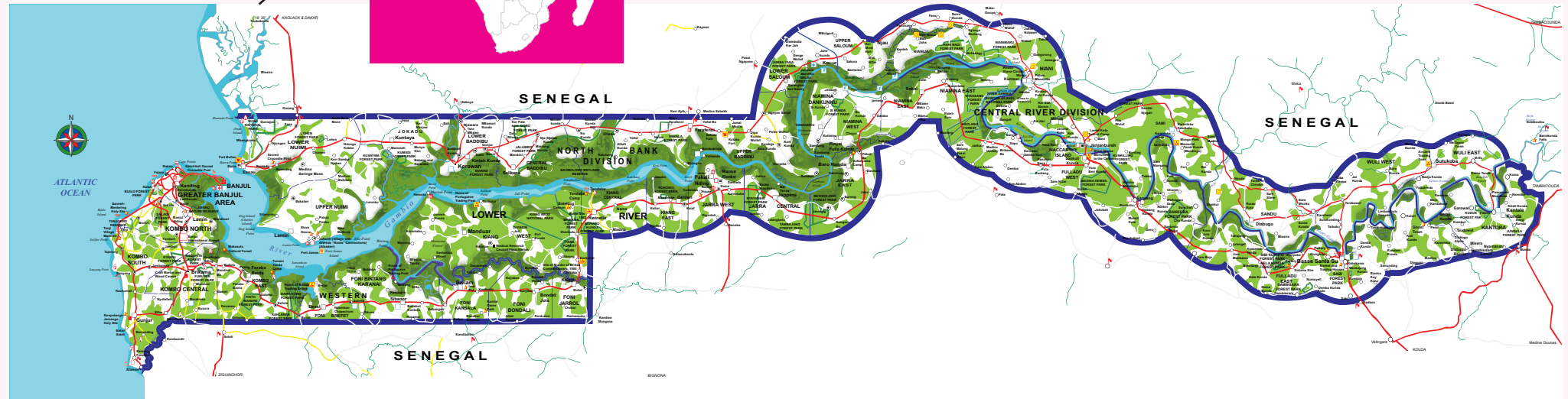
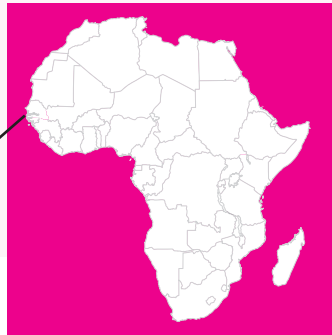


Proposed by



**PROPOSAL FOR THE STATE OF MAP 2019/CALL FOR VENUES**

**SotM 2019 – The Gambia (The Smiling Coast of Africa)**



# About the Gambia

## Location

West Africa (one of the smallest countries in mainland Africa)

## Area

11,295 sq. km (4361 sq. miles)

## Capital

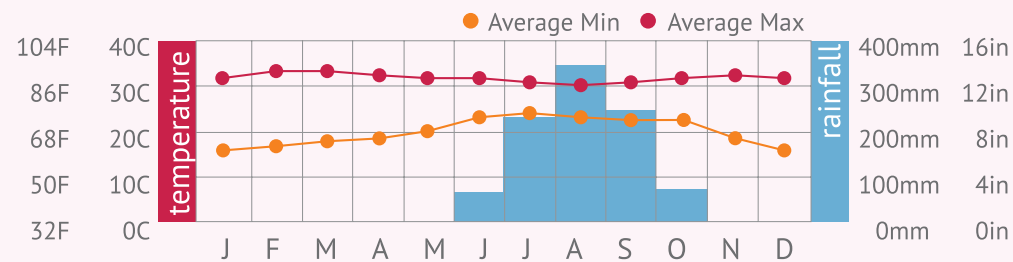
Banjul

## Currency

Dalasi (GMD), pronounced da-la-si

## Time Zone

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)



## Climate

The country enjoys virtually uninterrupted sunshine and high daytime temperatures with almost no rainfall from November to June. From July to October the humidity level is high, and the sunshine is punctuated by heavy tropical showers.

## Population

1.8 million

## Ethnic Diversity and languages

Official Language: English

Other Languages: Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola, Sarahule, Serer, Manjago, Creole (known as Aku)

French is spoken quite widely. In addition, some staff in hotels, restaurants and excursion agencies speak other languages including German, Italian, Dutch, French and the Scandinavian languages.

