



# EQUATORIAL GUINEA'S HEALTH SECTOR

# Contents

1.	Country Overview	2
	1.1. Key Country Statistics	3
2.	Covid-19	3
3.	Health Overview	4
	3.1. Key Health Statistics	5
4.	Key challenges faced by the private sector	5
5.	Key opportunities for the private sector	6
6.	References	6

# 1. Country Overview

Equatorial Guinea, officially referred to as the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, is located on the west coast of Africa. The country is neighbours Cameroon to the north, Gabon to the South and east with the Gulf of Guinea to the west. Its post-independence name pays homage to the countries location, near the equator and the Gulf of Guinea. The country has an insular and a mainland region. The insular regions consist of Bioko islands in the Gulf of Guinea and Annobon, a volcanic island which is part of the country only south of the equator<sup>[1]</sup>. The capital city, Malabo is located in Bioko. Equatorial Guinea was colonised by the Spaniards and was liberated in 1968.

The vast majority of the mainland is densely covered by tropical rainforest which has been misused by the lumbering industry who cut trees for commercial purposes. The rainforest has over 140 species of wood with okume, African walnut and various mahoganies uprooted for industrial use. Bioko, where the capital city is located has a large variety of tropical vegetation and mangroves outlining the coast and riverbanks<sup>[1]</sup>. The ethnic composition of Equatorial Guinea includes Fang, the largest group followed by Bubi, Yoruba, Igbo. Each group speaks their own indigenous languages with Fang and Bubi being the most common, evoking their large population. However, the official languages are Spanish and French. Majority of Equatorial Guineans are supposedly Roman Catholics with those residing in the mainland following traditional arrangements of worship<sup>[1]</sup>.

Equatorial Guinea is part of the Africa Continental free trade agreement (AfCFTA) which was created to place Africa as the leading free trade area in the world and reduce trade barriers for member states. The country seeks to position as a regional natural gas producer and exporter as the country recently fulfilled its first shipment of methanol to Gabon. This transaction was enabled by the AfCFTA and is just the beginning for other sectors to capitalise on the benefits of tariff reduction and market liberalisation<sup>[2]</sup>. Equatorial Guinea's president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, has been one of the longest serving presidents in the world. He took power after the 1979 coup and has been in office for 40 years<sup>[3]</sup>.



## 1.1. Key Country Statistics



**58.74**

Life expectancy at birth (yrs), 2019



**-4.90**

GDP growth (annual %), 2020



**43.33**

Exports as a % of GDP, 2020 in 2019



**46.45**

Imports as a % of GDP, 2020



Top 3 export products, 2019:  
Crude petroleum (**\$3.08B**),  
Petroleum gas (**\$920M**),  
Acyclic alcohols (**\$265M**)



Top 3 import products, 2019:  
Gas turbines (**\$65.7M**), Beer (**\$33.7M**),  
Special purpose ships (**\$33M**)



**1423.90 CFA Franc Billion**  
Balance of trade, 2019

## 2. Covid-19

As of 23 September 2021 <sup>[13,14]</sup>:

- Total Covid-19 cases: 11,5444
- Recovered: 9,826
- Dead: 140
- 1<sup>st</sup> dose administered: 397,000
- Fully vaccinated: 168,000
- % Of population fully vaccinated: 11.9%

The first case was noted in March 2020 whereby the government implemented strict measures. Local and international borders were closed, travel between districts was banned unless deemed as an essential service. Additionally, the two largest cities, Malabo and Bata were in total lockdown. An emergency fund totalling 5 billion CFA was gathered by the government along with the help of various multilateral entities and non-governmental organisations <sup>[6]</sup>. The funds were allocated toward health system strengthening to coordinate the response to the crisis. This included procurement of hygiene supplies, increases testing capabilities and bringing in international experienced health professionals <sup>[7]</sup>. With regard to their vaccination status, China donated 100,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine to help kickstart the countries vaccination campaign in February 2021 <sup>[7]</sup>. Later in June, the country purchased 500,000 more doses from China. As of June 2021, Equatorial Guinea is the third most immunised country per capita in Africa with 17% of the population inoculated. The country also signed up to the COVAX initiative to ensure that Equatorial Guineans can access vaccines in a timely manner <sup>[8]</sup>.

