DCAF final project evaluation:

Strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of The Gambia immigration department

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DCAF 25 YEARS

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DLEAG	Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia
FGD	Focus group discussion
GAF	Gambian Armed Forces
GBA	Greater Banjul Area
GIC	Gambia Immigration Council
GID	Gambia Immigration Department
GIS	Gambia Immigration Service
GPF	Gambia Police Force
HRPSU	Human Rights and Professional Standards Unit
IBM	Integrated Border Management
KII	Key informant interview
LGA	Local Government Area
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NSA	National Security Adviser
NSP	National Security Policy
NSS	National Security Strategy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office of National Security
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SCDS	Standing Committee on Defence and Security
TOT	Training of trainers
TRRC	Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
TWG	Technical Working Group

Executive summary

This summative final evaluation focuses on assessing how and to what extent DCAFs intervention to support The Gambia's Immigration Department (GID) improved existing legal frameworks, developed and enhanced internal GID structures to improve professionalism and accountability, and strengthened individual officer capacity to implement these. In doing so it seeks to assess the extent to which these contributed to the overall objective of GID being more effective at ensuring human security at individual and community levels, with due regard to international human rights standards, including gender equality.

To gather insights and information to inform the evaluation, extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection was undertaken. This included a desk-based review of relevant project documentation, internal and donor reports and monitoring data produced by the project's activities; a 1,200 person nationwide population-based survey; insights from community level respondents gathered during guided focus group discussions; a perception survey of GID staff that had participated in at least one project training or activity; and key informant interviews with GID officials, project staff, oversight institution representatives and civil society partners.

As a key result, this evaluation found that 57% of respondents to the 2024 population survey ranked the effectiveness of GID as either excellent or good, with just 11% scoring it as poor. This marks a 12-percentage point increase from the data collected in 2023 and a 17-percentage point increase compared to the 2019 baseline, demonstrating that the effectiveness of GID is perceived by the population to be improving significantly and was above the stated target of a 15% increase laid out in the project's log frame. Furthermore 51% of respondents ranked the transparency of GID as either excellent or good, the same percentage also did the same when asked about their accountability and fairness, an increase of 14 and 12 percentage points on 2019 data.

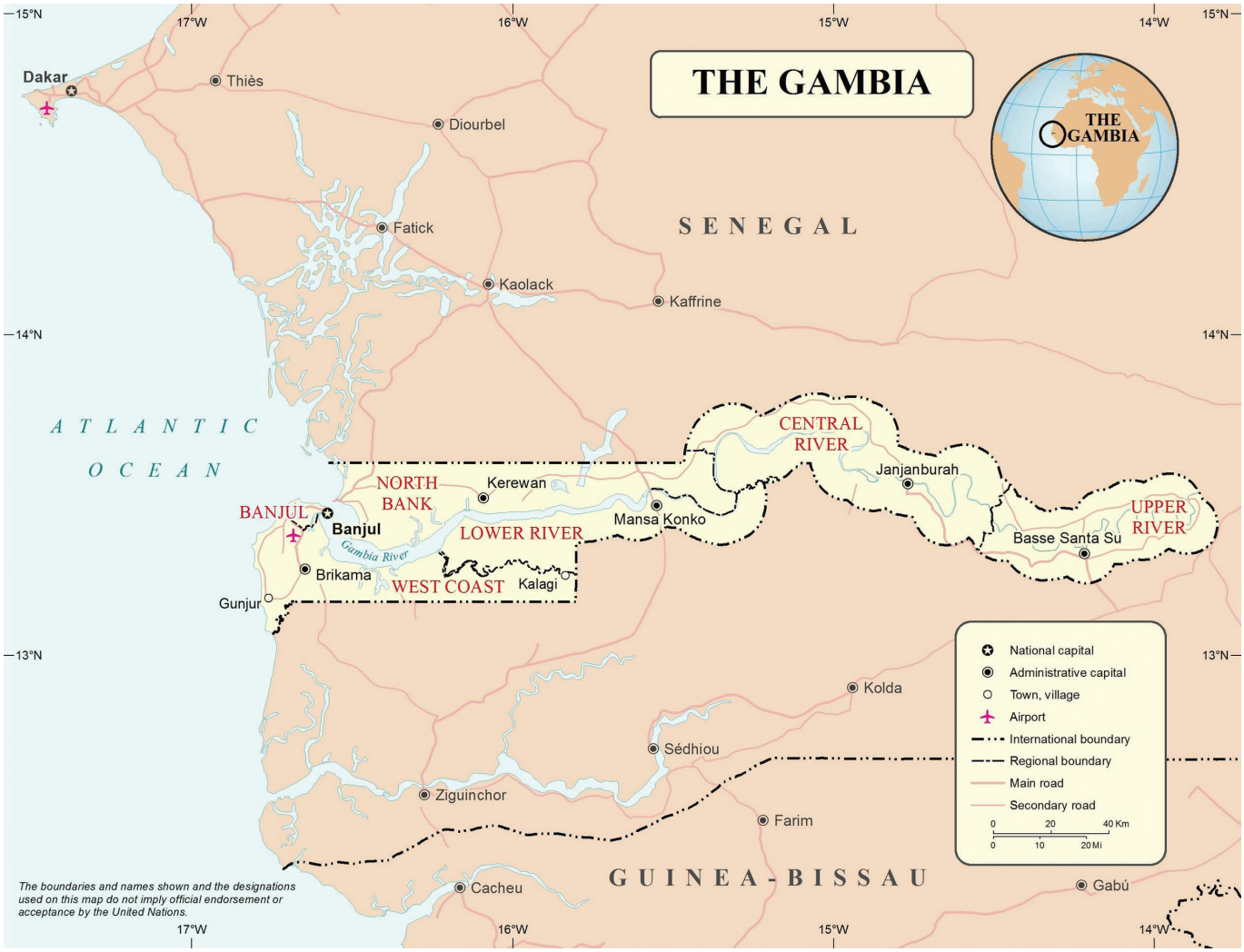
These quantitative findings are supported by the qualitative data collected under six key headings – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – which illustrates the extent to which the project was not only able to deliver the outputs targeted, but that the delivery of those outputs translated, for the most part, into the achievement of project outcomes.

The application of a more coordinated and collaborative approach to border security has been achieved through the use of an Integrated Border Management framework which was developed and tested using a multi-sectoral approach. Notable progress was also made in bridging the gap between the development of professional standards, GID officers' knowledge about them and their effective implementation. This, combined with the commitment to create an external oversight body as part of the legislative overhaul are contributing to efforts to embed human rights and gender norms within GID. Finally, progress made on gender, reflected in the adoption of 34% of gender mainstreaming recommendations - 9% above the 25% targeted – has been significant, with a five-fold increase in the numbers of female officers holding senior positions in the institution (from 4% to 21%) and general perceptions among rank-and-file female officers that senior leadership are increasingly becoming advocates for them.

This has been one of the key impacts of the intervention to date, with the evaluation also keen to highlight the role it has played in strengthening internal capacity of GID to improve professionalism and how that is translating into improved efficiency of the organisation and reduced absenteeism. Another critical impact has been in the way the interventions have brought together key stakeholders from across the security sector – and even those who work on the oversight side – in the development of frameworks and regulations that are applicable in the Gambian context, and responsive to prevailing needs.

The relevance and coherence of the intervention has been particularly commendable. DCAF has been involved in The Gambia's security sector reform process since 2017, and this understanding of the needs and reform landscape meant that it was well placed to ensure that the intervention was designed to align with institutional and internal priorities and not to overlap or impinge on the work being supported by other development partners. Its focus on efforts to update the legal framework that underpins the work of the GID was highly relevant as it is widely agreed that existing immigration legislation and accompanying regulations and standards, which dates back to 1965, is increasingly obsolete for dealing with the challenges – such as illegal migration - facing The Gambia. But beyond the focus of the intervention, the approach used was also key, as in bringing together Gambian and global experts, not only did the legislation and regulations developed meet international standards, but they were rooted in the local context and enabled GID officials to enhance their drafting skills and knowledge which can allow them to support efforts to update other, outdated legislation in the future.

This knowledge transfer, along with the internal regulations that the project has supported, but which have ultimately been led and driven by GID, is one of the key sustainability components that the project has been able to deliver. Sustainability that will be enhanced even further, if the much-discussed draft Gambia Immigration Bill is approved by the legislature and signed into law by the President. But even without that happening, the project has contributed to a change in culture, approach and behaviour among GID officials that is important to highlight.



This is one of the core lessons that this evaluation captures; that consultative approaches to developing regulations and legislation ensure that they are contextually relevant and increase the likelihood that they are applied in practice. Key to this is also ensuring that there is leadership buy-in for rights-based reform processes and independent oversight to ensure effective compliance, the latter is something that the project targeted but which has not yet been fully realised because of the current legislative impasse.

The evaluation also highlights recommendations that could strengthen these types of intervention further in the future:

- Include greater elements of citizen engagement in the design of projects that predominantly focus on technical development of institutions, even if that is just to engage with media to explain more about the reform processes and how they will benefit ordinary Gambians.
- Support the institutionalisation of the consultative frameworks developed by introducing more mentorship programmes to complement training rollouts and entrench attitudinal change at an officer level.

Introduction

Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The project evaluation is multi-purpose. It aims to assess the relevance and level of achievement of the project objectives, including an assessment of the project's effectiveness, efficiency, impact, inclusiveness, and sustainability in its design and implementation. Its objectives include:

- An evaluation of the output/outcomes and impact of the project against the expected results.
- An assessment of the core project structures, methodologies and capacity development achieved.
- An appraisal of the implementation strategy in relation to the project's achievements.
- An enhanced understanding of the perception of the Gambian population on the performance of Gambia's Immigration Department (GID) and its approach to, and role in, ensuring border security.
- An outline of the thoughts of GID staff on the impact of the intervention.
- An identification of problems and constraints that have been encountered.
- An assessment of the project's financial management and value for money.
- Lessons learned and recommendations that can shape continuing support and/or future programming.