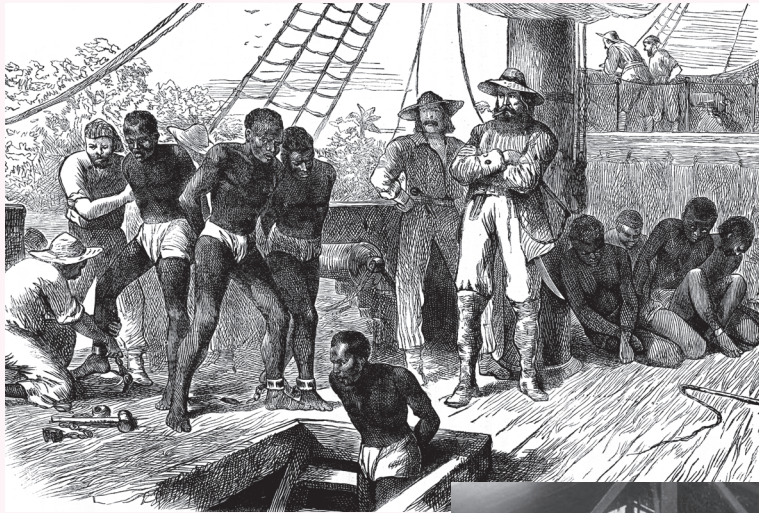
## Religious Tolerance and Diversity

The Gambia is one of the most religious tolerant nations in the world. Indeed, most people are inter-related, regardless of their religious backgrounds; it is not uncommon to find Muslims and Christians married to each other, or closely connected. Religious days and feasts – both Christian and Muslim - are celebrated nationally. This has been the case since time immemorial, and continues today.

Muslims account for 85% of the population. The other 15% is comprised of Christians and practitioners of other African traditional religions.

## Economic Activity

Tourism is a major industry in The Gambia. Others include agriculture, agro processing, fisheries, livestock, manufacturing and petroleum.



## Brief History of The Gambia

Archaeological evidence, in particular the Wassu Stone Circle, shows that people have been living in the region since 500 BC. Around 1200 saw the first migration of the Fula to the region; they now account for about 20% of Gambia's population.

Between 1400 and 1600 the region fell under the Mali Empire, the first of the great empires in West Africa to reach the Atlantic coast. The Malinke (Mandinka) ruled, a subset of the Mandé peoples who are spread across West Africa, and are now the dominant ethnic group in The Gambia.

Towards the end of the 16th century, the region came under the control of the Songhai Empire, but incursions by forces from Morocco, and then the arrival of Portuguese traders quickened its collapse. The Portuguese, British and French all tried to claim the region as part of their colonial empire; Britain gained the narrow tongue of land which was sandwiched within French territory. During the 17th and 18th century, the region was a major source of slaves for the trans-Atlantic trade.

When Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807 it met with resistance in The Gambia; a military post was set up at Bathurst (now Banjul) to aid anti-slavery measures. Indeed, slavery in The Gambia was only abolished in 1906.

In 1889 the boundary between The Gambia and Senegal was agreed by Britain and France. Five years later, with increasing colonial activity inland, it became a British protectorate.

Independence was granted on 18 February 1965, with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state and Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara as prime minister. A republic was declared five years later, on 24 April 1970, with Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara becoming president.

A military coup in 1994 deposed President Jawara, who had been in power for 32 years (since becoming prime minister in 1962). Yahya Jammeh remained Head of State since 1994 to January 2017.

Yahya Jammeh lost to Adama Barrow in an election that was followed by high tensions requiring the intervention of ECOWAS troops to force him to accept and step down. Adama Barrow is the current democratically elected and sitting president.



## Why The Gambia?

The country major hotels are uniquely positioned on the coastline and it has great accessibility through the Rover Gambia all year round. The country which just ushered in a new democratic government on the 19th of January 2017 with the slogan "The Gambia is open for Business", It has already started attracting major conferences, with the Organization of Islamic Countries conference slated for December 2019. The Local host The Gambia YMCAs Computer Training Centre and Digital Studio has great working and collaborating relationship with the Ministry of Information Communication and Infrastructure, who's Minister will officially open the conference. It has a lot of collaborative relationship with all the major hotels, youth organizations, the University of the Gambia, as a leading centre and NGO for youth empowerment through ICT including the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The centre is known locally to host and organize Youth related ICT events and host the secretariat of the Information Technology Association of the Gambia. The centre is a big player in promoting girls in ICT with 90% of the centre personnel as women, who play leading management roles in organizing events.



The Gambia is also uniquely poised as a conference destination based on its friendly customer service, peaceful nature, where visitors feel safe at anytime of the day, and its unique hotels with affordable prices. Its local Internet Service Providers and TELcos have made sure all major hotels have reliable and efficient Bandwidth for Internet Access.

## Who is the SotM Gambia Team?

The Gambia Bid team is composed of Computer Scientist and ICT Experts from Banjul, The Gambia working at the Gambia YMCA Computer Training Centre and Digital

Studio. The centre is involved in various ICT research and related work with the Freedom Online Coalition [www.freedomonlinecoalition.com](http://www.freedomonlinecoalition.com) work Group 3 on Transparency and Privacy online and also the Open Data Charter [www.opendatacharter.net](http://www.opendatacharter.net).

The centre also runs the Google Developers Group and carries out numerous outreach programs for young people interested in programming at our centre.

