



# WORKING IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

## OUR CAPABILITY STATEMENT

## HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US: OUR TEAM

How can GFA assist you in designing, managing, or implementing programmes in fragile and high-risk environments?

We are ready to share our experience with you, explore your priorities, and work with you to achieve sustainable results even under the most difficult conditions.

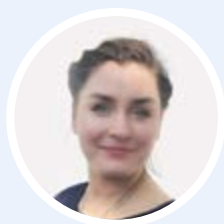


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## WHERE URGENT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS MEET LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Fragility is a rising concern across OECD's multidimensional lens. According to latest studies, over 122 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced and needed outpace funding. In that situation, what counts is delivery that is fast and trusted. The approach of GFA Consulting Group is pragmatic – access built on trusted local relationships and consistent presence combined with rapid implementation with fiduciary and compliance assurance and a bridge from urgent fixes to system reforms that last.

For donors, the urgency is clear: They need partners who can deliver reliably, accountably, and safely in environments where volatility is the norm, institutions are contested, and access can shift overnight. Funding is increasingly tied to risk management, conflict sensitivity, flexible delivery models, fiduciary assurance, and measurable contribution to collective outcomes.

Development cooperation has become fundamentally political. Donors require implementers who can sustain presence, maintain neutrality, and uphold compliance without slowing down delivery. GFA's philosophy reflects exactly this expectation: We combine technical excellence with a low-visibility, high-trust operational style, prioritising discretion, local relationships, and continuity over branding or institutional positioning.

Our attitude is one of respect for local actors, humility in complex environments, and a commitment to long-term partnership, even under deteriorating conditions. In our grounded approach, we define "fragile contexts" not as an abstract category but as a set of overlapping pressures that profoundly shape people's lives.

The OECD describes fragility as a state's limited resilience across political, societal, economic, environmental, and security dimensions. IDOS emphasises weaknesses in legitimacy, authority, and capacity - often visible in contexts where government institutions are contested or absent, social

contracts fray, or communities rely on parallel governance systems for safety and services.

These definitions can appear euphemistic: In practice, fragility can mean municipal water systems destroyed by shelling in Ukraine, districts in Burkina Faso cut off by non-state armed groups, health systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo operating despite decades of insecurity, or cities in Yemen where access depends on daily negotiation with changing authorities. These are not merely "fragile contexts" – they are environments where basic rights, services, and security cannot be taken for granted, and where development actors must adapt constantly to keep programmes functioning and people supported.