To do this, the evaluation has assessed the extent to which the project has enhanced the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the GID to support more inclusive responses to security challenges facing The Gambia through the development of legislation, frameworks and delivery of technical support. Specifically, it sought to assess the extent to which there is a more coordinated and collaborative approach to border security and immigration management; the level of improvement in professional standards and adherence to principles of human rights in GID's internal and external interactions; and the extent to which improved leadership capacity has strengthened organizational strategic capacity and commitments to gender mainstreaming. These findings not only measure the project's success but also influence DCAF's ongoing, and future SSR support work in The Gambia.

Project background and description

President Adama Barrow's administration initiated a series of comprehensive processes following his electoral victory in 2016. This included the introduction of a transitional justice agenda, a commitment to undertake a comprehensive constitutional review and security sector reform (SSR) that were designed to overhaul a system that had been marred by human rights abuses and saw security largely focus on regime protection, rather than citizens' rights or needs, under the presidency of Yahya Jammeh (1994-2016). SSR was an integral part of the National Development Plan (2018-2021) with one of its primary goals being to build a security sector that will not only be effective and responsive to internal and external threats but also more accountable to citizens.[1] An interconnected Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS), and National Security Strategy (NSS), had the overarching goal of reforming individual security institutions in order to create space for "an apolitical security sector that is able to protect the country and its people in line with fundamental rights and the rule of law".[2]

The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) played an active role in the development of the SSR approach. It's work to support the institutional framework and capacity of GID over a three-year period beginning in July 2021 were aligned with efforts to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the Gambia Police Force (GPF). DCAF's Human Resources Assessment of the GID highlighted weak command and supervision, and a limited management system that contributed to ineffective use of resources and impacted on the performance of staff who expressed dissatisfaction with the direction provided by leadership and admitted to being underemployed for much of the time they were at work.[3] Poor oversight structures were another area identified by the assessment that was a shortcoming of not just GID but also GPF and the armed forces. Given the complex and pressing migration challenges facing The Gambia, increased processing pressure and a clear appetite for, and willingness to drive internally reforms that were spelt out in the institutions strategic plan for 2019-2024, DCAF identified GID as a key partner to support, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the SSR agenda.[4]

Interventions focused on improving existing legal frameworks, developing and enhancing internal GID structures and approaches to boost efficiency, accountability and inclusivity, and improving individual officer capacity to implement these. This summative final evaluation focuses on assessing how and to what extent the project's eight outputs were achieved and the extent to which they supported the realization of the three outcomes (listed below) and ultimately the overall objective of the

GID being "more effective at ensuring human security at individual and community levels, with due regard to international human rights standards, including gender equality":

Outcome 1: A more coordinated and collaborative approach is applied to border security and immigration management between security institutions which is underpinned by a clear and gender-mainstreamed legal and policy framework.

- **Output 1.1:** A concept for Integrated Border Management (IBM) is developed and operationalized.
- **Output 1.2:** An Act governing GID is developed.
- **Output 1.3:** Updated gender-mainstreamed regulations, operational concepts and policies governing the operations of GID are developed in the area of border security.

Outcome 2: Improved respect for professional standards and human rights norms, including gender equality, by GID personnel through a strengthened and gender-mainstreamed internal oversight framework.

- **Output 2.1:** GID internal oversight structures are reinforced.
- **Output 2.2:** The normative framework governing ethics, integrity and professional standards of GID personnel is reinforced and promoted.

Outcome 3: Improved leadership, including support for women leaders, and performance management that addresses implicit bias within GID leading to enhanced efficiency and improved utilization of resources.

- **Output 3.1:** Improved performance management within GID.
- **Output 3.2:** Improved mainstreaming of gender within GID.
- **Output 3.3:** Enhanced leadership and management skills with a focus on gender equality.

Project intervention logic

The project's intervention logic was that by improving management and accountability structures and capacity through the development of more gender-mainstreamed and comprehensive regulation, improved leadership and management skills and development of a clear internal oversight system to detect and address shortcomings in conduct or performance, the GID would become more efficient, accountable and better able to maximize its capabilities and capacities in a way that respected international rights standards. An assessment of these assumptions will be a core component of this evaluation process.



Methodology

Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation focuses on the extent to which the project was able to meet its objectives and the extent to which the project adhered to the six key evaluation criteria laid out in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

- **Relevance:** To what extent have the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change?
- **Coherence:** Is the intervention compatible with other interventions in The Gambia?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results?
- **Efficiency:** To what extent has the intervention delivered results in an economical and timely way?
- **Impact:** To what extent has the intervention generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects?
- **Sustainability:** To what extent have the benefits of the intervention continued or are likely to continue?

Gender and cross-cutting issues

Alongside these six criteria, the evaluation also aimed to ensure that cross-cutting themes were adequately captured. These included a strong focus on ensuring that gender mainstreaming featured prominently across all the data gathering process given the strong emphasis given to this in the project's interventions. The population survey was able to not only deliver gender parity in its responses but produced disaggregated data for all questions which allowed them to be analysed by these metrics. In addition to gender, survey data was also sensitive to geographical locations, economic status and educational background, as part of an effort to capture vulnerable groups who are often more exposed to risks associated with insecurity.

Methodological approach

Extensive quantitative and qualitative information was collected for this evaluation. Desk-based research included a review of relevant project documentation, internal reports and monitoring data produced by the project's activities. This was supplemented by a nationwide population-based survey, insights from community level respondents who participated in guided focus group discussions (FGDs), a short survey of GID staff that had participated in at least one project training or activity, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with GID officials, DCAF staff, oversight institution representatives and civil society partners. These discussions used open and semi-structured interview guides that elicited more in-depth qualitative assessments of the project's activities, outputs and outcomes and were supplemented by an extensive review of project and output activity reports and other relevant project materials.

The 2024 survey data was collected from 1,200 respondents and used the same questionnaire to one used in 2019 that served as the projects baseline and for a 2023 evaluation of the Gambia Police Force (GPF), to ensure consistency and comparability of data.[5] The survey questions cover a wide range of themes, including perceptions of effectiveness and trust in security and justice sector actors, expectations for the reform process, experiences of crime and violence, perceptions and experiences of border security management and citizens experiences of seeking assistance and support from a range of security and justice actors. In addition, extensive demographic information such as age, marital status, and socio-economic status were gathered to support the creation of disaggregated data. Furthermore, by collecting this information at three main junctures since 2019, this evaluation is able to undertake comparative analysis that can point to evidence of changes in attitudes and experiences over time when it comes to popular engagement and perceptions of effectiveness of the GID, understanding of the security landscape and even of the SSR agenda more broadly.

The sampling design, size, calculations and data collection procedures were developed with the objective of achieving a nationally representative sample and generating reliable estimates at the 95% confidence level with a low margin of error (<±3%). A multistage cluster sampling approach, involving three stages of sampling from the frame of enumeration areas within the eight Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 48 districts of The Gambia, was deployed. In the first stage, the frame was sorted within each LGA, and 32 districts independently selected with probability proportional to their size. This step aimed to ensure that the sample was representative and covered a diverse range of geographic areas within the country. The second step involved enumeration areas being sorted to create a new frame. From this new frame, 150 enumeration areas were selected using probability proportional to the size of each. This approach ensured that enumeration areas with larger populations have a higher chance of being selected, ensuring proportional representation. Finally, within each enumeration area eight households were chosen using equal probability

systematic sampling procedures. The field team started at a central point in the enumeration area and randomly selected three households for data collection. After the initial selection, interval sampling based on the size of the area was used to choose the remaining five households.

The data collection team - comprised of 16 enumerators and four supervisors - only interviewed the households selected during the sampling process. Strict adherence to this protocol was essential to minimize bias in data collection and this was made clear in the pre-survey training that was given to all data collectors. To ensure that the data collection teams were best equipped to deal with ethnic diversity of The Gambia, individuals were assigned to regions based on their language skills and applicability in those regions, considering the country's eight dominant ethnic groups and languages.

FGDs targeted similar communities to those targeted in 2019 and 2023 data gathering exercises.[6] The types of groups also remained the same and were inclusive of youth, women, and vulnerable groups, to gain their valuable insights, perspectives and concerns. Questions focused on participants broader experiences of security as well as more specifically on their interactions and perceptions of the performance of GID, particularly on issues of border management. As was the case for the survey interviews, research teams were assigned to regions based on their language skills and applicability in those regions, considering the country's eight dominant ethnic groups and languages, to conduct the FGDs which were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English.

Alongside the population-based survey, 50 members of GID, covering a range of ranks and expertise, who had participated in at least one project activity or training were surveyed, 40% of whom were female. The survey used a Likert scale to understand if and how the activities had improved knowledge, attitudes and practices pertaining to integrated approaches to border management, improved professional standards and mechanisms for redress, strategic leadership, gender equality and mainstreaming, and overall operational effectiveness.[7]

The final data collection component was KIIs, undertaken predominantly in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) as this is where the bulk of officials holding senior leadership positions – those being targeted for the KIIs – are based. Six interviews were held with officials of the GID, three were held with representatives of oversight institutions and bodies such as the National Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman and civil society, and an additional three with members of the project team from DCAF. A set of general questions were asked to all interviewees, but specific questions that were tailored to an individual's engagement with the project were also asked in order to substantiate and expand on the project's success and challenges not just at an outcome level, but also with regards to specific outputs.

Limitations of the evaluation

One potential limitation of this evaluation is an overstatement of impact by key stakeholders interviewed given that many have a longstanding relationship with DCAF and are likely to be, or view themselves as, beneficiaries of future interventions. To reduce the risk of these biases shaping the evaluation, all KIIs were anonymized to give people the chance to speak freely. Furthermore, the population-based survey and FGDs, undertaken with ordinary citizens without a strong knowledge of the project, ensured that a range of perspectives were captured which ensured a balanced assessment.

Another limitation is that nearly all the KIIs were conducted with officials in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA). This was addressed by ensuring that the quantitative survey components, both popular and in the GID survey, as well as the FGDs presented a non-Banjul centric viewpoint. Nonetheless, a lack of qualitative insights gathered, particularly from officials present at land border posts or close to borders, could present a slightly skewed picture of the project's national impact and could have been captured in a cost-efficient manner using telephone interviews, at least with select leadership officials at select regional hubs. However, given that the DCAF intervention focused a significant amount of attention on developing overarching frameworks and structures through which effectiveness and accountability would be improved, it was important to prioritize those holding positions in central command to better understand how the approaches were being embedded, with the GID survey an effort to measure the extent to which those changes were being felt by officers on the ground.

