



## FOSTERING FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE IN GUINEA-BISSAU - BLUE CARBON

### The context

. Guinea Bissau is a Small Island State (SIS) and Least Developed Country (LDC) in West Africa with globally relevant coastal and marine ecosystems;

. In spite of its small extent, the country includes the second largest area of mangroves in West Africa, which covers about 10% of the national territory;

. Mangroves constitute a natural buffer against extreme weather and sea level rise, while providing ecosystem services and subsistence to local communities;

. The coastal zone is part of the Biosphere Reserve and it functions as a regionally important breeding and nursery zone for fish and crustaceans, also including the most important turtle spawning site in Africa and the second most important wintering ground for Palearctic shorebirds in West Africa;

. Growing anthropogenic pressure on coastal and marine resources is a primary cause of biodiversity loss in the country. The population is increasing sharply and approximately 80% is concentrated in the coastal zone where most economic activity occurs;

. Economic growth and livelihoods in Guinea-Bissau rely almost exclusively on natural resources and agriculture: the sale of cashew nuts and fisheries licenses are currently the country's two highest income earners and represent two-thirds of the GDP and 90% of the country's exports;

. Subsistence agriculture, cashew plantations, rice production, artisanal fishing, and the extraction of fuelwood for charcoal production or smoking of fish are major threats to biodiversity;

. Despite extreme poverty, official institutions and local communities have been pushing the advancement of the climate change mitigation and adaptation agendas.

### The history of an unlikely success

. From 2005 to 2011, the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the European Commission (EC), among others, provided support to the Government of Guinea Bissau to protect large areas of mangroves and other coastal forests.

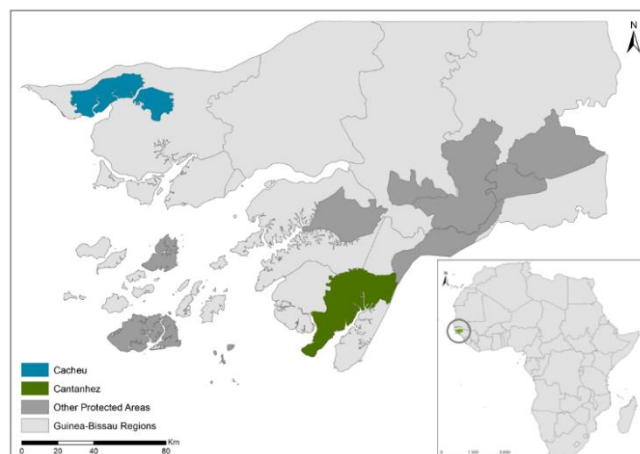


Figure 1 - Guinea-Bissau location, SNAP (~26% of the national territory) and Project location (Cantanhez and Cacheu).

. These efforts led to the creation of IBAP and to the establishment of the protected area network (SNAP), which is now managed by IBAP. However, and even though IBAP has been pioneering biodiversity conservation with social and environmental benefits, its long-term sustainability rests on the ability to secure steady financial streams;

. In this context, a pilot blue carbon project was initiated in 2011 for the Cacheu (PNTC) and Cantanhez (PNC) National Parks with the objective of obtaining carbon revenues;



### ... and against all odds:

| Guinea-Bissau deepened its national involvement with the UNFCCC climate agreements and with UN-REDD since 2010 and the blue carbon project was successfully validated in 2015;

| The conservation activities implemented during the last five years cut the baseline deforestation by half;

| Led by IBAP, Guinea-Bissau will submit a Forest Reference Emissions Level (FREL) to the UNFCCC in January 2019.

## CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN THE PROJECT AREA

IBAP implemented a series of specific conservation measures in PNTC and PNC. These measures avoided losing forest area between 2011 and 2016:

. In 2012 the Bioguinean Foundation was formally established. Additionally, the first Park Management Council and the first Agricultural Community Council meetings took place in PNTC. The main goal was to improve traditional fishing and rice cultivation practices, while reducing the negative impacts of slash-and-burn. Control and surveillance activities were also kicked off then.

