

## **Concept Note**

### **ECOWAS Peace, Security and Governance Project Output 5:**

**“The regional training infrastructure cooperates more effectively in the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the EPSA”**

**Stand-alone component commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development**

#### **1. Positioning the output in the German cooperation context**

Output 5 contributes to the Africa Strategy of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) "Shaping the Future with Africa" (2023) which reaffirms the importance of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and highlights the areas of early warning, peace mediation and preventive diplomacy, as well as the role of regional Training Centres of Excellence such as the National Defence College (NDC), Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) and the Ecole de Maintien de Paix Alioune Blondin Beye (EMPABB). The project further contributes to the implementation of the German Action Plan on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (2021-2024), the “Feminist Development Policy” and the initiative theme "Digitalisation and Data". It also comes in the context of the BMZ's Sahel Plus Initiative which seeks to prevent the spill-over of violent extremism into coastal states, namely Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin.

The Output is part of the German Government's wider support for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA). This includes or has included complementary support by the German Federal Foreign Office and Ministry of Defense to the development of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) through military and/or police advisors as well as through training at the NDC, KA IPTC and EMPABB. Other regional training institutions such as the CPADD and ESSAL contribute to identifying relevant and specialized training for the ESF and were supported in the first phase of the EPSAO project.

#### **2. Analysis of challenges and potentials**

The political stability of West Africa, especially the Sahel zone, is affected by violent extremism and democratic backslides, which threaten political stability and peace throughout West Africa and pose major challenges for ECOWAS. EPSG has as its objective to strengthen the implementation of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture (EPSA) at regional and national levels.

To achieve this objective, ECOWAS can rely on competent regional Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs), which contribute to training for the ESF as well as strengthen ECOWAS capacities and support policy dialogue in other thematic areas. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed

the need to further enhance their level of digitalisation. TCEscan also contribute to preventing the spill-over of violent extremism and instability from the Sahel into coastal states by connecting regional, national and local stakeholders, as well as security sector and civilian actors, through training and other formats (policy dialogues etc.). They offer a range of relevant expertise, including on the prevention and countering violent extremism, Security Sector Management, IEDs, psycho trauma, health epidemic, women leadership, SGBV prevention & referral, youth, peace & security, mediation and rule of law related issues.

### **3. Objectives, results hypothesis, indicators and partners for the module**

**Module Objective:** The implementation of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture (EPSA) has been strengthened at the regional and national level.

**Output 5: The regional training infrastructure cooperates more effectively, regarding the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the EPSA.**

#### **Indicators:**

Outcome indicator: ECOWAS has confirmed that the TCEs have reached 4 milestones for jointly defined and monitored objectives contributing towards a strengthened EPSA.

Output Indicator 5.1: 7 new or revised trainings based on a joint capacity needs assessment (CNA) for the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture conducted by Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs) and the ECOWAS Department for Political Affairs, Peace & Security (PAPS), have been piloted. Two of the 7 trainings should be relevant for Sahel Plus priorities.

Output Indicator 5.2: 7 digitalisation projects have been implemented by TCEs aligned with their institutional development plans (Baseline: 4 digitalisation projects supported under EPSAO I).

#### **Target groups:**

The target group in the broader sense is the population of the ECOWAS states, which benefits from the implementation of the EPSA through conflict reduction, increased security and democratic governance based on the rule of law. A focus lies on transition countries and the population and conflict prevention stakeholders in the North of the four Sahel Plus priority states (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin). A specific target group is women and youth. Security sector actors and members of parliamentary committees on security and human rights commissions are also target groups for capacity-building measures.

Intermediaries are relevant departments and institutions of the ECOWAS Commission and the regional training centres.

#### **Impact assumptions:**

The regional training centres fulfil important functions for the qualification, counselling and networking of experts and stakeholders in the policy areas of EPSA. Output 5 aims at closer cooperation between the TCEs and at an even more effective alignment with ECOWAS priorities. Output 5 is aligned with Outputs 1-4 in terms of the focus of its support on areas of the EPSA. Additionally, Output 5 will provide targeted support to the development of civilian-focused and/or

multidimensional training for the ESF on Compliance and Accountability Framework as well as Gender and PSOs Policy, building on the previous cooperation under EPSAO Output 1.