Findings

Project achievements and challenges

The population survey data collected in 2024 is compared, where available, with data collected in 2023 and in 2019 and presents a nationally representative sample of Gambian attitudes towards security and justice, accounting for differences in age, levels of education, gender and geographical location and supports an assessment of the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. This is also supported by the findings from the GID staff survey.

1. Perceptions of GID effectiveness

In the 2024 population survey, 57% of respondents ranked the effectiveness of GID as either excellent or good, with just 11% scoring it as poor. This was ahead of the court systems, Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG) and State Intelligence Services (SIS), but slightly behind the GPF and GAF, which both scored over 60%. However, this marks a 12-percentage point increase on data collected in 2023 and a 17-percentage point increase as compared to the 2019 baseline, demonstrating that the effectiveness of GID is perceived by the population to be improving significantly and was above the stated target of a 15% increase laid out in the project's log frame. This was a view shared by female and male respondents alike.

However, GID effectiveness in improving neighbourhood security and implementing immigration control varies across regions. Regions like Mansakonko and Brikama reported high levels of satisfaction with 52.2% and 36% of respondents, respectively, rating the effectiveness of GID's efforts as *Excellent*. In contrast, regions such as Kuntaur and Kerewan have a higher percentage of residents rating the effectiveness as *Fair*, indicating that while some improvements are noticed, GID's impact in these regions may not be as strong or widely felt.

The analysis of the gender distribution within each rating category further underscores this trend. Among the "excellent" ratings, 53.5% came from women, slightly exceeding the 46.5% from male counterparts. For "good" ratings, males and females were nearly balanced at 47.4% and 51.7%, respectively. In contrast, males were more critical in the "fair" and "poor" categories, contributing 56.2% and 54.3% of these ratings, compared to 42.7% and 45.7% from females.

Other indicators of institutional effectiveness – responsiveness and accessibility – have also improved from 2019 to 2024. 57% of respondents now viewed GID responsiveness as excellent or good, an increase of 13 percentage points from 2019. Perceptions of accessibility have also increased – by eight percentage points - from 43% in 2019, to 51% in 2024. Both point to a positive trajectory, even if 12% and 14% of respondents respectively described institutional responsiveness and accessibility as poor, highlighting the need for continued improvement. For example, although not specific to the GID given that border security measures are the responsibility of a range of security actors, the survey data also finds a decline in the perceived level of satisfaction with the way in which border security is being managed when compared with 2019. Corruption was regularly mentioned as a particular issue, with one FGD respondent contending that "some officers do not act professionally, many demand bribes in exchange for services at the border". Others also argued that there was a lack of collaboration in border security efforts, with the lack of cooperation with community leaders a particular concern. Whilst 48% expressed some level of satisfaction – and 27% of those were extremely satisfied – this was a decline on the data collected five years previous which found 58.5% to be satisfied to some degree.

Figure 1: GID effectiveness 2019, 2023 and 2024

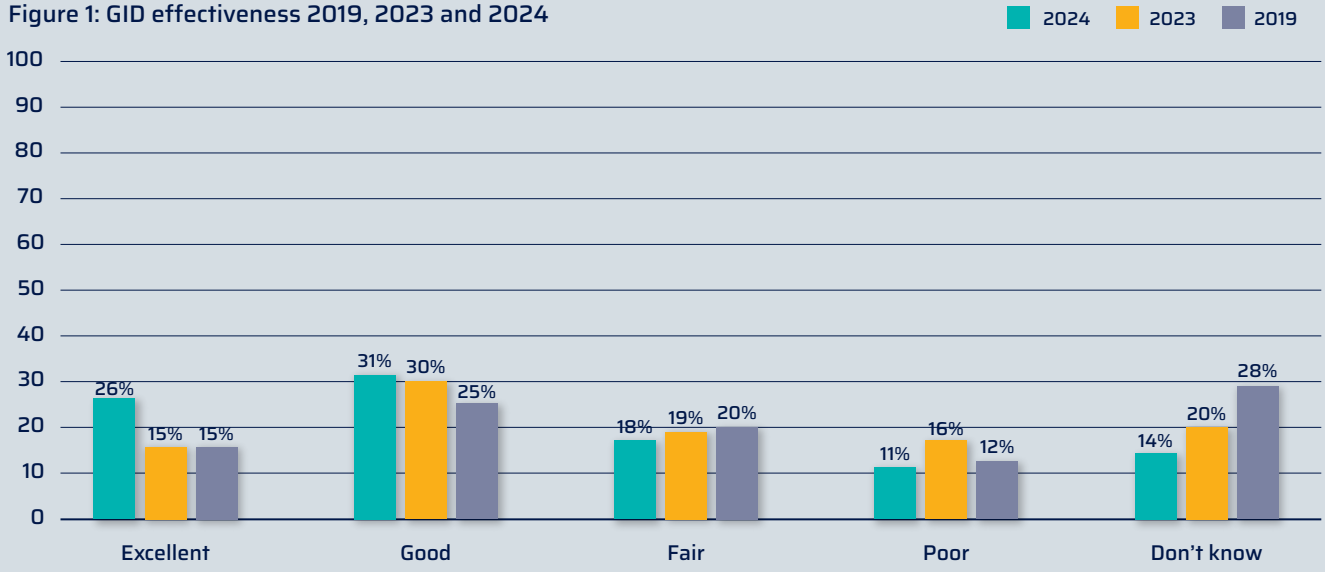
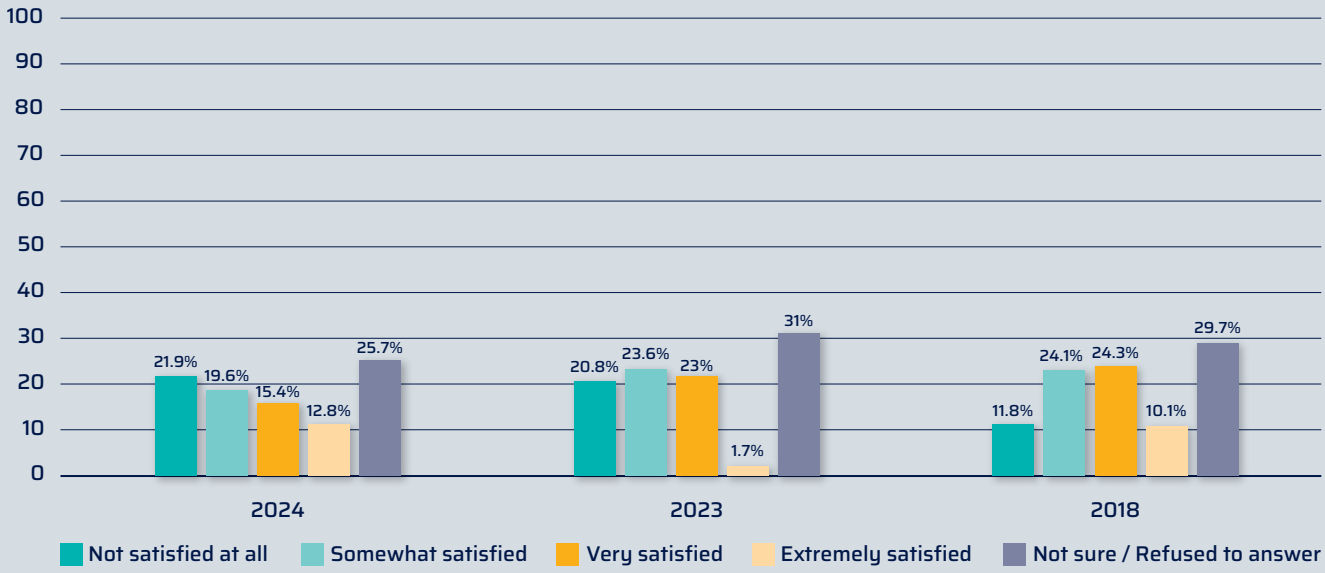


Figure 2: Satisfaction with border security measures



This was reflected by survey respondents who had crossed the border in the last year - 43.1% of the total sample. Of those three quarters had no issues when doing so. However, 25% encountered issues, with harassment by immigration officials the most common challenge, reported by 22% of respondents, with bribes also cited by 12.3% of respondents.

2. Perceptions of GID accountability and professionalism

In the 2024 survey, 51% of respondents ranked the transparency of GID as either excellent or good. This was similar, albeit marginally lower, than citizens' perceptions of the GPF. Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of fairness and accountability when it comes to the work of GID, and the data shows a consistent improvement since 2019 in both areas. Most respondents - 51% in both instances - scored the GID's accountability and fairness as excellent or good, an increase of 14 and 12 percentage points on 2019 data.

However, the FGD discussions did not always reflect this level of satisfaction with respondents sharing multiple experiences of preferential treatment, particularly in border areas, in ways that they perceived to be untransparent and unfair. One viewpoint that summarised the sentiments express by many others was that "when it comes to the work they do, in my opinion they don't operate in a professional manner, corruption always features. It is very difficult at times if you don't give them something in the form of money, they won't give you the assistance you need".

