

functioning of the ANP and improving CSOs access thereto. The third component will work with election management bodies and CSOs aiming at enhancing the inclusivity, legitimacy and transparency of electoral processes, including local elections, if held during the implementation period.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The Action shall be carried out in Guinea-Bissau, included in the list of ODA recipients.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Guinea-Bissau counts a population of over 2 million,² composed of various ethnic groups each with their own linguistic, cultural and religious identity. While this diversity is a strength, it can also be exploited for electoral purposes by politicised ethnic hate speech. With an undiversified *cajú*-based economy, the country faces significant challenges to create formal employment and generate better living standards for its population. It is also confronted with major issues in terms of inequality, maternal and child mortality, climate vulnerability, social cohesion, resource allocation, and improving public services. Meanwhile, Guinea Bissau's national governance paralysis is stifling internal and external investment critical for sustainable socio-economic growth and inclusive human development. This trajectory undermines the enabling environment of good governance envisioned by the EU Global Gateway.

Guinea-Bissau ranks 179th of 193 in the Human Development Index (HDI 2024, UNDP) and 192nd of 209 in terms of government effectiveness (WGI 2021, World Bank). The private sector is embryonic and intertwined with political interests, and the country ranked 174th (out of 190) in the 2019 World Bank's Doing Business index. Transparency International's corruption perception index places Guinea Bissau as one of the most corrupt in the world, with a score of 21 points out of 100. In terms of human rights and specifically women and girls' rights, although Guinea-Bissau has demonstrated commitment to promoting women's empowerment with a number of recent legislation, gender inequality persists at all levels of society, including the executive, legislative and judicial spheres³. In this context, the EU's Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025) and respective Country Level Implementation Plan for Guinea-Bissau (CLIP) aim at promoting and fostering gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) considering the challenges at national level, following a human rights-based approach. A number of 11,584 people are estimated to live with disabilities in all regions of the country⁴.

Guinea-Bissau's 1996 Constitution introduces multi-party democracy within a semi-presidential political system with government being accountable more to ANP than to the directly elected President. The 1996 Constitution's fluid delimitation between presidential and parliamentary powers, however, did not anticipate the eventuality of divided government (*co-habitation*), which has persisted in since 2019. Recent attempts by the ANP to amend the Constitution to more clearly delimit legislative and executive powers in its favour have led to an institutional stand-off between the head-of-state and the Parliament-controlled government, culminating in the two-time dissolution of the ANP in the course of a year. The Constitution itself lacks an enforceable timeframe for holding fresh parliamentary elections in the event of the ANP's dissolution, even if underlying legislation does.

Radio and social media reach the widest target populations (especially youth) for civic education, but are not yet leveraged by CSOs and do not yet engage their audiences in the constitutional debate. When in session, the ANP is made up of 102 members, directly elected for four-year terms in multi-member constituencies in a proportional list system. Because of the low number of seats in each district and the weak penalties against breach of the 36 percent gender quota, only 10 women (9,8 percent) were elected to the ANP in 2023, fewer than in 2019 (14) and far below Guinea Bissau's regional lusophone peers. Among the 10 ANP women members, only three were seated on standing committees, and none on the powerful First Committee. Guinea Bissau's multi-member constituencies also dilute geographic accountability of ANP members.

Following the ANP's first recent dissolution in 2022, delayed snap elections took place on 4 June 2023 in a remarkably peaceful atmosphere. The transparency of the elections was recognised by international observation

² Extrapolated on the basis of its last census from 2009

³ Gender Action Plan III- 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan- CLIP Guinea-Bissau

⁴ [Launch of database of persons with disabilities in Guinea-Bissau | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)