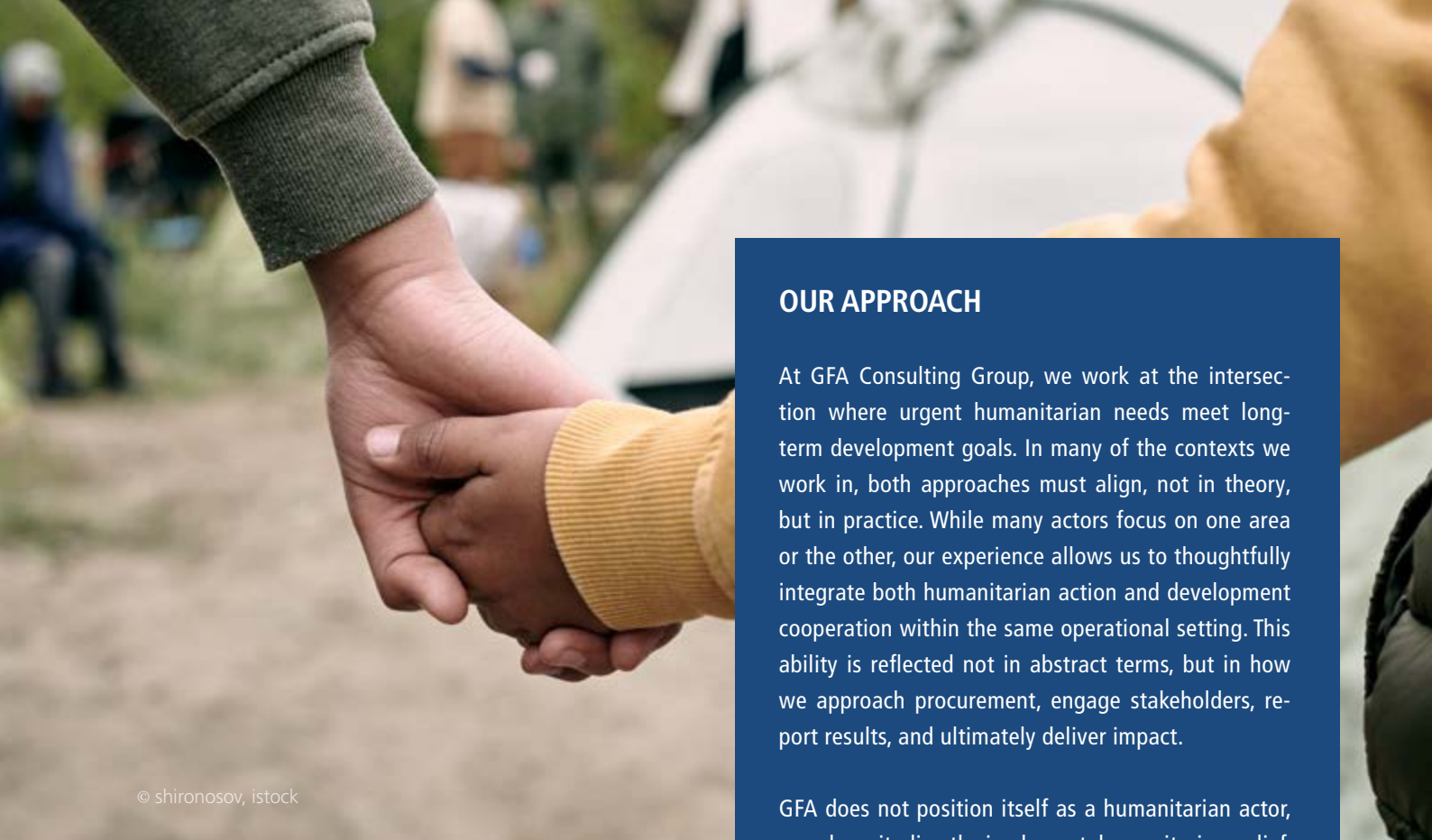
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„In Burkina Faso, many of the women we support live in communities that are difficult to access. Through GFA's partnership-driven approach, we work hand in hand with local organisations to ensure the PDICA project reaches those who are often left behind. This is how we build trust, create impact, and strengthen resilience where it is most needed.”



**Nathalie Kuela**

*Team Leader, Personnes Déplacées à l'Intérieur du pays et les Communautés d'Accueil (PDICA), Burkina Faso*



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Traditional silo approaches have been questioned as they have proven insufficient for creating lasting solutions. The so-called Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus therefore calls for integrated multi-sectoral action – humanitarian, development, and peace actors working in concerted manner to address immediate needs and addressing underlying issues simultaneously. In many post-conflict settings, humanitarian relief tapers off before development programmes ramp up, risking a collapse back into crisis.

The HDP nexus approach thus deliberately links short-term and long-term efforts so that gains made by emergency aid are reinforced by development investments. This ensures a managed transition from emergency aid to long-term recovery and prevention of the notorious “assistance gap” after crises.

“With the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mykolaiv Vodakanal (MVK) has made a major step forward by systematically mapping its water supply system in GIS and developing a calibrated hydraulic model based on real field conditions. This work has transformed data into a practical decision-making tool, enabling the utility to better understand system behaviour, identify bottlenecks, and plan targeted optimisation and rehabilitation measures.”

## OUR APPROACH

At GFA Consulting Group, we work at the intersection where urgent humanitarian needs meet long-term development goals. In many of the contexts we work in, both approaches must align, not in theory, but in practice. While many actors focus on one area or the other, our experience allows us to thoughtfully integrate both humanitarian action and development cooperation within the same operational setting. This ability is reflected not in abstract terms, but in how we approach procurement, engage stakeholders, report results, and ultimately deliver impact.

GFA does not position itself as a humanitarian actor, nor does it directly implement humanitarian relief. Instead, GFA’s strategic engagement with the HDP nexus is rooted in its role as a development partner operating effectively in fragile and crisis-affected environments. GFA leverages its adaptive delivery models, local access, and institutional flexibility to support national systems, promote resilience, and embed peacebuilding elements – all without replacing humanitarian actors, but rather by aligning with them.

Through this approach, GFA contributes meaningfully to collective outcomes while reinforcing locally anchored, system-strengthening pathways out of fragility.