Figure 3: Transparency of GID

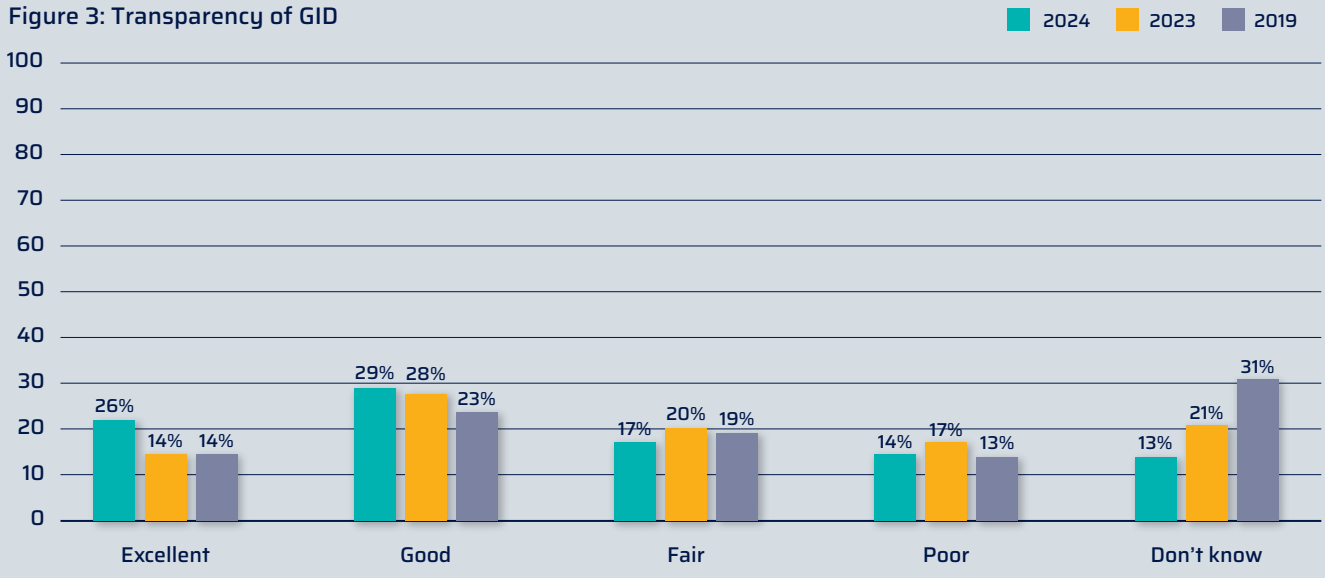
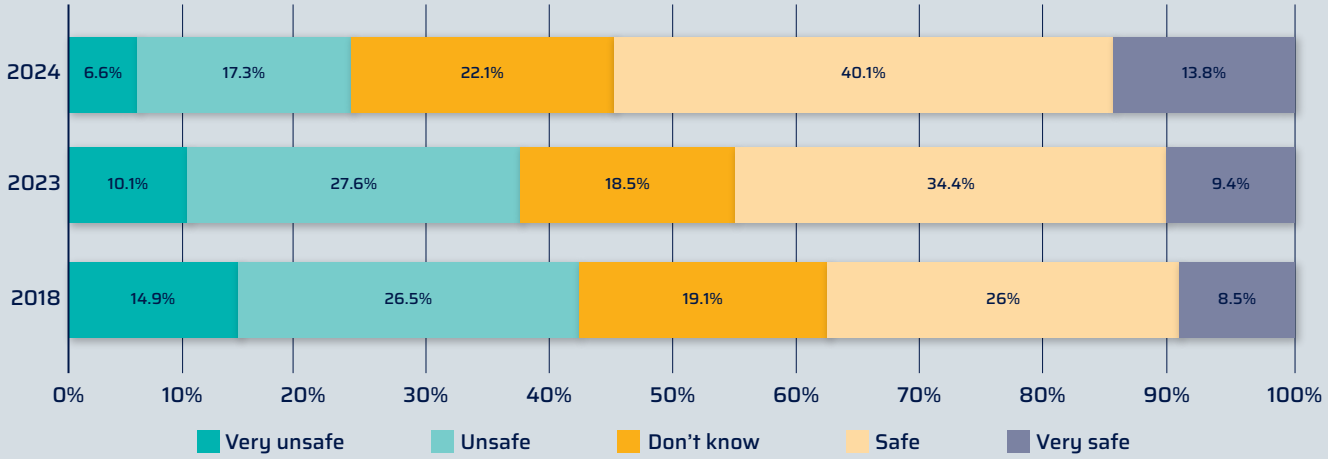


Figure 4: How safe or unsafe do you feel the border areas are?



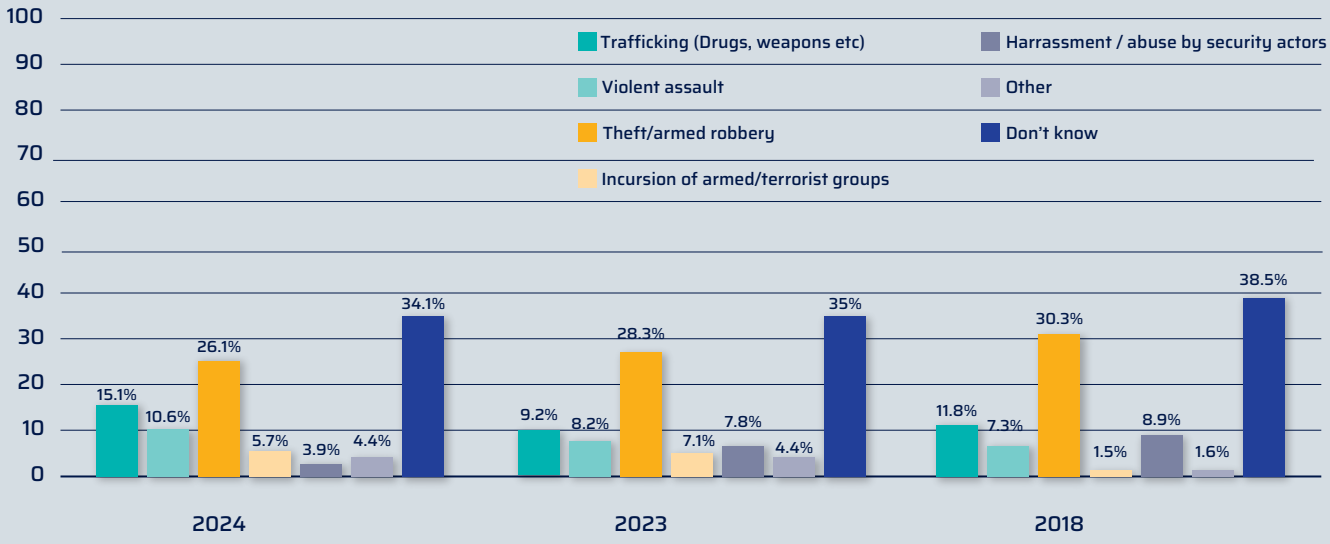
3. Progress on GID's commitment to gender

Gender mainstreaming has been a core component of the project's interventions, and the staff survey data found that 86% of respondents, including 95% of female respondents, agree or strongly agree that the GID promotes gender equality and inclusivity within the institution. The creation of a women's network was cited by several key informants as being a particularly important development that can maintain and sustain this progress. So too has been the deliberative efforts to include male GID leadership in the mainstreaming approach. According to one respondent, "having male senior management team members advocating for gender, we are seeing men in the GID advancing the cause of women, and this is part of the impact that the gender orientation has had". However, whilst there is strong internal support for the institutions efforts to improve gender equality, there is less awareness of what measures have been put in place to support gender mainstreaming, such as the gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment policies, with almost half of staff survey respondents, 46%, not having any significant knowledge of the contents of internal policies and regulations put in place to strengthen gender inclusion.

4. Popular perceptions of security and safety

Safety and security in border areas is perceived to be worsening according to the survey data collected especially among urban residents and men. FGD respondents across the country highlight growing concerns about the rise in criminal activity and a growing fear of being attacked or robbed without a corresponding increase in patrols from security agencies, particularly those that take place at night, when respondents highlighted the risk of criminal activity increased. As a result, the number of respondents feeling very unsafe in border areas has increased to 14.9% in 2024 – 17.8% for men - whilst those who admitted to feeling safe or very safe declined from more than 50% in 2019, to 34.5% in 2024 with that figure higher among rural residents (43.4%) and lower, at 28.4%, for those in urban areas. This perceived decline in urban security is also reflected in respondent's responses to questions about the safety of their immediate neighbourhood – which 31% believe got worse in the last year, a figure notably higher for urban respondents (37.7%) than those in rural areas (26.8%). There was no noticeable difference between genders in the response to this question

Figure 5: What types of security problems do local communities at the border face?



The pattern was repeated when respondents were asked about whether they believe the wider border security situation has improved in the last year. Whilst overall 30% agreed, this was much higher in rural areas 42.5% than in urban areas (19.3%). Almost a quarter of all respondents feel as though border security became worse in the last year – with the data again showing this was exacerbated among urban and male respondents - which is a significant increase on 2019, when it was less than 10%. The two primary problems identified by survey respondents were theft/armed robbery (26%) and trafficking, which was broadly defined to include weapons, drugs and people, at 15.2%. Data which suggests that either there is likely a conflation of broader insecurity, driven by criminal actors that is often more prevalent in urban areas, with border insecurity in the minds of respondents, or that there is perceived to be a direct correlation between heightened levels of criminality and cross-border migration.

Prominent responses that survey respondents were aware of at the border area included controls at border posts (23.5%), patrols (24.6%) and searches of goods or vehicles entering the country (7%). But nearly 30% of respondents were unable to provide details about activities that were done to help secure border areas suggesting that more needs to be done to boost popular awareness of the work being done by GID and other security actors in this area. For those aware of measures being taken, 47.8% were satisfied to some degree with this again significantly higher in rural areas – 20% were extremely satisfied in rural areas as compared with 6.6% among urban respondents. There was a higher level of dissatisfaction among male rather than female respondents – 27.6% to 18.2% - perhaps because men are more likely to cross the border than women - 53.9% to 36% - and therefore have more regular interactions with these border security activities and agents.

5. GID and security sector collaboration

84% of staff survey respondents believe that internal and inter-agency collaboration and cooperation is strong or very strong, something that has been driven by improved awareness of a more integrated approach to border management, which was strong or very strong among 82% of staff surveyed. However, reflections on the regular application of the IBM approach were more mixed – with just 52% saying that such approaches were used on a regular basis. However, this is largely a result of the fact that ratification of the IBM service level agreement and the simulation exercise, supported by the project, only took place after the staff survey was issued by the evaluation team.

On the issue of collaboration, FGD respondents were largely divided between those that felt the GID collaborates better with traditional leaders than with GPF and those that saw very limited collaboration between GID and any local leaders or security agencies, at least in border areas. A key area of collaboration was centred around access to documents that would support movement across borders. Although Alkalos (traditional leaders) are viewed as key actors in this process, they are not perceived to be well integrated in the work of GID officials.