## 3. Health Overview

The health system is distributed into four levels of care <sup>[9]</sup>:

- Health posts: in each village of 600 people
- Health centres: have dispensaries and qualified nurses
- District level hospitals
- Referral hospitals

The health system of Equatorial Guinea is fragile and underdeveloped. Based on the nation's budget they seem to have placed emphasis on investing in their infrastructure rather the health system. In 2011, the country was condemned by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund when they allocated 82% of the countries national budget towards large infrastructure projects <sup>[10]</sup>.

Due to lack of healthcare financing, the number of health professionals are dearth in the country. The lack of financing towards healthcare acts as a deterrent for many to join the profession and reason for many health cadres to migrate. The underfunded health sector has 1.81 health personnel per 1000 population (2018), this is below the SDG target of 4.45 <sup>[6]</sup>. This disparity is heightened in rural areas with the health workforce opting to work in urban settlements, exposing them to more vulnerabilities. Besides the inadequate staffing, patients are having to endure long waiting times, stock outs of basic medications and medical supplies and common misdiagnosis <sup>[9]</sup>.

The state invested in two advanced hospitals in Malabo and Bata, La Paz, which are managed and run by international health professionals. The facilities are equipped with modern equipment and specialised services which charge user fees that conventional people who earn a minimum wage would not afford <sup>[9]</sup>.

Furthermore, the country does not have any form of national health insurance as a result, out of pocket payments towards health form a significant part of healthcare financing (75.34% of CHE, 2018). The absence of a national health financing scheme could broaden health inequities because some people may skip seeking care and result to using ineffective traditional remedies while others may incur catastrophic expenses, whereby households are pushed below the poverty line in search of health services <sup>[9]</sup>.

Since 1995, majority of the population does not have access to safe and clean drinking water. Additionally, since 1990, child vaccination rates have drastically decreased from 77% to 40% (2015), considered among the worst in the world <sup>[15]</sup>. However, in seeking to build a modern economy through huge investments in infrastructure there is hope that the government also improves the status of access to drinking water in their plans. The country may also be at the cusp of improving their vaccination strategies given the momentum gained in their Covid-19 vaccination rollout which could be embodied in improving child vaccinations as well <sup>[9]</sup>.

## The top ten causes of death are:



HIV/AIDS



Malaria



Neonatal  
diseases



Lower respiratory  
infection



Ischemic  
heart disease



Stroke,



Road injuries



Diabetes



Tuberculosis



STIs

## 3.1 Key Health Statistics



**3.0**

Current health  
expenditure as a  
% of GDP, 2018

**77.81**

Private health  
expenditure as a  
% of CHE, 2018

**19.87**

Government health  
expenditure as a %  
of CHE, 2018



**75.34**

OOP expenditure  
as a % of CHE,  
2018



**301**

Maternal mortality  
modeled per 100,000  
live births, 2017



**81.8**

Under five mortality  
per 1,000 live births,  
2019

## 4. Key challenges faced by the private sector

- Lack of power transfers has led to:
  - Poverty
  - Corruption
  - Political instability
- The health system is heavily reliant on donors for delivery of essential healthcare to the population.

## 5. Key opportunities for the private sector


- The country has heavily invested in infrastructure
- Introduce new health financing models in collaboration with the government
- Mobile health clinics to reach remote settlements.
- Investment in medication and medical equipment