**Dijana Delic,**

*Senior Consultant and Team Leader,  
Water, Sanitation & Waste Management*

## WHAT WE DO: OUR ROLE IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS



### Stay present, safely

GFA is well prepared to remain operational in environments where conditions can change rapidly. We design every project with multiple implementation scenarios, modular workplans, and built-in redundancies so activities can continue even when access decreases or security risks intensify. Remote monitoring and verification systems ensure continuity when field presence is restricted. This approach allows us to maintain delivery responsibly, without exposing staff or partners to unnecessary risk.



### Work with the people who matter locally

Effective engagement in fragile contexts depends on trusted local interlocutors who understand political, social, and cultural dynamics. GFA works with individuals and institutions who are embedded in local systems and able to identify early signals of emerging risks. Their insights help us adjust activities in a timely, context-sensitive manner and navigate boundaries that may not be visible through formal structures alone. This grounded approach ensures that project decisions respect local realities and maintain legitimacy.



### Move fast, verify well

Rapid implementation is often essential in fragile settings, but it must be matched with strong quality and compliance assurance. GFA manages operational processes such as cash transfers, logistics, procurement, and last-mile delivery with the responsiveness required in crisis-affected areas. At the same time, we apply rigorous financial controls, digital audit trails, remote verification tools, and comprehensive duty-of-care protocols. This combination allows us to act quickly while meeting donor requirements for accountability, transparency, and staff safety.



### Translate between silos

Fragile contexts bring together humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors who often work under different mandates and timelines. GFA helps create coherence across these approaches. We ensure that short-term operational decisions do not undermine long-term institutional strengthening, and that essential reforms are not postponed until stability returns. By facilitating communication and coordination among actors, we help align urgent actions with broader system objectives and contribute to more integrated, sustainable outcomes.

## HOW WE WORK: OUR SIGNATURE PRACTICES

„After ten years with the United Nations - most of them with UNHCR - I remain impressed by the agility and flexibility with which GFA sets up and implements projects. Here, I can finally bring together my full experience on forced displacement to design and deliver interventions that truly make a difference on the ground.“



**Maren Kröger,**

*Senior Consultant, GFA Consulting Group*

### Local anchoring from day one

GFA starts every project with a collaborative approach that involves local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders. We apply conflict-sensitive planning to ensure activities do not exacerbate tensions and incorporate safeguarding principles as well as accountability mechanisms for affected populations. This early and continuous engagement builds legitimacy, strengthens ownership, and ensures that interventions reflect local priorities and social realities.

### Dual-profile teams

Our teams combine two types of expertise. Professionals experienced in crisis operations such as logistics, access planning, and remote oversight complement specialists in system strengthening, including financial management, institutional development, and governance. These mutually supportive profiles allow us to respond rapidly to immediate needs while maintaining a long-term focus on building sustainable systems. Lean escalation lines to headquarters ensure that decisions can be made quickly when circumstances change.

### Resilience by design

We structure our projects so that they can continue operating even when disruptions occur. This includes scenario-based workplans, clear deputy arrangements for key roles, secure digital documentation systems, and remote management and verification processes that meet audit requirements. These measures ensure continuity, transparency, and compliance in environments where access, staffing, or security conditions can shift unpredictably.

### Tools that span timelines

GFA uses digital platforms that support both rapid field-level verification and longer-term performance monitoring. These tools allow teams to collect and validate data quickly when access is limited while also tracking progress against medium- and long-term indicators. This integrated approach ensures that immediate operational needs and strategic development goals are monitored within the same system.

### Shared risk, not risk-dumping

We recognise that working in fragile contexts involves genuine operational and fiduciary risks that cannot be transferred entirely to local partners. GFA provides early warnings to donors and partners when contextual conditions deteriorate, and we make joint decisions on whether to scale activities up, adjust them, or pause them. Our approach includes realistic planning, transparent communication, and comprehensive duty-of-care measures to protect staff and partners.

### Results and value for money

Our monitoring approach combines adaptive monitoring, evaluation and learning with results-based management. This ensures that activities remain relevant and can be adjusted as circumstances evolve. We also apply value for money principles - economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity - throughout the project cycle. These principles are embedded in workplans and reporting processes to demonstrate accountability and ensure that resources are used responsibly and transparently.

## WHY CLIENTS CHOOSE GFA: OUR STRENGTHS

**Proven ability to operate in fragile and volatile environments:** We maintain delivery even when access, security, or political conditions shift by support through scenario planning, remote verification, and modular workplans.

**Strong local anchoring and trusted interlocutors:** Our long-standing relationships with local institutions, community actors, and technical counterparts provide early insights into risks and ensure context-sensitive implementation.