6. Knowledge of SSR reform

Survey respondents were asked questions designed to better understand their knowledge and expectations of the SSR process as this project's aim to boost GID effectiveness sits within that wider framework. Knowledge remains low and has in fact decreased to 16.3% overall - dropping to 9.3% for women - when compared to 2023 data when 34.1% of Gambians claimed to have at least a little knowledge of the reform process. These figures are

Figure 6: Knowledge of SSR Reform

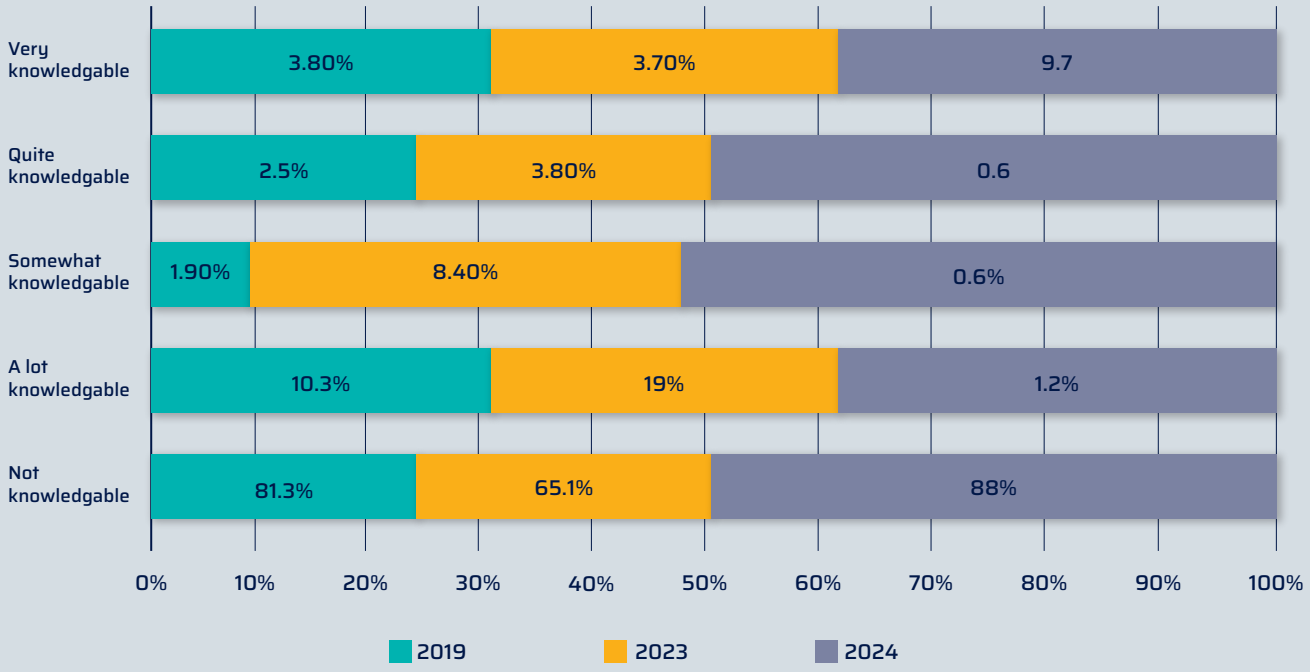
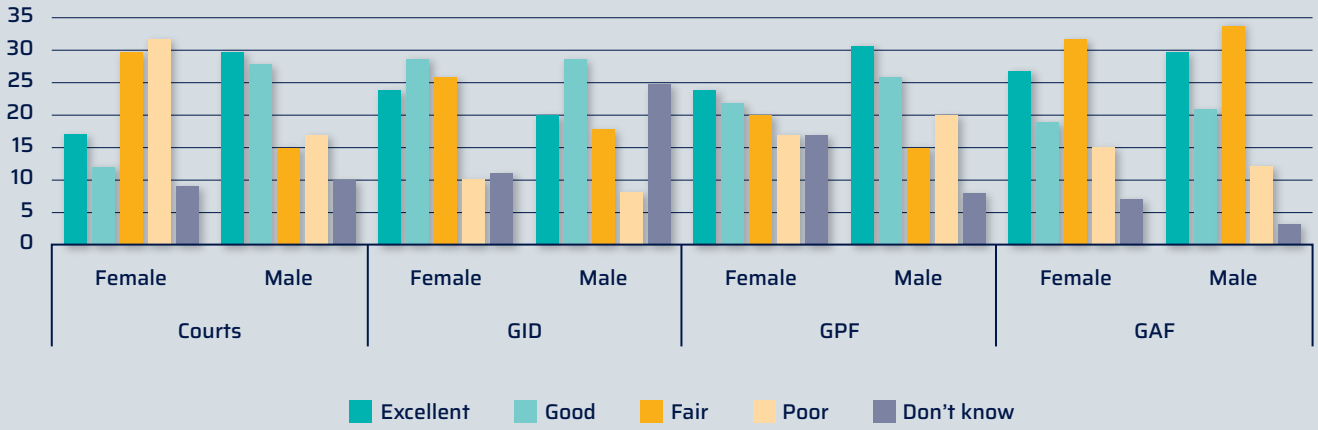


Figure 7: 2024 Institutional Effectiveness Rating Disaggregated by Gender



even a decline on those gathered in 2019, when nearly 80% of respondents did not have any knowledge. This data is illustrative of the continuous work that needs to be done to enhance public awareness of the security sector reform agenda under which this intervention was implemented.

7. A more effective, rights oriented and gender sensitive GID?

As shown, the population survey data shows a 17-percentage point increase from 2019 to 2024 in perceptions of GID efficiency to deliver its mandate, a view that is consistent across genders. This, along with the staff survey data that reflects the perception of improved effectiveness among GID staff, has likely been aided by the support offered to enhance internal standards and planning, through consultative regulation development and accompanying training.

Significant progress has also been made towards achieving the latter with the GID not only establishing a dedicated gender mainstreaming policy, but also a sexual harassment (SH) policy – becoming the first security agency in The Gambia to have one in place – having shown an appetite to consistently apply gender mainstreaming principles in the development of frameworks and regulations to support improved performance management, operations and professional standards. Ongoing commitment to gender quality is having an impact on appointment processes – which has seen a fivefold increase in the number of women being appointed to senior roles in GID. Key to this is the increased leadership on the issue by both male and female members of senior management, the creation of a specific gender unit and the continued support for, and development of, the GID female network. These are all strong indicators that the commitment to improving gender equality can be sustained and even enhanced, a perception that is shared by respondents to the staff survey who noted an increased awareness and willingness to act on gender related issues.

A positive trajectory has also been set when it comes to greater coordination and collaboration between security agencies working at the border with the development of the IBM service level agreement and the successful hosting of the scenario exercise designed to instil practical learning. Whilst the population survey data highlights citizens belief that measures to secure the borders are still facing notable challenges, these have the potential to change if the more coordinated approach that the IBM framework provides for, is effectively implemented – and given the consultative process through which it has been developed, with DCAF support, the evaluation believes this to be likely.

Coordinated and consultative approaches were key in developing regulations and legislation that both aligned with the Gambian context and existing legal environment, but that also respected and reflect international human rights standards. However, delays in the passage of the revised Immigration Bill despite the persistent efforts of GID with support from DCAF, does pose a minor risk to the continued application of the regulatory changes that have been introduced, as they will not have formal legal backing, even if, and crucially, they appear to be contributing to a shift in culture when it comes to rights-based approaches, as per the staff survey data findings. Internal mechanisms for improving efficiency and ensuring that rights-based approaches are being applied have shown notable improvements with the doubling of investigations for professional misconduct for example. However, until the law is passed, an independent, robust and rights-oriented oversight body that can improve internal processes within GID and ultimately external engagements between the agency and the public will not be in place, potentially limiting the application.

Responding to the evaluation and research questions

Relevance: To what extent have the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change?

Efforts to update the legal framework that underpins the work of the GID was highly relevant as existing immigration legislation dates to 1965 and is increasingly obsolete for dealing with the challenges – such as illegal migration - facing The Gambia. In the view of one GID official the revised Bill, which the project supported the development of, and which provides for the creation of a separate immigration entity, Gambia Immigration Service (GIS), "gives a stronger legal backing to the GID, improve efficiency and clarity in the way it functions and strengthen our operational activities". Another agreed that it had the potential to "address many of the gaps we have been facing". One key issue is that many actions taken by the GID are done either through regulations that are not expressly backed in law or which have a legal basis but are outdated and limited in scope. The merging of the Smuggling of Migrants Bill, within this wider revision to the legal framework was also an excellent example of the interventions adaptability that enhanced its relevance to both GID and also the National Assembly. Furthermore, by including provisions to address the issue of the criminal activities facilitating migration, the intervention also enhanced the likelihood of the draft Immigration Bill being passed into law, given that this is an issue where there is a strong political push, from external partners, to have legislation.

The relevance of not just having external technical experts lead on the rewriting of the legislation, but to do this in a collaborative way with national expertise and both staff of the GID and prominent legal academics and drafters – which formed two technical working groups (TWGs) – was also stressed by respondents. In their view, it not only made the document "robust and progressive" but also ensured it was "in line with the policies being developed by the government on security – and security sector strategy and therefore reduced the risk of conflicts around operationalisation". The approach of having a GID staff member seconded to DCAF proved to be a highly relevant approach in "getting the message across and ensuring that we got the people we needed in the room to attend" according to one DCAF staff member.

Another important approach that improved the relevance of the interventions engagements was to also engage with stakeholders outside of Banjul and, where possible, to do so in their locations, an approach that was key in collecting the data that was key for the development of the multi-sectoral integrated border management agenda. This meant that the IBM training was not just an imposition of international best practise but, through cross-institutional engagements across the country, "it became a genuine national endeavour that built domestic ownership and the relevance of what is being discussed". This approach was part of DCAFs efforts to make itself, and the project, more accessible and to enhance its relevance not just for those based in urban areas, but to cover more rural and border areas.

Coherence: Is the intervention compatible with other interventions in The Gambia?

DCAF has been involved in The Gambia's SSR process since 2017, and this understanding of the security sector needs, and reform landscape means that it is well placed to ensure that the intervention was designed to align with institutional and internal priorities and not to overlap or impinge on the work being supported by other development partners. Deliberate efforts were made to ensure regular communication with like-minded organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to ensure projects strategically support one and other and avoid the duplication of efforts. The intervention's support was also well aligned with GID's own priorities. The focus on gender mainstreaming, as well as the revision of the legal framework, were laid out in its own internal strategic plan (2019-2024) for example. This coherent alignment was recognized by one GID official who was keen to stress that "gender mainstreaming was not only a core tenet of the SSR process, but also very much in line with our own strategic plans" which had only been inhibited by a lack of financial support, coupled with limited political will, that DCAF was able to support efforts to overcome. DCAF efforts to support gender mainstreaming also aligned with, and drew learnings from, existing and ongoing work to support the GPF, with initiatives like the introduction of GID female network replicating an approach used to support the GPF.

