

EU Support to ECOWAS in Peace, Security, and Governance (EPSG)

Strengthening the peace and security architecture at regional and national level to create a more secure, democratic, and resilient West Africa

The challenge

Political transitions, governance changes, insurgencies, and violent extremism continue to reshape West Africa's peace and security landscape. Since 2021, several countries in the region have experienced military-led changes in leadership, reflecting broader governance shifts. These developments have influenced constitutional processes, governance structures, and regional cooperation efforts.

At the same time, the expansion of violent extremism from the Sahel into coastal states—including Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana—presents a growing security concern. Additionally, disinformation and organized crime contribute to instability, posing risks to democratic governance and social cohesion.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) plays a critical role in coordinating regional responses to security challenges through its strategic frameworks for peace and development. These include long-standing conflict prevention and governance approaches alongside newer regional strategies addressing climate adaptation, resilience, and economic integration—recognizing the interconnections between security, governance, and broader regional dynamics. Strengthening coordination, fostering inclusive engagement—including with civil society—and promoting adaptive and preventive approaches remain key to achieving lasting peace and sustainable development.

Our approach

The EU- and BMZ- co-financed EPSG project provides technical and financial support to ECOWAS for the strengthening of regional peace, security, and democratic governance. The project builds on the achievements and lessons learned of the predecessor "ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations" (EPSAO) project.

The project is active in **five key focus** areas:

Project name	EU Support to ECOWAS in Peace, Security, and Governance (EPSG)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Funded by	European Union (EU) and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Expertise France and Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas (FIAP)
Project region	ECOWAS Member States
Political partner	ECOWAS Commission
Duration	12/2024 - 12/2027
Financial volume	EU 13 Million Euros (Co-Financing) BMZ 11 Million Euros (Co-Financing) BMZ 3.25 Million Euros (Stand-Alone)

1. Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management

EPSG enhances ECOWAS' ability to detect and respond to conflicts by strengthening National Centres for Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRMs) and other National Peace Infrastructures (NPIs). It also supports the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate (EWD) in improving data collection, analysis, and reporting within the ECOWARN system. Additionally, the project reinforces ECOWAS' capacity to initiate timely interventions through the Early Response Mechanism (ERM).

2. Security Sector Governance and Human Rights

To strengthen accountable and citizen-focused security institutions, EPSG supports security sector reform through:

- Training and advisory services for security actors, parliamentary committees, and civil society organizations
- Strengthening democratic oversight to improve governance and transparency



Photo left and middle: Student Sensitization Workshop on Political Participation in Freetown, Sierra Leone

Photos right: Results from Digital Conflict Transformation Peer Learning Exchange in Abuja, Nigeria



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Photo left: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
Photo right: BRIDGE Training on Voter Information, Education & Election Observation for Civil Society Participation and Political Parties in Monrovia, Liberia

- Promoting human rights, addressing gender-based violence, and increasing the representation of women in security roles.

3. Electoral Support and Democratic Transitions

Amid political transitions and the risk of election-related violence, EPSG supports ECOWAS member states to conduct peaceful and credible elections by:

- Supporting Election Management Bodies (EMBs) to address gaps from past elections and facilitating training and peer-learning initiatives coordinated by the ECOWAS Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) and the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC)
- Implementing recommendations from ECOWAS election observation missions.
- Engaging civil society and the media to counter disinformation and prevent electoral violence.
- Supporting transition of member states back to a constitutional order.

4. Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agendas

Recognizing the crucial role of women and youth in peacebuilding, EPSG supports the implementation of ECOWAS' WPS and YPS agendas. EPSG:

- Supports women and youth networks like the Network on Peace and Security for Women in West Africa (NOPSWECA) to enhance their involvement in peace processes.
- Provides training and advocacy to increase women and youth participation in governance and conflict mediation.

5. Strengthening ECOWAS Peace and Security Training Institutions

Funded exclusively by BMZ, this component enhances capacities of and cooperation between regional training centres of excellence in the region such as the Kofi Annan

International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana and the National Defense College (NDC) in Nigeria.

The component focuses support on:

- Developing and implementing trainings, dialogues and research relating to ECOWAS policy areas such as early warning, security sector governance or women, youth, peace and security
- Strengthening capacities of training centres through digital skills development and other capacity development measures

It will also provide targeted support to the development and implementation of policy for ECOWAS Peace Support Operations, namely the Compliance and Accountability Framework and the Gender Policy.

Project impact

The EPSG project supports ECOWAS in addressing security and governance challenges in West Africa by enhancing early conflict detection, security sector reform, electoral support, and inclusive peace processes. Through these efforts, the project contributes to a more stable, democratic, and resilient region.

Partners

EPSG will work closely with a variety of regional and national stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive approach to peace and security. The principal political partner is the ECOWAS Commission, particularly the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), the Human Development and Social Affairs (HDSA) Department, and the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate (EWD).

Implemented by



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