**Fast response with rigorous compliance:** GFA combines rapid operational delivery with strong fiduciary controls, digital audit trails, and transparent verification systems that meet donor accountability standards.

**Conflict-sensitive and responsible implementation:** We apply conflict analyses, safeguarding, and mechanisms accountable to affected populations to ensure that interventions do not exacerbate societal tensions and remain locally legitimate.

**Integrated humanitarian–development–peace approach:** We align urgent operational needs with long-term system strengthening to support continuity, resilience, and sustainable institutional capacity.

**Reliable partner with a long-term presence:** Donors value our consistency, discretion, and ability to remain engaged which safeguards stability and continuity for national partners when other actors scale down.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT AND RELY ON

**Uninterrupted delivery of essential services even in deteriorating conditions:** Donors can rely on GFA to keep core services functioning even when access, security, or political conditions change. This applies to water supply and health operations, cash transfer mechanisms, grant management, skills development, and income-generation interventions. Our design ensures service continuity rather than disruption.

**Rapid mobilisation that remains fully compliant with donor requirements:** Partners can expect a quick start-up, fast deployment of teams, and timely implementation paired with transparent reporting, clear audit trails, strong financial control, and full adherence to safeguarding and duty-of-care standards.

**Measurable strengthening of national and local systems alongside emergency actions:** GFA makes sure that every crisis response or urgent intervention simultaneously reinforces local institutions, operational procedures, and governance capacities. Donors receive not just short-term outputs, but tangible improvements in system performance.

**Lower operational and fiduciary risk through real-time oversight and adaptive design:** Donors benefit from reduced execution risk thanks to scenario-based planning, modular workplans, secure digital documentation, ongoing verification of outputs, and continuous monitoring. These mechanisms reduce exposure to delays, misalignment, or non-compliance.



**Flavien N'donko**

*Team Leader, PESoP project in Cameroon*



„Working with vulnerable groups in the health sector has taught me how essential targeted, income-generating support is for restoring dignity and resilience. At GFA, I can apply this experience to shape the PESoP project in ways that genuinely reach the most vulnerable and open real pathways to improved livelihoods.“

## COMPLIANCE & INTEGRITY



### Gender and diversity

GFA applies a clear gender and diversity policy that promotes equal opportunities and non-discrimination in all projects and internal processes. We conduct gender analyses during design, integrate inclusive and gender-responsive measures into implementation, and track progress through dedicated indicators. Our approach addresses the specific barriers faced by women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, and other marginalised groups, enabling safe participation, respectful conduct, and a “leave no one behind” commitment throughout the project cycle.



### Safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

GFA applies a strict zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding violations. We maintain confidential and accessible reporting channels, use a survivor-centred response model, and ensure that all staff and contracted partners receive regular training on safeguarding responsibilities and behavioural standards.



### Data responsibility and compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Our data management practices follow a data minimisation approach, limiting collection to what is necessary for implementation. We obtain informed consent, define clear purpose limitations, apply secure data storage protocols, and conduct data protection impact assessments when required. These measures ensure responsible handling of sensitive information, particularly in fragile contexts.



### Environmental and social safeguards

GFA carries out context-specific environmental and social risk screenings that include conflict sensitivity and the ‘do no harm’ principle. Identified risks are addressed through proportionate mitigation measures and continuous monitoring. This makes sure that activities are implemented responsibly and without unintended negative consequences.



### Fiduciary assurance

We apply rigorous financial control systems that include segregation of duties, risk-based sampling, transparent audit trails, and independent verification when needed. Third-party spot checks, incident reporting, and structured learning processes expedite compliance with donor requirements and support continuous improvement.



### Integrity and anti-corruption measures

GFA enforces a comprehensive code of conduct, carries out due diligence on suppliers and partners, and applies clear rules on gifts, hospitality, and potential conflicts of interest. Whistle-blower protection mechanisms ensure that concerns can be raised safely and acted upon promptly.



**Hennadii Dudko**

*Expert, MVK project in Ukraine*

„The GFA team, with financial support from the ICRC, launched an important initiative in close cooperation with local utility MVK in Ukraine, following the completion of a comprehensive diagnostic study in 2023 and the identification of priority actions. This partnership has successfully laid the essential groundwork to improve the city's water supply. Through the joint efforts in this project, substantial progress has been achieved toward building a more resilient and efficient water system for Mykolaiv.”

A photograph of two young Black women in white shirts working on a laptop. The woman on the left is looking at the screen, while the woman on the right, wearing glasses, is smiling and looking at the camera. They are in a rustic setting with wooden beams and pillars in the background.