Our Team Members are:

- Poncelet O. Ileleji
- Anna Anet Sambou

## When?

We propose the second weekend of May 2019, as the recommended date for State of the Map. Our bid includes a quotation for the recommended venue on that weekend. We can consider alternative dates.

## Where?

The Smiling Coast of Africa as commonly referred to The Gambia is famous for its hospitality which makes it an ideal choice for seeking suitable venues with a flair for the exotic. Many of the hotels offer meeting facilities, all with the bonus of a tropical beach location for after-business relaxation.

Our bid includes a firm quotation for our recommended tropical venue, on the recommended dates.

Catering services are by the hotel and we have provided the quotes.



## Transportation

The transportation system in The Gambia mixes both public and private operations and consists of a system of roads (both paved and unpaved), water and air transportation. Tourist Taxis (green) are parked in the main hotel areas. They charge for waiting time and this should be negotiated, prior to your journey. There are no railways in the country.



## Car Rental

The car rentals sector is not very well developed. You can pick up a vehicle at Banjul International Airport's front booths or in the coastal resorts, but elsewhere in the country the possibilities of getting one are basically slim to none. Daily rates including insurance and mileage can be pretty steep, and for a 4WD can go through the roof.



There are now a few car rental firms operating in The Gambia, like AB Gambia Car Rental, AVIS, Hertz and Afriq Cars. Your hotels' receptionists can best advise you where to look for the most convenient car to hire from.

Alternatively you can hire a taxi on a daily basis as it simpler and cheaper. However low the prices, don't get into a vehicle that's not roadworthy, has an impatient driver or someone you cannot communicate easily with. Finally, ask politely to see his or her driver's license is up to date, the seat belt is working properly, and the lights and signals are in good working order.



## International Travel Requirements and Advice

### Banjul International Airport

Banjul International Airport also known as Yundum

International (IATA: BJL) is the international airport of Banjul, capital of the Gambia, and the only paved airport of the country. The airport is located in Yundum about 24km from Banjul, the capital city of The Gambia.

## Entry Requirements

Citizens of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other nations with a reciprocal visa abolition agreement with The Gambia do not require a visa to enter the country, whether on holiday or on a business trip not exceeding 90 days. All other nationalities should possess a visa, which is available from any of the Gambian embassies and consulates: London, Paris, Washington DC, Brussels, Taipei, Rabat, Jeddah, Havana, Dakar, Lagos, Freetown and Guinea Bissau. Citizens from France, Portugal, Switzerland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Belgium, Poland and Russia are exempted from visa from October to April.

Tourists and others travelling on last minute bookings will be allowed entry but will be required to submit their passport to the Department of Immigration in Banjul within 48 hours to be issued a proper visa.

## Health Requirements

An International Certificate of Vaccination is no longer compulsory for visitors to The Gambia. However, a yellow fever vaccination will be required for visitors from Europe and North America. The last outbreak of yellow fever in The Gambia was in 1978 and there is no immediate danger to visitors. Anti-malaria medicine is however recommended and visitors should consult their doctors on which pills to take. Visitors are also advised to bring along insect repellents, sun screen, anti-fungal creams and disinfectant

as they may prove expensive or unobtainable in certain parts of the country. There are several hospitals and clinics operated by the Government as well as by private practitioners which provide both therapeutic and preventative healthcare.

## Travel Insurance

Visitors are advised to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering the following:

- Injury
- Death
- Illness
- Personal belongings
- Baggage damage/loss or delay

## Duty Free

For further information on duty free restrictions, please contact the Director General of Customs and Excise in Banjul. website: <http://www.gra.gm>

## By Air

There are a number of tour operator chartered flights to The Gambia. Most of these operate only in the winter months (November to April). Some charters operate throughout the year, as do some scheduled airlines serving Banjul International Airport.

### From the USA

Brussels Airline, Royal air Maroc connecting flights available from Europe

### From the UK

Thomas Cook, Gambia Experience, Royal Air Marco

### From Morocco

Royal Air Maroc.

### From Scandinavia

Thomas Cook Scandinavia, Brussels Airline

### From Belgium

Brussels Airline, TUI- Belguim

### From Holland

TUI Holland (Arke fly), Travelpoort, Corendon

### From Spain

Vueling, Binter Canaries, Royal Air Marco

### From Germany

Brussels Airline and Vueling, connecting flights available from other European Countries

### From the United States

Connecting flights available from Europe.

### From the West African sub-region

Fly Mid Africa, Asky and Royal Air Maroc.

## By Sea

Banjul has a deep- sea port, which receives several cruise ships all year round.

Container ships and other freighters call into Banjul Port from all over the world.

## By Road

There is a road link between Dakar and Banjul; the journey takes between five and six hours. There is also a road link with Ziguinchor, in Southern Senegal, and Bissau. A four-wheel drive vehicle is highly recommended for these journeys.

