

Evaluation summary

Strengthening the financial viability of the National System of Protected Areas in Guinea-Bissau through the operationalization and capitalization of the BioGuinea Foundation and its Trust Fund

Country/Countries: Guinea-Bissau

Topic: Biodiversity

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Key FFEM support data

Project name: Strengthening the financial viability of the National System of Protected Areas in Guinea-Bissau through the operationalization and capitalization of the BioGuinea Foundation and its Trust Fund

Project number: CGW 1019

Amount financed by the FFEM: EUR 1,440,000

Project grant date: February 6, 2017

Duration: 8 years (initially planned: 4 years)



Context

In Guinea-Bissau (West Africa), exceptional terrestrial and marine biodiversity contrasts with rural poverty and a strong dependence of populations on natural resources. Although more than 25% of the territory is classified as protected areas, the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) remains fragile due to unpredictable and fluctuating funding as well as limited institutional capacity.

With support from the FFEM, the project has enabled the BioGuinea Foundation (FBG) to be operationalized and structured as the national conservation trust fund dedicated to the sustainable financing of Guinea-Bissau's SNAP, in coordination with the National Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP).

Participants and operating procedures

Project management was handled by the BioGuinea Foundation (FBG), in close coordination with the relevant national institutions, particularly IBAP enabling the FBG's role as a national mechanism for sustainable conservation financing to be tested and consolidated.

Objectives

Main objective

The project was implemented to support the financial sustainability of Guinea-Bissau's National System of Protected Areas by operationalizing the FBG **conservation trust fund** addressing specific needs identified in the Orango and Urok Marine Protected Areas in the Bijagos archipelago and supporting the testing phase of REDD+ mechanism in the Cacheu and Cantanhez **National Parks**.

Specific objectives

The specific objective of the project was to strengthen the financial sustainability of the country's biodiversity conservation efforts, notably by providing recurring financial resources for the management of the SNAP through:

- The operationalization of the FBG;
- The capitalization of its endowment fund ;
- Structuring the financing scheme for protected areas (funding allocation and monitoring mechanisms, carbon finance pilot).

Performance appraisal

Relevance

The project shows a high level of relevance with regard to FFEM strategic priorities, addressing issues related to financial innovation, the sustainability of conservation mechanisms, and local institutional anchoring. It aligns coherently with national conservation priorities under the SNAP and implemented by IBAP, combining structural support to the FBG with concrete interventions in selected protected areas. Despite an initially ambitious design relative to institutional maturity, the project laid solid foundations for a sustainable conservation financing mechanism in Guinea-Bissau.

Coherence

Project coherence strengthened progressively as the FBG matured. The articulation between internal structuring, coordination with IBAP, and the mobilization of complementary co-financing contributed to enhancing the Foundation's credibility. The early years were nonetheless marked by delays and adjustments linked to still-limited institutional capacities. The FBG-IBAP partnership proved constructive, while now calling for greater clarification of roles and institutional autonomy.

Effectiveness

The project made a significant contribution to strengthening the institutional, financial, and operational capacities of the FBG, which now has functional governance and credible procedures. Support to the REDD+ process constitutes a major achievement, enabling the certification of carbon credits and the generation of revenues, thereby reinforcing the Foundation's credibility. However, the pilot grant mechanism remained largely concentrated on IBAP, limiting the initially intended diversification, while allowing for pragmatic and effective implementation.

Efficiency

Financial and human resources were used in a generally efficient manner, despite administrative delays and budgetary adjustments during implementation. Financial management complied with the transparency and governance standards required by the FFEM. Grants to the Orango and Urok MPAs helped maintain essential conservation and local development activities. The experience nevertheless highlighted the need to strengthen joint financial planning between the FBG and IBAP, as well as performance indicators.

Impact

The project had a significant institutional and strategic impact by positioning the FBG as a recognized actor in sustainable conservation financing in Guinea-Bissau. FFEM support played a catalytic role in attracting new partners and supporting innovative mechanisms, notably carbon finance. Environmental and socio-economic impacts observed in the targeted MPAs were positive but localized, with their scaling-up remaining conditional on the financial and institutional stability of implementation arrangements.

Viability/Sustainability

The sustainability of results relies primarily on the operationalization of the FBG as a national conservation financing mechanism. While institutional and financial foundations are in place, the Foundation remains in a consolidation phase, particularly due to still-insufficient capitalization. The durability of achievements will depend on the diversification of funding sources, team stabilization, and the formalization of relations with IBAP and other partners.

Added value of FFEM support

FFEM support stood out for its structuring and innovative character, combining institutional strengthening, financial capitalization, and technical assistance. The project enabled the testing of financial tools such as the endowment fund, grant mechanisms, and carbon finance. Although some innovations were only partially implemented, they consolidated a base of good practices and demonstrated the FBG's capacity to manage a range of financial instruments.

Recommendations & learnings

The main recommendations are described below:

Recommendations addressed to the BioGuiné Foundation (FBG):

Recommendation 1: Finalize the consolidation of FBG's management and operational tools and mechanisms.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen FBG's institutional and strategic autonomy.

Recommendation 3: Establish strategic and predictable budget planning.

Recommendation 4: Develop a sustainable and targeted resource mobilization strategy, making capitalization of the endowment fund the central financing priority.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen external communication and strategic capitalization.

Recommendation 6: Ensure controlled growth aligned with strategic priorities.

Recommendations addressed to IBAP:

Recommendation 7: Plan recurring financial needs that could be financed by the FBG.

Recommendation 8: Jointly strengthen IBAP's capacity to manage and monitor FBG funding.

Recommendations addressed to the FFEM:

Recommendation 9: Support a new strategic phase focused on consolidating FBG's role as a national conservation trust fund and strengthening SNAP's ecological connectivity.