# GFA *AT* WORK

*FIND A SELECTION OF PROJECTS  
ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES •••▶*

## SELECTED PROJECTS



### Ukraine

#### Water Network Rehabilitation for Mykolaiv Vodokanal (ICRC, 20241–2026)

In the aftermath of extensive damage to urban infrastructure, GFA supports the municipal water utility in Mykolaiv with technical assessments, GIS-based diagnostics, hydraulic modelling, and rehabilitation planning. Despite ongoing security risks and fluctuating access, GFA provides reliable technical expertise and capacity development, enabling the utility to restore essential services and plan longer-term infrastructure investments with international financiers. The project demonstrates GFA's ability to deliver specialised support rapidly, safely, and with strong coordination between emergency response and system recovery.



### Mali

#### Fiduciary Agent for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (2024–2027)

In a highly fragile and insecure operating environment, GFA acts as the Fiduciary Agent overseeing Global Fund grant implementation. We ensure that all financial and procurement transactions are eligible, justified, authorised, and fully compliant with Global Fund rules and national regulations. GFA verifies and approves commitments and payments, provides no-objection to disbursements, reconciles expenditures with bank statements, and reviews agreements with sub-recipients. We also strengthen the principal recipient's internal systems by reviewing procedures, advising on procurement, and supporting configuration of the Tompro accounting system. This assignment proves GFA's ability to safeguard major health investments, maintain grant continuity in volatile contexts, and uphold strong fiduciary controls in support of HIV, TB, and malaria programmes.



### Nigeria

#### SEPIN Programme: Piloting Innovative Social Protection Mechanisms (GIZ, 2025–2027)

GFA supports the development of inclusive and shock-responsive social protection instruments in Borno and Adamawa States - two regions heavily affected by conflict, displacement, and weak service systems. The programme combines immediate assistance (cash transfers) with the piloting of innovative long-term measures (coaching, skills development, income-generation support). Together, these interventions aim to improve the resilience of the targeted households and put them on a path to achieving sustainable graduation from poverty, while simultaneously strengthening the institutional capacities of state social protection actors. GFA applies gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive approaches and works with trusted local institutions to ensure safe access and relevance. By linking urgent household support with long-term systems strengthening, GFA helps create a more resilient and accountable social protection architecture in a highly fragile environment.



#### Benin, Togo, Guinea-Bissau | Stabilisation fund in fragile regions within ECOWAS Member States (FRSD Phase I+II), (KfW, 2021–2028)

