



Integrated Country Strategy

GUINEA-BISSAU

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Guinea-Bissau experienced its first-ever peaceful democratic transition of authority in 2020, when outgoing President Jose Mario Vaz stepped down in favor of his elected successor, Umaro Sissoco Embaló. Since then, the country has made uneven efforts toward promoting democratization and rule of law, while continuing to face periodic political turmoil, insecurity, and governance challenges. The next few years will be crucial to Guinea-Bissau's development, providing the United States Government with an opportunity to advance both American and Bissau-Guinean interests in the areas of security, democratization, and economic and social development.

Partnering with the government, the USG can help Guinea-Bissau secure and protect its maritime and land borders from the threats posed by transnational criminal organizations – especially narcotraffickers – and the arrival of religious extremists from abroad. Enabling Guinea-Bissau to respond to these threats advances U.S. interests by making the country and region more secure and preventing drug trafficking into the United States or European partner countries.

Poor service delivery, political power struggles, and corruption have eroded Bissau-Guineans' confidence in democracy. However, the country's peaceful handover of power and emergence from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic present new opportunities to engage. The United States can bolster Guinea-Bissau's democracy by helping strengthen its institutions, promote rule of law, encourage transparency, and ensure respect for human rights. Opportunities to make a difference abound at both the national and local levels.

With untapped energy, mining, and tourism resources, Guinea-Bissau has the potential for much greater economic development and international trade. Partnering with the government and people of Guinea-Bissau to create a more favorable investment climate can open up opportunities for U.S. companies and increase private-sector contributions to growth and job creation. This will require addressing the concerns that impede growth and discourage foreign investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, corruption, and lack of transparent decision-making.

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With USG support, Guinea-Bissau has improved its ability to respond to public health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. However, much work remains in the areas of public health and social development. Many young Bissau-Guineans lack access to a quality education and a nutritious diet. American assistance can mean a better future for the country's youth, supporting social stability and paving the way for a closer relationship between our peoples.

Bissau-Guineans aspire to partner with the United States and want to see us more engaged. Although we lack an Embassy in Bissau, the Bissau Liaison Office (BLO) and numerous elements of Mission Dakar are well placed to enhance Mission engagement with the government and people of Guinea-Bissau. Three American staff (one FSO and two EFMs) based in Dakar and 13 local staff based in Bissau conduct all aspects of diplomacy except for visa services.

Coordinating with the Bissau Liaison Office, CDC, DOD, OSC, and USDA each manages programs in Guinea-Bissau from Dakar in support of Mission goals. Moreover, our Public Affairs section informs and educates audiences of our assistance programs, diplomatic engagement, and security cooperation, highlighting how USG activities benefit the people of Guinea-Bissau.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Advance Peace and Security

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Increase Capacity to Counter Transnational Threats
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Advance Regional Security Cooperation and Security Sector Reforms

Mission Goal 2: Strengthen Democratic Governance

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Spread and Support Democratic Norms to Stem Corruption
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Foster Increased Government Transparency

Mission Goal 3: Spur Economic Growth and Development

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Improve Investment Climate
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Improve Public Health
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Improve Youth Education

Management Objective: Establish an Administrative Platform Better Equipped to Support Engagement in Guinea-Bissau

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Advance Peace and Security

Description: This goal reflects the priorities for Africa set forth in the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy, including enhanced border security and the protection of U.S. citizens abroad. In concert with AFRICOM's 2021 Theater Posture Statement and the National Security Strategy's priority actions for Africa, the Mission will seek to combat illicit transnational activities that threaten to disrupt regional security and endanger U.S. interests at home and in West Africa. The Mission will promote cooperation between U.S. and Bissau-Guinean law enforcement authorities, including mutual legal assistance and extraditions, which will increase joint efforts to counter terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and other cross-border criminal matters. We will work with Guinea-Bissau and its regional partners to promote meaningful security sector reforms, combat the scourge of human, drug, and wildlife trafficking, bolster the rule of law, strengthen epidemic and disease preparedness, and build lasting stability in the country and the region.