The coherence of the intervention in relation to the wider SSR agenda was also strong and realised through synergies and partnerships with key national security and oversight institutions. Cross-sectoral coordination on the issue of IBM, which included working closely with the Office of National Security (ONS), and in particular the National Security Adviser (NSA), helped secure the baseline data needed for the IBM practical exercise and enhanced the participation of the range of security agencies that are a necessary part of more integrated border security efforts. This holistic approach to security inherent in the project design, encouraged agencies not to work on issues in silos but to recognise complementary roles and find ways of delivering them effectively, supporting a more coherent SSR agenda in turn.

Finally, the coherence of the project's effort to overhaul the legislation, and regulations underpinning that legislation, upon which GID operates meant that efforts to improve professional standards, gender mainstreaming and oversight structures would not simply be tied to the project but become embedded parts of the legal framework.

At the same time, this approach was not without risks, as challenges of getting the legislation passed into law – a challenge that persists at the conclusion of the project – means that the legal enforcement of policies and frameworks developed by the project are not, yet at least, legally binding even if they have been approved and validated by the GID and other key stakeholders.

Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results?

Based on the desk review of documents and the fieldwork data gathered, this evaluation assesses the extent to which the intervention achieved its outputs, outcomes and ultimately its overall objective.

Outcome 1. A more coordinated and collaborative approach is applied to border security and immigration management between security institutions which are underpinned by a clear and gender-mainstreamed legal and policy framework: The application of a more coordinated and collaborative approach to border security, through the use of the IBM framework is now in place, though its ongoing application remains in its infancy, in large part because key elements of the approach to IBM – scenario training exercises – were only completed in the final few months of the project's implementation. However, the successful IBM simulation exercise points to its future potential to ensure more holistic and cross-cutting institutional approaches to border security moving forward.

There was a strong appetite among those engaged for the approach to become a standard practice because "it offers clarity on who should do what, and how" explained one official, whilst another explained that "IBM is helping us to understand how to work in a more integrated manner with border management issues in particular. It is a very good document, but we need a policy document to make it stronger". Improved coordination will be further strengthened by the robustly designed and validated legal and policy framework, which has successfully embedded and mainstreamed gender, that the project has been a key driver of. Although the overarching Immigration Bill has yet to officially become law, the projects work on revising the legal framework and developing related policies using a highly consultative process will, and is already in practice, contributing to improved clarity on roles and responsibilities of the GID, and shape its interaction with other security agencies.

Output 1.1: A concept for Integrated Border Management (IBM) is developed and operationalized. ACHIEVED. The IBM concept has been developed and operationalized. The series of initial stakeholder consultation workshops, together with the collection of data that was required for the development of the concept and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) provided an initial opportunity for engagement between different security stakeholders at the border and outlined clear areas where there was a need to focus on to improve existing practices – issues such as timely communication and mechanisms for cross-institutional cooperation. The fact that at least 13 departments and agencies were part of the consultations for the development of SOPs was viewed very positively by one participant who commended the "approach has helped us see how we can support each other and what each entity is doing". Rolled out through trainings using a training of trainers (TOT) model across the main regions of The Gambia that reached 160 participants, the importance of these training series was in creating synchrony among senior management across agencies about the concepts and their applicability at border posts. "Before there was cooperation but it was not always coordinated" explained one GID official, who was optimistic that "strengthened operational relationships with other institutions – through service level agreements – has, and will continue to, make the work easier and more effective". These trainings also boosted knowledge of the IBM concept among GID officers across the regions according to the pre and post testing done by DCAF of participants by over 10% on average.[8]

Going beyond a conceptual understanding, the fact that project was also able to hold a simulation exercise in which four different scenarios were responded to using the IBM approach with 57 participants from more than 20 border agencies, including from civil society and media, "provided an opportunity for the practical application of learning" in one participant's view. At an event to mark the signing of a service level agreement on IBM, the deputy NSA described it as "a significant step in establishing secure, well-regulated borders that support both security and economic mobility". Officials within GID interviewed were keen to stress how the IBM concept is already being used to help manage migration flows in a more coordinated and effective way.

In terms of how widely the IBM approach is understood and perceived, respondents from various agencies have shown an increasing awareness of its objectives. One key respondent noted, "IBM is still new to many of us, but there is a growing understanding. It's clearer than before, and we're starting to see how it could bring people together." Another echoed similar sentiment, saying, "it's been a learning process, but the training exercises are helping people get on the same page. We can see the value in working collaboratively."

Despite these positive responses, concerns remain about the level of implementation. A respondent mentioned, "The IBM framework makes sense, but we need time to integrate it into daily operations. We're still figuring out how to bring it into the real world, especially with the number of agencies involved." This reflects a concern that although IBM is understood, there may be barriers to full integration without a formal policy document.

Improved coordination is expected to be further strengthened by the robustly designed and validated legal and policy framework, which has successfully embedded

and mainstreamed gender, that the project has been a key driver of. Although the overarching Immigration Bill has yet to officially become law, the project's work on revising the legal framework, the signing of the service level agreement and development of related policies using a highly consultative process will, and is already, contributing to improved clarity on roles and responsibilities of the GID, and shaping its interaction with other security agencies.

Early signs of improved coordination are evident, with one official noting, "We are seeing more joint discussions between departments and agencies. It's still in the early stages, but you can feel a shift toward more collaboration." However, there is also recognition that further work is needed to solidify these efforts. As one respondent shared, "We are more aware of each other's roles, but it will take continued effort to break down the silos and ensure that the IBM approach becomes a permanent part of our work".

Output 1.2: An Act governing GID is developed: ACHIEVED. Significant strides were made by the project towards the overhaul of the Immigration Act of 1965 and create a revised and validated legislative framework that is more reflective of current realities. The creation of two TWGs with domestic and international experts, as well as GID officials, and their efforts to engage and brief National Assembly members on its contents on an ongoing basis, and have it validated by key stakeholders, were highly strategic approaches that helped ensure that the Bill not only responds to the needs of GID but is aligned with the broader SSR agenda. As one KII explained, "working with consultants was very good, as they helped us understand modern immigration trends at a global level whilst national consultants provided a lot of legal guidance. It was an enriching experience, and learning was done in a way that constantly referred to the Gambian context".

The Bill was initially validated, as targeted by the project, in March 2023 and it has since evolved and been merged with the Smuggling of Migrants Bill to become the Gambia Immigration Bill 2024. Efforts to sensitize National Assembly members pre-emptively so they can understand and validate the Bill before it reaches them and to understand how best to align it with their own priorities has been an important strategy deployed that has ensured support for the revised law, even though it has yet to be approved by the legislature. As one National Assembly member explained, "GID were showing us what they wanted to do from a technical perspective, and we can review and make sure this aligns with our laws". Another argued that the "consultations with assembly members were widely attended and very positive" a view shared by a National Assembly member who believed that the "pre-emptive engagement with the Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS) [which will be responsible for going through the Bill clause by clause when it comes to parliament] was really helpful, so that we can align these proposals with our review process".

Although the drafting and validating of the Bill followed a highly consultative process that "took time" and was "an approach that other agencies have not done but which has a lot of value" respondents were keen to highlight the value of this approach. "This [consultation and validation] has made the document robust and progressive and in line with the policies being developed by the government on security – and security sector strategy, thereby avoiding potential conflicts around operationalisation."

GID officials and National Assembly members interviewed in the framework of this evaluation remain confident that the Bill will become law soon, even if there remains a latent risk that the work done on the legislative overhaul



could be undermined if it does not. Nonetheless, it is fair to assess that the project has taken a multitude of interlinked steps, notably efforts to consult on and validate the draft document before it reaches the legislature officially, to significantly increase its chances of passage.

Output 1.3: Updated gender-mainstreamed regulations, operational concepts, and policies governing the operations of GID are developed in the area of border security: ACHIEVED. The institutional structure of the GID was redesigned and the mandate of the GID has been redefined, in line with the revised Immigration Bill. This is reflected in the fact that the deployment, recruitment and terms and conditions of service regulations all now have gender mainstreaming embedded. Like the review of the Bill itself, all of these revisions underwent broad consultations and validation with key stakeholders in order to ensure consensus and alignment with the new legal framework. In validating the revised draft immigration regulations for example, GID legal, gender equality and operational specialists were in attendance as well as from representatives from the National Assembly SCDS, ONS, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice.

This approach has been critical in ensuring that there remains "buy-in and momentum for the enactment of these policies and that the policies align with and ultimately support the function of the broader immigration legislation" according to one KII. Consultative processes were also used, and proved critical, in getting buy-in from select senior leadership to support a gender mainstreaming approach. GID is now the first security agency in The Gambia with a sexual harassment policy, a significant milestone that the project's activities and engagements were critical in facilitating despite initial resistance. As one GID official maintained, "at command level they accept the document [gender mainstreaming policy], they see it as important, and I think if you look at growing numbers of female promotions] it is changing attitudes across the board".

Outcome 2 – Improved respect for professional standards and human rights norms, including gender equality, by GID personnel through a strengthened and gender-mainstreamed internal oversight framework: Gender mainstreaming efforts have been a significant success of this intervention, a view that is shared by male and female officers alike, and this is reflected in the efforts to improve commitments to professional standards though the creation of, and training of staff in, the Human Rights and Professional Standards Unit Policy (HRPSU) which is widely seen as effective by GID staff. Particularly when it comes to providing an avenue for the reporting of issues that pertain to sexual harassment within GID. Furthermore, the notable progress made in bridging the gap between the development of professional standards and GID officers' knowledge about them has supported the achievement of project targets to double the number of internal disciplinary measures being taken against GID staff, with 20 recorded in 2023. This, combined with the willingness of GID to create an external oversight body, are indicators of its commitment to the application of its new internal frameworks for professional standards that embedded human rights and gender norms within them. Although this external scrutiny is still to be codified in law, there has been some movement on public complaints made towards the GID for officer conduct, even if the findings of the nationwide survey and FGDs across the country suggest that many more citizens experience unprofessional conduct.