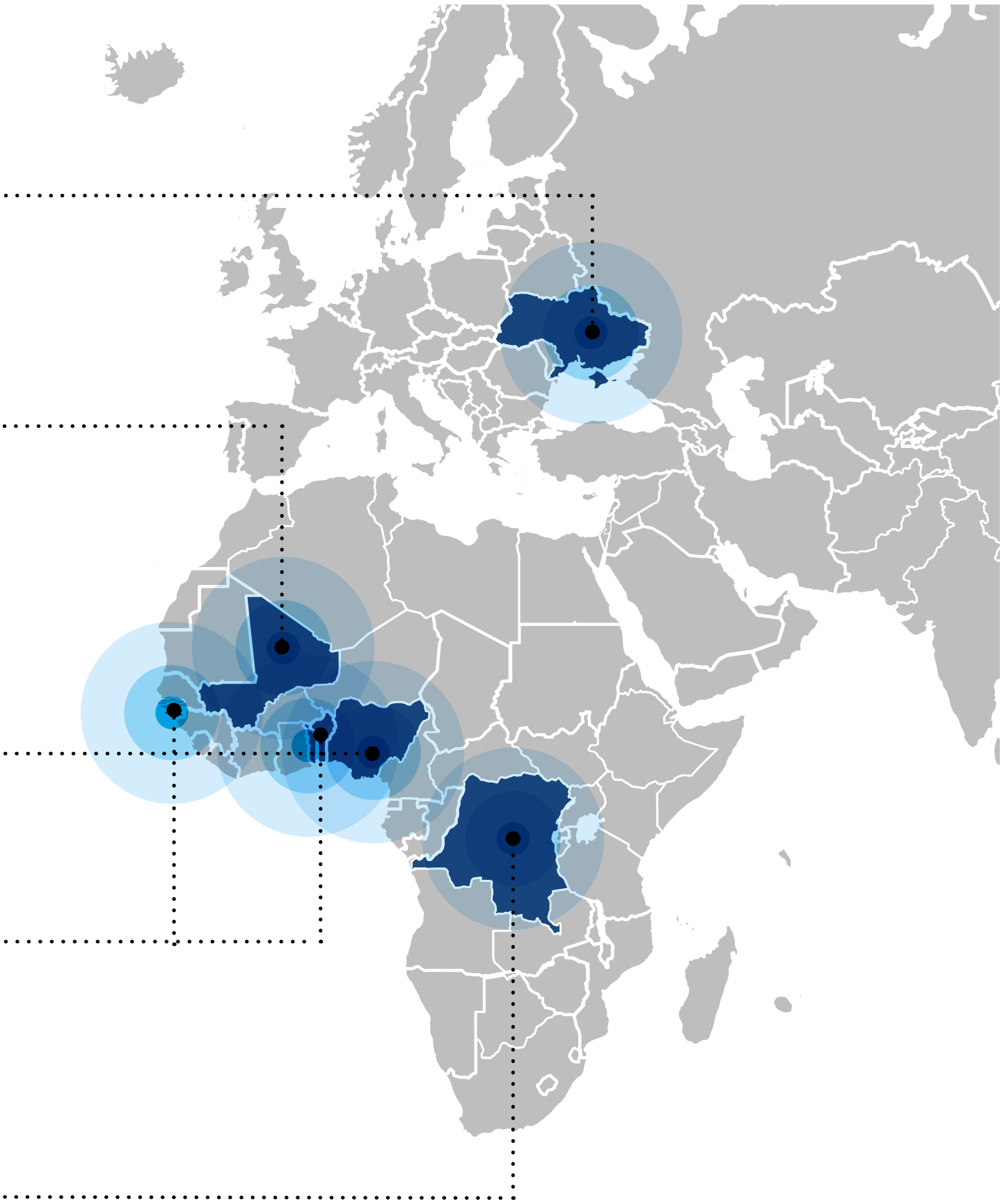
The "Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development in fragile regions within ECOWAS Member States" (FRSD Phase I+II) addresses fragility through investments and capacity building. It serves as a flexible funding instrument that can be employed to respond to needs arising from newly emerging crises, conflicts and fragility in the ECOWAS region. The main objective is to contribute to the stability and sustainable development through the improvement of living conditions, the strengthening of social cohesion and the promotion of good governance. GFA manages the Financial Cooperation (FC) window funded through KfW Development Bank. As Fund manager GFA is currently responsible for 6 Infrastructure Grants in Guinea Bissau, 2 in Togo and 2 in Benin, all implemented by international NGO in the context of multiannual projects. GFA safeguards by training, supervision and monitoring proper technical and financial project implementation of the Contractors.



### Democratic Republic of Congo

#### PBF I–VI: Biodiversity & Forest Programme (KfW, 2010–2027)

The PBF programme supports the management of major protected areas in Eastern DRC, a region marked by persistent insecurity, armed groups, and contested governance. GFA has provided long-term technical, operational, and security management support to the national conservation authority (ICCN), which makes continuous project implementation possible despite volatility. After major security incidents – including a rebel attack on the Okapi Wildlife Reserve headquarters – GFA sustained operations through remote management, rigorous security protocols, and specialised personnel. The programme illustrates GFA's ability to maintain delivery, uphold duty of care, and strengthen national institutions over more than a decade in one of the world's most challenging contexts.

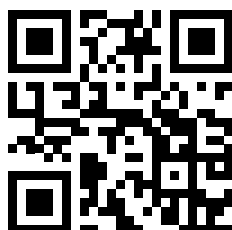


“For me, the SEPIN project has been a unique opportunity to translate technical expertise into meaningful impact for people who need it most. Leading the first pilot design of the graduation and shock responsive social protection systems, with a deliberate focus on women, internally displaced persons, returnees and promoting green jobs, has reaffirmed why I chose this field in the first place: to support vulnerable households to regain stability, confidence and sustainable economic opportunities. The project has shown that innovation in social protection is not just a theoretical concept, it is a practical pathway for restoring livelihoods, promoting women's economic participation and rebuilding more resilient, climate conscious communities in Northeast Nigeria.”



**Atem Kingsly**

*Team Leader Nigeria,  
SEPIN Programme: Piloting Innovative Social  
Protection Mechanisms*



The spare parts market for new motorcycles in Newi, Nigeria, uses sustainable solar panels. It is the third largest in the world.

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GFA GROUP  
Your purpose  
Our expertise



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