Objective 1.1: Increase Capacity to Counter Transnational Threats: Guinea-Bissau is an under-governed space open to all types of transnational security threats. Bolstering GoGB governance and capacity will help reduce opportunities for drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, and trade in endangered flora and fauna, and it will mitigate the risk of pandemic disease.

- **Justification:** Guinea-Bissau has undergone cycles of political instability resulting in a deterioration of the government's capacity to enforce its laws. The consequent climate of impunity threatens to undermine any efforts to counter transnational threats in the region. Increasing the capacity of GoGB authorities to control land borders and maritime access will enhance their ability to interdict criminal activities, detect and prevent disease, and collect taxes and duties to fund public investment.
- **Linkages:** Efforts under this objective will advance key goals under interim National Security Strategy pillar 1 (Protect the Security of the American People); the FY 2022-

2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 1 (Renew U.S. Leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being); and the FY 2022-2026 Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 1 (Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and revitalized alliances and partnerships to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy, including through long-term efforts to address immediate causes of violence and build resiliency).

- **Risks:** Failure to mitigate the risks associated with numerous transnational security threats present in Guinea-Bissau jeopardizes America's interests in West Africa. Porous borders and the government's limited commitment to the rule of law contribute to the ongoing challenge of confronting transnational threats, especially narco-trafficking. To mitigate these risks of failure, the Mission will coordinate with law enforcement professionals and military partners throughout the region to improve border security and strengthen GoGB's ability to respond to transnational organized crime.

Objective 1.2: Advance Regional Security Cooperation and Security Sector Reforms

- **Justification:** Guinea-Bissau's inability to control its own borders and maritime space has a negative impact on regional security and increases the difficulty of combatting transnational crime. This weakness also inhibits the government's ability to collect revenues to fund its own operations. Increasing the capacity of the government is key to promoting USG interests in countering transnational criminal activity and creating a climate for sustainable economic development.
- **Linkages:** Efforts under this objective will advance key goals under interim National Security Strategy pillar 1 (Protect the Security of the American People); the FY 2022-2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 1 (Renew U.S. Leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being); and the FY 2022-2026 Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 1 (Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and revitalized alliances and partnerships to address

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challenges in security, stability, and democracy, including through long-term efforts to address immediate causes of violence and build resiliency).

- **Risks:** Failure to foster effective relationships with Bissau-Guinean military and security personnel would likely perpetuate an environment of lawlessness and border insecurity. To mitigate these risks of failure, the Mission will continue to help strengthen Guinea-Bissau's military and security personnel capability by providing ongoing training activities and participating in border security and international crime focused exercises as appropriate.

Mission Goal 2: Strengthen Democratic Governance

Description: This goal reflects the priorities for Africa set forth in the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy. The Mission will work to strengthen democratic values by helping Guinea-Bissau improve its governance and commitment to the rule of law. Through support for democratic norms and reforms aimed at increasing transparency in government, we will reinforce the foundations of the country's nascent democracy.

Objective 2.1: Spread and Support Democratic Norms

- **Justification:** As a result of underlying political conflict and the weakness of the nation's institutions, Guinea-Bissau had never had a president serve an entire term until 2019. While observers deemed recent elections in Guinea-Bissau to be "largely free and fair," post-election formation of a stable, functioning government has proven challenging due to political infighting among a small group of elites. The lack of stability in the political system has led to legislative paralysis and an inability of the government to effectively furnish public services. USG engagement and programming can help the GoGB to strengthen its democratic institutions, while increased engagement with youth can encourage their constructive and active role in shaping the future of Bissau-Guinean democracy.
- **Linkages:** Efforts under this objective will advance key goals under interim National Security Strategy pillar 3 ("Realize and Defend the Democratic Values at the Heart of

the American Way of Life”); the FY 2022-2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 3 (“Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity”); and the FY 2022-2026 Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 3 (“Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to human rights and to generate greater peace and prosperity”). This objective is linked to the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 3 (Increased Government of Senegal Effectiveness and Accountability).

- **Risks:** The fragile political state of Guinea-Bissau makes our programs and engagement vulnerable to disruption due to civil unrest or factional disputes. To mitigate risks associated with fragility within the GoGB, the Mission will continue to support programs and provide focused training on transparency, anti-corruption, and rule of law.