Output 2.1: GID internal oversight structures are reinforced: ACHIEVED. Interventions designed to enhance internal oversight of the GID have made significant progress but will only become functional once the Immigration Bill becomes law, as this will see the formal codification of the Immigration Council – if that is to be the format, as recent developments suggest that this could evolve further as part of wider security oversight reforms that go beyond the scope of this project - that will have the authority to oversee the practices and processes of the immigration agency. The guidelines that have informed development of an oversight mechanism were also viewed as having been developed effectively because of extensive consultation with a range of key stakeholders, including those mandated to protect and promote human rights in The Gambia, who praised the security agencies "willingness to ask us about how they could be better held to account"

The establishment of a HRPSU for GID that is in line with human rights commitments, improves the ethics and was aimed at building public trust and confidence in the institution was another key component of this output. To support its effective function, training of internal investigators was supported by DCAF, with pre/post training questionnaire showing an average 128% increase in knowledge and awareness as a result. 66% of respondents to the staff survey issued as part of this evaluation agreed or strongly agreed that it was effective, with these perceptions largely consistent across genders. KII respondents also agreed that the Professional Standards Division (PSD) has been "much more vibrant" in its commitment to promoting rights, both within the agency and in its interactions with the public because of the project, and this has led to a doubling of investigations into GID official misconduct – from 10 in 2019 to 20 in 2023 according to GID internal data.

Output 2.2: The normative framework governing ethics, integrity, and professional standards of GID personnel is reinforced and promoted: ACHIEVED. The development of a revised Code of Conduct to govern ethics, integrity and professional standards was completed, aligned to international standards and institutional realities. This was followed up with a training of trainers for staff from the GID Training School, who subsequently rolled out training on the revised Code of Conduct to 69 GID officials with representation from all regions, including three in

senior management, to enhance institutional knowledge of its contents and the implications for failing to adhere to it. But the effectiveness of this roll out was mixed according to staff survey respondents, with awareness of its key contents among staff survey respondents split. Whilst 52% had a strong level of understanding of what is contained within the code of conduct, 48% had no or a very limited understanding. This was particularly pronounced among female officers, with 75% of those surveyed stating that they were not very clear about the contents of the code of conduct document.

Outcome 3 – Improved leadership, including support for women leaders and performance management that addresses implicit bias within GID, leading to enhanced efficiency and improved utilization of resources: Training on performance management and leadership was received by 51 officials from a combination of GID and GPF middle and senior management. In general, and this applies to training provided across the project's outputs, the interactive nature of the sessions and the high-quality facilitators – both national and international – were consistently praised by respondents. They were viewed as being able to present relevant content and have impacts on subsequent staff action. "Senior officers are more aware of their responsibilities, functions and mandates because of DCAF" argued one respondent. As one official noted, "when it comes to performance management, we are now assessing individual performance for the first time, we intend to keep this going – this can help us better place staff based on their skills and experience". Just 18% of staff surveyed for this evaluation said they did not have a sufficient workload, a near 20% decrease from 2019, when this figure stood at 35% indicating that the performance management systems are contributing to improved efficiency. Absenteeism has also dropped as a key challenge from 27%-21% according to the survey data – although this still falls short of the 10% decline targeted by the project.

The staff survey findings also demonstrate that 60% of respondents saw leadership figures as making informed decisions, be that when it comes to discussing strategic planning or when it comes to deployment. However, this was viewed less favourably by female respondents (just 40%) suggesting that perceived or actual implicit biases are still a challenge to be overcome, even if the project has made huge strides in shifting culturally embedded attitudes in such a short period of time.

Output 3.1. Improved performance management within GID: ACHIEVED. Constituting a GID core expert group to design and develop the requisite tools, conduct a comprehensive review of progress made by the GID against the primary objectives of the GID Strategic Plan 2019 to 2024 , identifying new key performance indicators (KPIs) and supporting the development of a Performance Management Framework (PMF) using nationally collected data, that will be embedded in the 2025-2029 strategic plan, was a significant undertaking and achievement. The approach taken entailed a comprehensive consultative data collection phase undertaken in all regions and at key central departmental premises. This was followed by a series of workshops where the data was analysed and key findings developed, before their presentation to officers from the senior command. As one interviewee explained, "DCAF has built up our capacity that means we can develop new policies on our own – this is something they have instilled in us". They went on further to explain that "performance management assessments support a more strategic approach to planning" and that these approaches, including collecting data from a range of key sources to inform planning, would be applied within the organisation going forward.

Output 3.2 – Improved mainstreaming of gender within GID: ACHIEVED. In addition to the development of the specific gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment policies, 34% of the recommendations made by the DCAF gender scoping study were assessed as having been implemented (exceeding the 25% targeted) highlighting how gender has been increasingly a consideration in the development of regulation and legislation and in institutional attitudes and approaches. This was reflected in the staff survey data with 86% of respondents, including 95% of female respondents, agreeing or strongly agreeing that the institution promotes gender equality and inclusivity within the institution. Despite initial reticence from senior male officials within GID to gender mainstreaming, sustained engagement and strategic targeting of internal male champions has proved to be key in overcoming culturally rooted opposition to such reforms. As one respondent explained, "having male senior management team members advocating for gender – for the first time we are seeing men in the GID advancing the cause of women - and this is core part of the impact that the gender orientation has had".

Whilst there is limited internal GID data as to the number sexual harassment reports or claims, and how they have been handled, subsequently, the increased commitment to tackling sensitive issues around gender has been driven by the project's interventions. Whilst overall 58% of GID staff said they would feel comfortable reporting misconduct or unethical behaviour, this was much higher among female officers, 75% of whom responded to say they would do so. Respondents believe that this support for enhancing gender has contributed to greater female representation in more senior positions within the institution. According to internal GID figures, females holding senior ranks in the GID - from Assistant Superintendent to Deputy Director General - has increased significantly from 4% to 21% since 2023, a shift that the project's efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming have contributed significantly to.

The creation of the GID Women's Network, a space in which all female members of the GID can come together to support each other to develop skills or to raise issues and concerns, has also "really helped to advance women's participation in the GID". One respondent agreed that:

"a key part of gender mainstreaming is also empowering female officers with the skills to do those jobs; we can't just promote them for the sake of it".

Output 3.3 – Enhanced leadership and management skills with a focus on gender equality: ACHIEVED. The support for female leadership in GID, driven by the projects sustained engagements and interventions, is reflected in the adoption of 34% of gender mainstreaming recommendations (9% above the 25% targeted). Initial impacts of this are the significant increase in the numbers of female officers holding senior positions in the institution. It is also perceived to have contributed to female GID officials more positive perceptions of leadership figures in the agency – "having the senior management team advocating for gender, including men, is another key impact that the gender orientation has had at leadership level". The extent to which improved leadership is driving enhanced efficiency and the utilization of resources is also shown through the staff survey data which finds that absenteeism is a declining problem and that a significant improvement has been made in staff reporting they have sufficient workloads.

Efficiency: To what extent has the intervention delivered results in an economical and timely way?

Collaboration, at different levels, has been a key part of ensuring that the intervention has been delivered in an efficient way. This includes the integration of both domestic and international expertise and knowledge in the development of regulations or delivery of training. This was critical in ensuring that they were done in line with international best practice and commitments to human rights and gender mainstreaming but adapted in ways that would resonate and gain traction with a local audience to "gain local ownership. Although a sizeable percentage of the budget was oriented around human resources, this approach of having international and domestic consultant's dovetail one and other, did enhance local ownership and knowledge and ultimately ensured that the outputs were relevant and applicable. Another key part of improving the training delivered was post-training evaluations, not just of the content, but the location, the trainers and other aspects that impacted learning. In one instance this led DCAF to "change the location of trainings after initial complaints that the environment was not conducive to learning".

Another key tool utilized by the intervention to enhance efficiency was the use of a ToT model and efforts to encourage and support those who attended the training and validation sessions across the project, to share what they had learned with colleagues. Funding was not made available to support cascading efforts but "ToT's were expected to cascade knowledge down and everyone was provided with all the materials to enable them to do so, digitally through WhatsApp groups and on flash drives". Holding trainings outside of the GBA and working to train trainers from the GID Training School were two other strategic approaches aimed to boost the scope of the knowledge acquired. The latter ensured that participants are equipped with the knowledge and materials to educate new recruits, as this is where a lot of internal GID training is focused rather than on refreshers, given the budget constraints within which these institutions operate. But data gathered by the staff survey with regards to knowledge of the code of conduct's contents and measures put in place to tackle gender mainstreaming illustrate that the cascading efforts need to be strengthened further to ensure knowledge and awareness of new provisions reach rank and file officers.

Finally, collaboration and communication has been critical to ensuring the required approvals and validation of regulations have taken place, largely in a timely manner. How to do this effectively was a learning that emerged from initial engagements. "It took us a long time to find a way to engage effectively" reflected one DCAF staff member. But ultimately engagement at leadership levels and the setting up of a steering committee to meet every quarter, "really helped with identifying challenges and finding solutions collaboratively". Regular meetings with the GID Director General, "worked as a sort of project management tool that supported ongoing action management and provide a good way of making, and evidencing, progress" argued one respondent. Identifying and working closely with key focal points within the various departments on issues like migration, performance and gender, have also ensured the project was able to target its interventions more efficiently. Furthermore, to ensure that this collaboration goes beyond GID the project utilised a quarterly breakfast club, which brought together representatives from all key security agencies to brief each other on ongoing initiatives and this helped significantly to support collaboration and avoid duplication.

A key driver of project efficiency was the strength of the partnership between DCAF and GID, which has led to the former being part of the "immigration fabric" in The Gambia. As one interviewee explained, "DCAF was invited to be part of their annual retreat to reflect and learn on what they had done – the only international partner invited to speak at the closing of this and indication that we have their full trust and see us as a key partner".

Impact: To what extent has the intervention generated or is it expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects??

86% of staff survey respondents are aware of the IBM concept, with 52% agreeing that it is applied effectively and frequently as a result of the projects interventions to support the design of the approach, run a scenario exercise and put in place a service level agreement that will only strengthen its application. This should also further strengthen coordination and collaboration with other security agencies, and even those involved in promoting oversight, which is already seen positively by 84% of survey respondents.