## 6.0. References

- [1] Britannica, "Equatorial Guinea | Culture, History, & People", Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Equatorial-Guinea>. [Accessed: 22- Sep- 2021].
- [2] Africa News, "Equatorial Guinea and Gabon Drive AfCFTA with Energy Deal: African Energy Week in Cape Town will Place Post-AfCFTA Opportunities at the Forefront of the African Energy Agenda | Africanews", Africanews, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.africanews.com/2021/08/30/equatorial-guinea-and-gabon-drive-afcfta-with-energy-deal-african-energy-week-in-cape-town-will-place-post-afcfta-opportunities-at-the-forefront-of-the-african-energy-agenda/>. [Accessed: 22- Sep- 2021].
- [3] Business Insider Africa, "After a historic vote, Vladimir Putin could remain in power in Russia until 2036. Here are 15 of the world's longest-serving leaders.", Business Insider Africa, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://africa.businessinsider.com/strategy/after-a-historic-vote-vladimir-putin-could-remain-in-power-in-russia-until-2036-here/122yjbz>. [Accessed: 24- Sep- 2021].
- [4] World Bank, "Exports of goods and services (% of GDP) - Equatorial Guinea | Data", Data.worldbank.org, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.ZS?locations=GQ>. [Accessed: 22- Sep- 2021].
- [5] OEC, "Equatorial Guinea (GNQ) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners | OEC", OEC - The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019. [Online]. Available: [https://oec.world/en/profile/country/gnq#:~:text=Imports%20The%20top%20imports%20of,\(%2454M\)%2C%20and%20United%20Arab](https://oec.world/en/profile/country/gnq#:~:text=Imports%20The%20top%20imports%20of,(%2454M)%2C%20and%20United%20Arab). [Accessed: 22- Sep- 2021].
- [6] Trading economics, "Equatorial Guinea Balance of Trade | 1990-2019 Data | 2020-2021 Forecast | Historical", Tradingeconomics.com, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://tradingeconomics.com/equatorial-guinea/balance-of-trade>. [Accessed: 22- Sep- 2021].
- [7] UN, "SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT Assessment of COVID-19 in Equatorial Guinea", 2020.
- [8] Reuters, "Equatorial Guinea buys 500,000 Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines", Reuters, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-equatorial-idUSL5N2NY2X2>. [Accessed: 23- Sep- 2021].
- [9] Africa Health Organisation, "Equatorial Guinea | Africa Health Organisation", Africa Health Organisation, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://aho.org/countries/equatorial-guinea/>. [Accessed: 24- Sep- 2021].
- [10] HRW, "'Manna From Heaven'?", Human Rights Watch, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/15/manna-heaven/how-health-and-education-pay-price-self-dealing-equatorial-guinea>. [Accessed: 24- Sep- 2021].

- [11] IHME, "Equatorial Guinea", Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2021. [Online]. Available: <http://www.healthdata.org/equatorial-guinea>. [Accessed: 24- Sep- 2021].
- [12] World Bank, "Current health expenditure (% of GDP) - Equatorial Guinea | Data", Data.worldbank.org, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?locations=GQ>. [Accessed: 24- Sep- 2021].
- [13] H. Ritchie et al., "Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)", Our World in Data, 2021. [Online]. Available: [https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID\\_WRL](https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID_WRL). [Accessed: 04- Oct- 2021].
- [14] Worldometer, "Equatorial Guinea COVID: 12,362 Cases and 147 Deaths - Worldometer", Worldometers.info, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/equatorial-guinea/#:~:text=Equatorial%20Guinea%20COVID%3A%2012%2C362%20Cases%20and%20147%20Deaths%20%2D%20Worldometer>. [Accessed: 04- Oct- 2021].
- [15] Worldbank, "Immunization, DPT (% of children ages 12-23 months) - Equatorial Guinea | Data", Data.worldbank.org, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.IMM.IDPT?end=2019&locations=GQ&start=1990>. [Accessed: 04- Oct- 2021].





Do you need more in-depth information on Equatorial Guinea's health sector and how your project or business can contribute?

AHB offers a wide range of tailor-made market, feasibility and strategy studies based on your needs. Our market intelligence services are designed to help you gain in-dept insight in a particular (sub) health sector, understand the opportunities and challenges for your project or business and provide you with recommendations that allow you to pursue the growth of your organisation in a particular (sub) sector or region.

Need more information on any health sector in Africa? Africa Health Business can help you.


We have an experienced and knowledgeable team on the ground in Africa that can help you make informed decisions when it comes to forming or further defining your business strategy in any health market on the continent.

We create value for your business or project by leveraging our large and unequalled networks, our people and our experience in Africa's health sector.


AHB's headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya and we work with professionals all over the continent to provide our clients with the tailormade and bespoke services that meet their business needs.

For other country reports please visit:  
[www.ahb.co.ke/publications](http://www.ahb.co.ke/publications)




 (+254) 704 838 150  
(+254) 700 014 557

 [www.ahb.co.ke](http://www.ahb.co.ke)  
[www.africahealthbusiness.com](http://www.africahealthbusiness.com)

 New Rehema House  
Rhapta Road, Westlands,  
Nairobi, Kenya

 [info@ahb.co.ke](mailto:info@ahb.co.ke)

 P.O. Box 49874 - 00100  
Nairobi, Kenya