



Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development in Fragile Regions within ECOWAS

Improving the economic and social living conditions of the population in selected ECOWAS member states for sustainable development.

The Challenges

The ECOWAS region faces many political, socio-economic, security and environmental challenges as a result of high unemployment and the frequency of natural disasters and security related problems in its Member States. In the majority of ECOWAS Member States, the population remains predominantly young. The ECOWAS Commission is committed to addressing these challenges through the technical and financial assistance of the Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development (FRSD) in Fragile Regions within ECOWAS - which is an instrument aimed at preventing and managing the consequences of socio-economic crises through the implementation of tailor-made measures in fragile areas for sustainable development.

Solutions approach

Strengthening ECOWAS in its own institutional and organizational capacities is an elementary component of the FRSD. The project is facilitating the establishment of a financing mechanism as a sustainable, rapid, effective, and efficient tool to prevent and manage socio-economic crises in ECOWAS Member States. This includes strengthening the organizational and institutional capacities of at ECOWAS member states level and local NGOs as well as implementing sustainable development projects in fragile regions in Member States.

The pilot project in The Gambia commenced in 2019 and has since helped to improve skills and income generation among young people. Our key focus areas are in the fields of Agro Skills Development, Micro Finance, Business Development and Youth Empowerment and Migration.

The Gambia Pilot project has successfully carried out skills development activities in horticulture, livestock, and fisheries value chains. Courtesy of the project's intervention, the target groups, who are particularly victims of conflicts and socio-economic crises, are benefitting from micro-projects implemented in the fragile regions of Togo, Benin and Guinea Bissau through local NGOs that are selected based on transparency and good governance criteria.



Project Title	Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development in Fragile Regions within ECOWAS (FRSD)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Executing Agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
Project Area	The ECOWAS Zone comprising the 15 Member States
Political Partner	ECOWAS Commission
Overall duration	01.03.2022 - 31.12.2025
Financial Volume	EUR 25.2 million

With a joint political steering structure comprising the ECOWAS Commission and BMZ, the ECOWAS Stabilization Fund Project has two funding windows for financial cooperation and technical cooperation actions and puts multi-stakeholder and partner-oriented approach into practice. Furthermore, tailor-made actions to improve the employment and income situation of young people and women to strengthen social cohesion in The Gambia, Benin, Togo and Guinea Bissau are being identified in collaboration with partners based on an ongoing needs-based assessment of the target groups.

Sustainable development in fragile areas

Through the FRSD pilot programme, over 6,000 young people were supported, to improve access to employment, 71% of which are women. Trainings were offered in horticulture, fisheries, and poultry farming value chains and over 2,000 beneficiaries were reached. FRSD strengthened the financial services sector through five expert forums on inclusive financing of agri-food microenterprises, the distribution of 569 business start-up kits and the support of more than 200 growth-oriented SMEs, 41% of which are women and capacity building was offered to over 1,200 farmers on Farmer Business School methodology.

Implemented by





Ebrima Minteh received poultry starter kits from FRSD's Micro Enterprise Startup Support Initiative (MESSI) Mini Grant Scheme in 2022. He has since grown his business and houses between 400 to 500 birds in his poultry farm. © GIZ

Mrs Evelin Ayadi-Krenzer
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The availability of psycho-social services for returnees is also part of the pilot project. Synergies are established with the support of KfW for the integration of target groups that have benefited from development programmes in three regions of the country. All these measures of the programme have contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the target group in The Gambia.

In Togo, Benin and Guinea Bissau, the project supports vocational training in the fields of agriculture, agri-processing and food security. However, in Guinea Bissau, the project goes a step further to also support in fishery activities.

Support to the ECOWAS Commission

To enable ECOWAS to efficiently address the stabilization and development of fragile areas in its Member States and to ensure the sustainability of the Stabilization Fund, the Project supports the ECOWAS Commission through capacity building at the organisational and institutional levels. This includes staff training, technical assistance, logistical support and transparent management of the fund. The concrete activities on ground are set and piloted jointly with all partners.

Concrete results and achievements

Our results and achievements for the pilot project in The Gambia focused on agricultural skills development, microfinance, youth empowerment and migration.

Some of the key achievements include:

- 1,383 young people (including migrant returnees) have been reached through networking, dialogue and information systems on migration and sustainable integration.

- 842 entrepreneurs received business starter kits for use in poultry, fish processing and agro-processing/micro-enterprises.
- Introduction of the innovative Nopale Fish Smoking Stoves in Greater Banjul Area and Upper River Region (URR) to at least 6 women groups consisting of over 120 members the regions.
- 12 user-friendly training curricula and manuals based on the three value chains have been developed and disseminated. These manuals were carefully designed and adapted to fit the literacy levels of our target audience.
- 30 government personnel including, security personnel, health and social workers trained on Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MPHSS)
- 150 migrants have been trained on MPHSS in each region (LRR, URR and GBA).
- 745 trained on life skills both in and out-of-school youths
- 32 Trainers and coaches are now qualified in the SME Loop methodology.



A trainee demonstrates how to use a new fish smoking facility at the Brufut Fish Landing Site, The Gambia. © GIZ

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