The central impact assumption is that in accordance with a jointly prepared ECOWAS needs analysis, trained professionals contribute to the increased success of EPSA at the regional and national levels. In the past, the TCEs supported by GIZ and other partners, have already successfully prepared course participants for assignments in peace and security governance, election observation missions and have contributed to building networks, advancing policy debate and promoting multidimensional approaches to security challenges, so that extensive experience (also based on evaluations) are available. Additional or adapted training courses and harmonised methodologies (e.g., through e-learning) will further increase the benefits for EPSA implementation, assuming that course participants use the competences they have learned in EPSA-relevant tasks. For the implementation of the Sahel Plus funds, an additional impact assumption is that the TCEs can contribute to increased collaboration among early warning and -response actors from the regional, national and sub-national/local levels through trainings and dialogue formats.

The **political executing agency** and, at the same time, the most important **implementing partner** is the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The **institutions of the downstream partner structure** include the centres of excellence KAIPTC in Ghana, EMP in Mali and the National Defence College (NDC) in Nigeria and (to a lesser extent) other training institutes. The TCEs have good expertise and extensive experience but need support in building sustainable structures.

## 5. Design of the module

**Duration:** From 11/ 2024 to 12/2027 (3 years)

**Budget:** ca. 3.2 Mio EUR (to be confirmed)

### Strategy:

The project pursues a multi-level and multi-actor approach, with the focus shifting even more towards supporting the implementation of EPSA in selected Member States. The focus is on accompanying the structures supported during or before the term of EPSAO. This is in line with ECOWAS' official strategy of increasing its visibility and appreciation through locally visible structures and activities. Enhancing the capacities of the ECOWAS Commission also remains necessary, in particular in the areas of policy development, strategy and planning processes as well as with respect to monitoring. The implementation experiences at the national level also serve as learning processes for the further development of policies. An emphasis lies on strengthening cooperation between the regional and national levels (e.g. between ECOWAS Commission and TCEs), as well as among the regional stakeholders (e.g. TCEs among themselves). Through the incorporation of Sahel Plus funding, this focus may be widened to include stakeholders at local level in some of the coastal states.

### Instrument use:

Output 5 concerns the strengthening of the contributions made jointly by the TCEs to the implementation of EPSA. In this context, EPSG builds on the longstanding experience of supporting the TCEs in the course of which training measures for the AU and the ESF, were developed and implemented. Training for other EPSA-relevant topics, such as (security) leadership, security sector reform, election observation and conflict mediation will be promoted more intensively, as well as the networking capacities of the TCEs, including in the areas of policy development and research.

A Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) conducted jointly by the ECOWAS Commission and the TCEs defines the current needs. On this basis and considering the priorities of the Sahel Plus Initiative where appropriate, new training curricula are developed, or existing curricula are adapted, and research, networking and policy development processes are conceptualised. In close cooperation with the relevant gender units of the TCEs and ECOWAS Commission both the needs assessment and the implementation measures are designed in a gender-sensitive way. Policy development processes may be supported at the regional level, including for the ESF Compliance Framework and Gender- and PSOs Policy, as well as at the national levels. .

Institutionally, the TCEs are promoted - in addition to training in leadership and management - primarily through the expansion of digital capacities. This can involve the expansion of e-learning and/or digital capacities used for management and monitoring.

The location of the experts (2 national experts, 1 part-time regional expert) deployed for Output 5 is KAIPTC in Ghana. An additional part-time regional experts will support the implementation with the NDC and other TCEs to align with priorities and policy development processes of the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria.

Outputs	Essential activities	Timeframe/ Milestones	Instruments used
Output 5	<p>Support implementation of joint CNA</p> <p>Development of training curricula and implementation of trainings</p> <p>Digital skills development</p> <p>Trainings and dialogue formats connecting stakeholders from the regional, national and sub-national levels (Sahel Plus).</p> <p>Support to regional and national policy frameworks</p>	<p>06/2025: CNA report available</p> <p>12/ 2025: Planning of digital projects completed</p> <p>03/ 2026 EPSA stakeholder networking event held</p> <p>06/2026 ESF Policy validated</p>	<p>International, national and regional long-term experts, short-term experts, financing, limited procurement of materials for digitalisation</p>