Objective 2.2: Promote Increased Government Transparency

- **Justification:** The climate of impunity in Guinea-Bissau diminishes the incentive of political actors to place the nation’s good ahead of their own. Ensuring transparency and accountability will be a key element of any effort to enable Guinea-Bissau to develop strong institutions. Guinea-Bissau needs stronger law enforcement and greater political will to put an end to malefactors’ sense of impunity.
- **Linkages:** This objective promotes American interests to combat corruption. Efforts under this objective will advance key goals under interim National Security Strategy pillar 3 (“Realize and Defend the Democratic Values at the Heart of the American Way of Life”); the FY 2022-2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Goal 3 (“Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity”); and the FY 2022-2026 Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 3 (“Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to

build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to human rights and to generate greater peace and prosperity”).

- **Risks:** The fragile political state of Guinea-Bissau makes our programs and engagement vulnerable to disruption due to civil unrest or factional disputes. To mitigate risks associated with civil unrest or factional disputes, the Mission will continue to closely monitor the situation in Guinea-Bissau and coordinate with our project managers to take measures necessary to safeguard the operation of our programs.

Mission Goal 3: Spur Economic Growth and Development

Description: This goal comports with the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy, as well as wider U.S. goals with respect to the African continent. Furthermore, this goal facilitates achieving the regional goals of other USG agencies, such as the USTDA and OPIC, and USG-led initiatives such as Prosper Africa and the Young African Leaders Initiative. By encouraging the growth of a positive investment climate and cultivating and safeguarding industrial and human capacity, the Mission will help foster a better climate for economic growth and development in Guinea-Bissau, consistent with U.S. priorities elsewhere in Africa.

Objective 3.1: Improve Investment Climate

- **Justification:** Economic growth and development can create wealth and jobs, thereby alleviating poverty and contributing to social and political stability. Improving the business climate will help attract investment so that the private sector contributes more to economic growth, thus increasing economic prosperity. The oil and gas, phosphates, and internet communications technology (ICT) sectors offer particularly attractive opportunities for foreign investment if the GoGB can ensure a welcoming and predictable business climate.
- **Linkages:** Post’s efforts under this Mission objective will advance key goals under the interim National Security Strategy Pillar 2 (“Expand Economic Prosperity and

Opportunity”); FY 2022-2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2 (“Promote Global Prosperity and Shape an International Environment in which the U.S. Can Thrive”); FY 2022 - 2026 Department of State/USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 2 (“Increase Mutually Beneficial Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment”); and Executive Order 14008 Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. This Mission Objective is linked to the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 1 (Increased Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth).

Activities for this objective are additionally aligned with U.S. Presidential initiatives such as Prosper Africa, Power Africa, the President’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE); directives from Congress on Global Food Security and Nutrition (Feed the Future), Food for Progress, the McGovern-Dole Food for Education, biodiversity, water, sanitation, and hygiene.

- **Risks:** The persistent fragility of Guinea-Bissau’s political situation could preoccupy the government, preventing it from dedicating the attention and effort necessary to promote improvements to the business climate. To mitigate this risk Post will continue to engage with the GoGB and advocate for U.S. investors.

Objective 3.2: Improve Public Health

- **Justification:** Broad USG engagement with public and private stakeholders can strengthen healthcare delivery and the country’s capability to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats. Despite ongoing efforts to improve its health systems, Guinea-Bissau continues to be near the bottom of global health indicator scales. Independent assessments of GoGB capacity to meet International Health Regulations standards for detecting and reporting public health threats reveal weaknesses in the areas of workforce capacity, laboratory capability, and routine surveillance of infectious disease events. Even though the region has largely emerged from the impact of the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic, Guinea-Bissau remains a high-risk country for new outbreaks and cross-border spread of disease. The

weakness of public health systems constrains broader economic growth and development.