A key impact of the project's intervention has been to build a framework and encourage active collaboration between agencies responsible for border management through the IBM framework and scenario exercises. As one participant noted "training was not just an imposition of international best practice, we began with consultation workshops to develop the workshop itself drawing on a range of key groups. So, by the time we came to develop the training, it was a collective endeavour". Others agreed that it, like many of the DCAF supported interventions, were "fantastically consultative processes" and that this encouraging of cooperation between security agencies, and even, though less so, cooperation between GID and oversight institutions including civil society groups, can improve GID's ability to deliver its mandate at individual and community levels.

The DCAF project has also helped GID make a significant breakthrough on gender mainstreaming with 86% of survey respondents in agreement with the statement that the GID promotes inclusivity and gender internally. Although there is still work to be done when it changes to shifting behaviours and implementing the stated ambitions, the recognition, held by the majority of senior management, of the need to ensure that all regulation and legislation needs to be sensitive to gender is an indication of significant progress that will have a sustainable and long-term impact, The effects of this are already being reflected in women holding more prominent positions in the organisation. The GID female network, established by the project, which supports mentoring among female officers, is also a key part of ensuring gains have been incrementally sustained, with recommendations to ensure gender mainstreaming proposed now all accepted and implemented by GID senior leadership. "We are seeing more gender equality in the operations already, even though we don't have the regulation, particularly at the strategic level. This is new. It should be about capacity, not about gender"

However, the overall impact of the project could be challenged by the continued non-passage of the Immigration Bill into law, as many of the highly consultative and validated regulations and frameworks developed under the project have their legal backing in the revised and progressive legislation. "It not being a law has limited our impact" noted one respondent who highlighted that whilst there remains a risk that "the process can be dumped and started again before it gets to the National Assembly and eventually the President, we are confident that it will pass". Ultimately this is one of the trade-offs of this particular intervention, in that whilst there is a clear need and desire to update a largely obsolete law and bring it in line with established global standards, this requires actions to happen that the project cannot control, only try and influence, which it has sought to do extensively and in very strategic and consultative ways. The positive of such an approach is that when the Bill become law, as almost all experts engaged for this evaluation expected it to, the impacts of those developed regulations become even stronger and more sustainable, than simply having held extensive training on issues of professional standards, conduct and gender mainstreaming. But that is not to underplay the impacts and importance of this transfer of knowledge that the project has provided which has not only improved understandings of professionalism, efficiency and conduct standards that align with human rights, but seen changes in both the behaviour and actions of GID personnel as well as the introduction of structures and agreements that can support, and further, these impacts.

Sustainability: To what extent have the benefits of the intervention continued or are likely to continue?

The project's approach of ensuring GID staff were part of, and enhanced their knowledge of, legislative drafting has increased the GID capacity not only to make additional changes that may be required following the closure of the project but the experience that DCAF has supported provides them with a template for tackling other outdated legislation that pertains to immigration – notably the Alien Registration Act, Refugee Act and Nationality and Citizenship Act – or to continue to introduce progressive and measurable strategic plans. One official described them as an "enriching experience and learning was done in a way that constantly applied it to the Gambian context. These skills can help us work on other revision to legal frameworks that relate to GID". Similarly, efforts to work through the GID Training School and to create a culture of transferring and integrating learning on leaderships, gender mainstreaming and professionalism within the institution is a key illustration of the projects commitment to sustainability given its role in educating future cohorts of GID recruits.

Finally, in addition to the gender network that the project has helped to build which continues to give mentoring and peer-to-peer support for female members of the GID, the creation of a standalone gender unit is indicative of the application and sustained impact that the push for gender mainstreaming is having on everyday operations. "The change is not just in the framework, but there is an attitudinal shift" remarked one GID female officer, who was firm in her belief that the change in how women are viewed within the GID, and even perhaps in the wider security sector given that the agency is the first to have a gender mainstreaming policy, will be a key legacy of the project.

Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Summary

This marks a 12-percentage point increase from the data collected in 2023 and a 17-percentage point increase compared to the 2019 baseline, demonstrating that the effectiveness of GID is perceived by the population to be improving significantly and was above the stated target of a 15% increase laid out in the project's log frame. Key contributions to this have been the frameworks that the project has supported the development of, and training around, codes of conduct, professional standards and strategic planning. Advancement in efforts to improve gender equality have also been significant, and underpinned by a gender mainstreaming policy, that is not just a provision of the revised immigration bill but increasingly integrated into other regulations and frameworks in ways that are contributing to enhanced female status in the agency.

The focus not just on trainings related to these themes, but also on the development of frameworks and regulations in a highly consultative and rights-oriented manner, that has enhanced collaboration and coordination with other security agencies – for example on IBM - is to be commended and has the potential to be transformative. The risk of developing a project where legislative reform ultimately underpins a lot of the accompanying outputs is that if that legislation is not passed, the other components are also weakened. Whilst all respondents, including those within GID and at the National Assembly, were confident that the much needed update to the Immigration Bill will become law, and DCAF made significant effort to do what it could to ensure its straightforward passage, if it does not become law, this could have an impact on longer-term sustainability as regulation, on issues like gender mainstreaming, will lack a legal basis.

Conclusions

Drawing on the findings of this evaluation, the following conclusions and lessons learned can be drawn::

- Frequent change in leadership of key institutions can delay legislative processes and make it difficult for bills to make their ways into laws.
- Legal changes can have more sustainable and long-lasting impacts, but they are less easy to control and thus can risk impacting on the overall outcomes of a project.
- Regular communication with key individuals within partner institutions, like the GID, is critical for smooth implementation. This ensures that there are strong synergies between the project's goals and those of the supported institution. This can mitigate against the risk of changes in personnel disrupting progress and further ensure interventions align with existing institutional planning and targets.
- Consultative approaches to developing regulations and legislation ensure that they are contextually relevant, increase the likelihood that they are applied in practice.
- Having difficult conversations about gender - particularly at senior management level given they can change culture from top down - should not be shied away from but need to be done strategically and gradually for changes to be realized.
- Efforts to improve gender inclusivity and leadership are enhanced when it changes attitudes among male leaders, and when mentoring support structures are put in place to support newly empowered female officers stand up for their rights.
- ToT approaches, particularly those that work through existing internal institutional training schools or structures can support efforts to cascade knowledge not just to the rank and file, but also to new recruits boost the sustainability of interventions.
- To ensure regulations that promote effectiveness and accountability are realised in practice, there is a need to ensure a mechanism exists for robust and independent oversight and to engage state and non-state oversight actors in the development of such.
- DCAF's strong institutional relationships with key stakeholders across the security sector gives them convening power to bring together a range of actors and support them to work towards a common agenda, or service level agreements, as has been shown in the work done around IBM
- Efforts to improve gender inclusivity and leadership, are enhanced when it changes attitudes among male leaders in the force as well, and when mentoring support structures are put in place to support newly empowered female officers.
- Training of trainers approaches to cascade new knowledge can have the benefit of embedding practices within existing structures and contributing towards institutional strengthening but without financial support to aid the training roll-out there are increased risks that the knowledge is not cascaded effectively.
- Bringing together key oversight institutions can strengthen their understanding of one and others' work, which in turn can support more streamlined and effective oversight of security sector actors.

- Providing a repository for information about SSR and legal frameworks, as well as handbooks that can be used for knowledge transfer and retention, offers a valuable resource for those with the responsibility of holding security agencies to account.
- Improved perceptions of GPF internal effectiveness and professionalism will take more time to be replicated in public perceptions and can be shaped by external factors. This should not skew overall assessments of projects effectiveness and impact in the short term.
- The effectiveness of GPF is undermined by limited budgets which reduce their ability to respond to reports of criminality professionally in the view of the public. This is a risk that can undermine public perceptions of a project that works with the police and should be given greater consideration in future internal project risk assessments.
- Alignment with the NSS and SSR Strategy were fundamental components of the design of the project and ensured the project activities dovetailed with national and international efforts to reform the security sector in the country.
- DCAFs strong institutional relationships with a range of key stakeholders in the security sector gives them convening power that few others have to bring together a range of actors and support them to work towards a common agenda.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are proposed.

- To support the institutionalisation of the consultative frameworks developed explore opportunities for more mentorship programmes to complement training rollouts and entrench attitudinal change building on the strong example set by the GID female network.
- In gathering internal monitoring and evaluation data the project can use broader and more encompassing indicators to assess ongoing impact that provides an understand not just of how the institution is changed as a result of project activities but how those that engage and interact with it – including citizens – also feel those impacts. This is done as part of the final evaluation, but if more integrated into project monitoring, it can support more responsive and adaptive programming.
- DCAF could do more to document examples of project successes as tools for increased public awareness and future advocacy. For example, they could look to document how efforts to improve inclusivity in the GID has contributed to greater female representation in a short case study, that captures the perspectives of those who have benefitted and could provide wider lessons for the security sector.
- Include project indicators that try to understand, in more depth, the extent to which a project output is having an impact. For example, seek to utilize and present pre-post training or exercise questionnaires as examples of the application of knowledge acquired during IBM scenarios for example. This would further strengthen the project's ability to demonstrate and point to impacts that go beyond simply achieving a stated output.
- Include greater elements of citizen engagement in the design of projects that predominantly focus on technical development of institutions, even if that is just to engage with media to explain more about the reform processes and how they will benefit ordinary Gambians.

Endnotes

1. Government of The Gambia. 2018. 'The Gambia National Development Plan 2018-2021'
2. Government of The Gambia. 2020. 'Security Sector Reform Strategy 2020-2024'
3. DCAF. 2020. 'Security sector institutional and human resource assessment in The Gambia'. p.6-7
4. Two of the four priority areas it outlined – addressing individual and institutional capacity challenges and filling policy gaps (the others focused on inadequate infrastructure and limited IT systems) – were core focus areas of this DCAF intervention.
5. Split equally by gender
6. In total 80 people in 8 communities across the country Nema Kunku, Fass, Bundung, Dobong Kunda, Sanding Kunda, Busumbala, Farafenni, and Farato.
7. Respondents were asked to rank their responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) in response to a series of statements and questions, with a not applicable option also available.
8. 2024 Project report



Notes

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