. In 2013 electrical fences were installed to reduce conflicts with hippopotamus (which were invading rice fields) and a community radio was started in PNTC. Furthermore, IBAP provided support to 60 fisherwomen to share best practices on sustainable fishing, hygiene and fish preparation. In PNC, a Director was appointed, and local level activities were started. Additionally, capacity building was delivered to the Park Rangers of both parks, with an initial group of 34 rangers, followed by a series of training workshops for Reforestation Agents. Advanced training was then provided in GIS and Forest Inventory to the technical staff of IBAP.

. In 2014, IBAP's Strategic Planning was updated (2014-2020) and local communities were further involved in reforestation and coastal monitoring activities, with Park Rangers and active patrolling being effective in discouraging impactful activities and yielding impressive results. Two community meetings were organized in each park leading to the creation of a Central Oversight Unit and to a draft of the Internal Regulation of PNC. Finally, additional area was electrically fenced to protect the production of 1,000 tons of rice.

. 2015 started with PNTC reaching **RAMSAR site status** on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and closed with the pilot blue carbon project validated using the Verified Carbon Standard (*verra.org*).

## THE BLUE CARBON PILOT PROJECT | CBADP

### The objectives

- . Promote forest and biodiversity conservation in a high deforestation risk region, but where well preserved and significant forest patches still remain;
- . Contribute to sustain soil fertility, agricultural productivity, food security, and the livelihoods of local populations;
- . Involve the main land use drivers in conservation activities that facilitate financial flows with positive feedbacks;
- . Contribute to fulfill national development strategies that mainstream climate change into policy, while supporting the nation's international commitments to the UNFCCC.

### Positive Impacts

In addition to the protection of the CITES listed *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, the reduction in deforestation contributes to maintain habitats of great ecological importance: e.g. those of five of the seven existing species of sea turtles; and those of *Crocodylus niloticus*; *Hippopotamus amphibious*; and *Pan troglodytes verus*.

Reduction of deforestation also contributes to sustain the supply of a range of essential services and goods for local communities. For example, in maintaining the production of oysters, crabs, shellfish or a steady supply of fuelwood.

### Project Parameters

**Project Area (PA):**  
181,200 ha

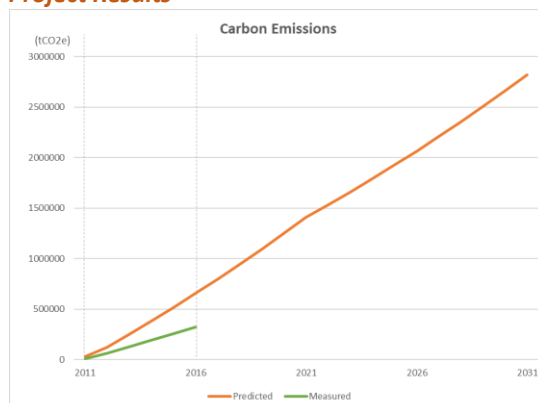
**Sectoral scope:**  
Scope 14: AFOLU

**Project type:**  
AUDD

**Baseline period:**  
March 2002 – April 2011

**Crediting period:**  
March 2011 – February 2031

### Project Results



### Deforestation Rate (2011-2016):

Reduce from 0,9% (baseline) to 0,4%

### Tons of Carbon per Stratum:

Terrestrial Forest – 190 tCO<sub>2</sub>/ha  
Mangrove – 180 tCO<sub>2</sub>/ha

### Credits:

302 043 VCUs (2011-2016), around de \$1 510 215

### Participatory Rural Appraisal:

Forest degradation by fuelwood collection is residual - less than 10% of the sample

### On-the-job capacity building:

14 Park Rangers received capacity building and participated in the fieldwork

### Project Status

The monitoring report is complete; the respective verification is almost finished; inclusion of the project in the VCS Program Project Database is on-going; registration of the project in a VCS Registry Operators will take place in early 2020.