- **Linkages:** Post's efforts under this Mission Objective will advance key goals under the 2022-2026 Department of State / USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1 ("Renew U.S. Leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being"), and more specifically, Strategic Objective 2.1 ("Leadership in Strengthening Global Health Security"); the FY 2022-2026 Department of State / USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 4 ("Build Africa's resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development"); and the U.S. interim National Security Strategy (NSS) priorities of promoting health security, and partnering with countries so they can improve the provision of quality basic services to their citizens. This Mission Objective is linked to the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 2 (Improved Human Capital).
- **Risks:** Public health failures make Guinea-Bissau more vulnerable to the spread of numerous diseases, including those associated with global pandemics. Furthermore, limited capacity in the healthcare sector and constant exposure to public health threats may constrain partnership opportunities. To mitigate these risks, the Mission will continue its close collaboration and communication with public health leaders in Guinea-Bissau, especially concerning vaccine-related needs.

Objective 3.3: Improve Youth Education

- **Justification:** Guinea-Bissau is unlikely to reduce poverty substantially without vastly improving education opportunities and outcomes for its population. Nearly half of children aged 6-11 were out of school in 2021 due to strikes in the educational sector as well as school closures related to COVID-19, with students in rural areas and female students being statistically more likely to have spent significant time out of the classroom. Infrastructure is very limited, teachers are often not well-trained, textbooks and other materials are often lacking, and the

entire system is heavily dependent on donor funding. University students and young professionals lack the training needed to become the next generation of leaders. Helping Guinea-Bissau improve the quality of its educational system will support USG goals of promoting economic growth, stability, and security while the Mission promotes American values that are relevant to the needs of Bissau-Guineans.

- **Linkages:** This objective supports the 2022-2026 Department of State / USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1 (“Renew U.S. Leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans’ security and well-being”), and more specifically, Strategic Objective 2.1 (“Leadership in Strengthening Global Health Security”); the FY 2022-2026 Department of State / USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa Goal 4 (“Build Africa’s resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development”); and the U.S. interim National Security Strategy (NSS) priorities of promoting health security, and partnering with countries so they can improve the provision of quality basic services to their citizens. This Mission Objective is linked to the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 2 (Improved Human Capital).
- **Risks:** Limited capacity in the educational system may further constrain Guinea-Bissau’s economic and social development and constrain our partnership opportunities. To mitigate this risk, we will continue to identify and implement programs that address Guinea-Bissau’s educational shortcomings.

4. Management Objective

Management Objective: Establish an Administrative Platform Better Equipped to Support Engagement in Guinea-Bissau

- **Justification:** The Mission's ability to meet its policy objectives depends on a robust and sustainable operational platform serving the interagency. Thus, ensuring appropriate facilities, technologies, resources, and staffing are essential to achieving our objectives. Efforts under this management objective will focus on setting up the Bissau office with the space, staffing, and administrative oversight necessary to accomplish our goals.

Our ability to advance USG interests in Guinea-Bissau is hampered by the lack of a permanent USDH presence in the country. Having adequate physical space to allow for a constructive work environment, accommodate future growth, and enable effective TDY visits not constrained by limited desk space is critical for the USG to be effective in bringing stability, reform, and development to Guinea-Bissau. To this end, the Mission needs improved and expanded office space for the Bissau Liaison Office.

Additionally, the disused former embassy compound is a resource that could support USG engagement if properly secured and developed. Securing the property will, at a minimum, signal to the Bissau-Guinean public that the United States retains possession of its diplomatic compound and its interest in Guinea-Bissau.

Post increased its reporting capability with the addition of a Political EPAP position in September 2019. Due to the tenuous nature of EPAP positions – dependent on availability both of funds and of a qualified EFM to fill the position – Post needs one Portuguese-designated FSO position in Dakar. Post also

requests one LE Staff management assistant position in Bissau. These steps would substantially expand our political and economic engagement efforts.

- **Linkages:** This objective supports U.S. interests as reflected in JRS 2022-2026 for the Bureau of Africa Affairs and the Bureau for Africa Management Objective 1. This objective also supports JSP 2022-2026 Goal 4 to revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions and Strategic Objective 4.3 to enhance workforce performance, leadership, engagement, and accountability to execute our mission efficiently and effectively. Additionally, this objective supports E.O. 13985 Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.
- **Risks:** Failure to implement improvements in our administrative support platform would constrain our ability to accomplish USG goals. To mitigate the risk, we continue to work with Washington to upgrade our facilities and identify the resources necessary to accomplish our objectives.