses mainly on the promotion of the involvement of migrant associations in the development of their region of origin according to an approach based on exchanges and consultation between the public, local actors and migrant associations<sup>14</sup>. According to the 2016 ICMPD/IOM/ECOWAS study cited above, this was still functional in 2016 but the current status of all its activities remains unclear.<sup>15</sup>

This project also included a 2019 mapping of Guinea-Bissau diaspora organisations in France, Spain, Portugal, Gambia and Senegal with the aim of enabling diaspora organisations to connect and build better knowledge of initiatives conducted in the country, particularly in the region of Cacheu so as to enable better engagement between the government and diaspora involved in development projects back home.<sup>16</sup> The study showed that diaspora organisations have continued to deliver projects at local level across a range of sectors in Guinea Bissau but with little to no interaction with the state authorities.

NETWORKING +  
DATA

### European Union Emergency Trust Fund-International Organisation for Migration (EUTF-IOM) Project on Migrant Protection and Reintegration and Migration Profile

As part of the EUTF-IOM project on migrant protection and reintegration, IOM has been supporting the reintegration of 700 returnees through individual, collective and community reintegration projects.<sup>17</sup> It is also building the capacity of the government to manage return migration.<sup>18</sup>

REINTEGRATION

13 [https://grdr.org/IMG/pdf/repertoire\\_def.pdf](https://grdr.org/IMG/pdf/repertoire_def.pdf)

14 <https://grdr.org/Repertoire-du-co-developpement.739>

15 ICMPD / IOM / ECOWAS (2016) A Survey of Migration Policies in West Africa, available at: [https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A\\_Survey\\_on\\_Migration\\_Policies\\_in\\_West\\_Africa\\_EN\\_SOFT2nd.pdf](https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf)

16 [https://grdr.org/IMG/pdf/repertoire\\_def.pdf](https://grdr.org/IMG/pdf/repertoire_def.pdf)

17 <https://www.iom.int/countries/guinea-bissau>

18 Ibid.

## Annex:

# List of Actors

## Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

**African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)** <https://au.int/en/cido>

Guinea-Bissau is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent the country as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings.

**ECOWAS** <http://www.uemoa.int/>

Guinea-Bissau has been a member country of ECOWAS since 1997.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities, Directorate of Communities** is responsible for all matters pertaining the assistance to Bissau-Guinean migrants abroad including the reception of forcibly repatriated migrants and of returning migrants in general.

<https://www.guinebissaupublic.com/external-affairs/>

- At sub-ministerial level

**The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on “Policies and Programs for the Promotion of Community Welfare and Development, including Migration”** is led by the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and Communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities, Directorate of Communities) and acts as a high-level technical coordination mechanism for initiatives at the intersection of migration and community development.<sup>19</sup>

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Rede de Associacao dos Filhos e Amigos de Farim (RAFA)** <http://www.afafc.pt/>

- ☑ **Development activities**

RAFA is a structured community development organisation focused on the Farim region. Also has some involvement in reintegration activities.

<sup>19</sup> <https://migrationjointinitiative.org/sites/default/files/files/articles/iom-guinea-bissau-synthesis-report-22122018.pdf>

### Associação dos filhos e Amigos de Bigene (AFABU)

<http://www.odemocratagb.com/?p=17557>

#### Development activities

AFABU is a community organisation involved in development projects in the Bigene region, with specific projects related to infrastructure, education, and managing clandestine migration.

### Fédération des Associations du Secteur de Calequisse en Europe, France (FASCAE)

<https://assoce.fr/waldec/W781002021/F-A-S-C-A-E-FEDERATION-DES-ASSOCIATIONS-DU-SECTEUR-DE-CALEQUISSE-EN-EUROPE-POPULATION-ORIGINAIRE-DE-L-AFRIQUE-DE-L-UEST-GUINEE-BISSAU-SENEGAL-GAMBIE-ET-DE-L-EUROPE->

#### Development activities

FASCE, created in 2007, undertakes development projects across West Africa (Guinea Bissau, Senegal, and Gambia). These projects range from public health initiatives, construction of schools, libraries, and sports; as well as infrastructure projects including roads, bridges, electricity, and modernisation of agriculture practises.

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