

Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development in Fragile Regions within ECOWAS - FRSD

Improving living conditions of the population in selected ECOWAS member states

The challenge

The ECOWAS region faces numerous political, socio-economic, security, and environmental challenges threatening peace and social cohesion. The emergence of armed groups, military coups and heightened political tensions in the region have turned the Sahel region into a global hotspot for terrorism. The neighbouring coastal states are experiencing multifaceted spillover-effects.

These factors, coupled with climate change and biodiversity loss, contribute to limited income opportunities and societal instability. Economic relations within the region with the Sahel countries are diminished, reinforcing waves of migration. Addressing these challenges is a top priority for the ECOWAS Commission, not least to create promising prospects for the predominantly young population in ECOWAS Member States.

Our approach

The FRSD addresses these challenges at the civil society level by working closely with at least 15,000 women and youth of the most affected regions. Project activities in The Gambia have successfully been concluded in 2023. Currently, the project is focused on Guinea-Bissau, Benin and Togo. Tailored stabilisation and crisis prevention measures are being developed jointly with the ECOWAS Commission and implemented in rural and remote communities. The FRSD emphasizes a feminist approach in its projects targeting at least 50% women in all activities. The projects are rolled out in three phases:

- I. Immediate action prioritizing livelihoods, especially for the most affected groups like women and youth
- II. Extended implementation to bolster income generation and vocational skills, focusing on micro-entrepreneurship
- III. Promoting social cohesion through sports, arts, and media to facilitate peaceful dialogue and coexistence among communities, thereby fostering overall peace

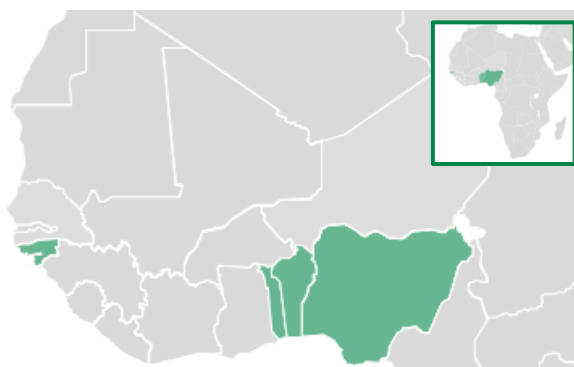
Project name	Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development in Fragile Regions within ECOWAS (FRSD)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	ECOWAS Region – special focus on Benin, The Gambia, Guinea - Bissau, Togo and Nigeria
Political Partner	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission
Executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
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Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau boasts a rich cultural heritage, linguistic diversity, and a history marked by struggles for independence and political stability. The FRSD is currently active in the regions Quinara, Bafata, Bolama and Gabú, diligently working to support stability and development. The project primarily targets groups in vulnerable positions, women and youth, with a focus on Employment Promotion, Climate-Smart Food Systems and Social Cohesion.

In Guinea-Bissau, a group of community facilitators has undergone comprehensive training to be equipped with the necessary skills to support fellow farmers. These selected individuals will act as trainers and advocates for knowledge and development within their respective communities.

Thanks to gender transformative approaches, the project specifically encourages women to take on roles as community facilitators and thus gain responsibility and meaningful influence. Therefore, their life reality as traditional family caregivers had to be considered in the project conception and all training sessions accommodate young children.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



L. to r.: Countries of FRSD implementation: Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Benin and Nigeria (ECOWAS Commission HQs)

Facilitator Aminata Baldé signs a Memorandum of Cooperation with the ECOWAS Commission in Bafata (Guinea-Bissau).



Evelin Ayadi-Krenzer

Head of Programme

Fund for Regional Stabilisation and
Development in Fragile Regions
Within ECOWAS Member States
(FRSD)

*L. to r.: Signing
ceremony of
Memorandums of
Cooperation for
Facilitators in Guinea-
Bissau*

*A market stall with
fresh produce in Togo*

Training sessions in Guinea-Bissau include:

- Human rights and Gender equality
- Income-generating activities
- Peaceful co-existence
- *Media 4 Peace* initiatives
- Climate change adaptation through agroecology approaches

Areas of Focus in Togo include:

- Support to small businesses
- Financial Literacy training for women and youth
- Community-based Peace Dialogues
- Training on Gender and Human Rights
- Assistance for returnees
- Psychosocial support
- *Sport 4 Development* initiatives
- *Media 4 Peace* initiatives

Sport 4 Development: Initiatives aiming to foster a spirit of community teamwork and develop local talent also outside of traditional pathways through sports-related activities and events; the *Sport 4 Development approach* contributes to overall employability through the development of soft skills and is particularly inclusive by encouraging participation of people with disabilities.



Media 4 Peace: Activities to enhance journalists' capacities in reporting in a conflict-sensitive manner on different topics of interest in ECOWAS member states; the expected outcomes are accessible political information and strengthened governance structures through increased visibility of local authorities and the ECOWAS commission.



Benin

Benin is recognized as one of the most stable democracies in West Africa. Nevertheless, effects of violent extremism in the Sahel region and the north of the country are a major handicap to the efforts made in recent years to improve living conditions and social cohesion. With fast-acting stabilisation measures, FRSD is addressing the needs of women, youth, and individuals from affected communities in the Collines, Donga and Atacora regions of Benin.

Areas of Focus in Benin include:

- Vocational training
- Support to small businesses
- Financial literacy for women and youth
- Agro-ecology training
- Introduction of renewable energy systems
- *Sport 4 Development* initiatives
- *Media 4 Peace* initiatives

Togo

A country characterized by a unique fusion of cultures, exceptional cuisine and economic potential, continues to face challenges in key areas such as poverty alleviation and infrastructure development. Economically, Togo relies heavily on agriculture, in different value chains including cocoa, coffee, cotton, and yams. In Togo, FRSD operates particularly in the most vulnerable and rural areas of the country in the regions Kara, Savanes and Centrale.

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ECOWAS COMMISSION
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