



U.S.  
COMMERCIAL  
SERVICE  
United States of America  
Department of Commerce

# U.S. Country Commercial Guides



2017

# Mali

# Table of Contents

<b><i>Doing Business in Mali</i></b> _____	<b>6</b>
<b>Market Overview</b> _____	<b>6</b>
<b>Market Challenges</b> _____	<b>7</b>
<b>Market Opportunities</b> _____	<b>8</b>
<b>Market Entry Strategy</b> _____	<b>8</b>
<b><i>Political Environment</i></b> _____	<b>9</b>
<b>Political Environment</b> _____	<b>9</b>
<b><i>Selling U.S. Products &amp; Services</i></b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Using an Agent to Sell U.S. Products and Services</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Establishing an Office</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Franchising</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Direct Marketing</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Joint Ventures/Licensing</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Selling to the Government</b> _____	<b>13</b>
<b>Distribution &amp; Sales Channels</b> _____	<b>14</b>
<b>Express Delivery</b> _____	<b>14</b>
<b>Selling Factors &amp; Techniques</b> _____	<b>15</b>
<b>eCommerce</b> _____	<b>15</b>
<b>Trade Promotion &amp; Advertising</b> _____	<b>17</b>
<b>Pricing</b> _____	<b>17</b>
<b>Sales Service/Customer Support</b> _____	<b>17</b>
<b>Protecting Intellectual Property</b> _____	<b>17</b>
<b>Due Diligence</b> _____	<b>18</b>
<b>Local Professional Services</b> _____	<b>18</b>
<b>Principle Business Associations</b> _____	<b>18</b>
<b>Limitations on Selling US Products and Services</b> _____	<b>18</b>
<b>Web Resources</b> _____	<b>18</b>
<b><i>Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports &amp; Investments</i></b> _____	<b>20</b>
<b>Energy</b> _____	<b>21</b>
<b>Overview</b> _____	<b>21</b>

Leading Sub-Sectors	21
Opportunities	21
Web Resources	22
<b>Agricultural Sector</b>	<b>23</b>
Overview	23
Leading Sub-Sectors	23
Opportunities	23
Web Resources	24
<b>Construction</b>	<b>24</b>
Overview	24
Leading Sub-Sectors	24
Opportunities	24
Web Resources	24
<b>Oil and Gas</b>	<b>25</b>
Overview	25
Leading Sub-Sectors	25
Opportunities	25
Web Resources	25
<b>Mining and Minerals</b>	<b>26</b>
Overview	26
Leading Sub-Sectors	26
Opportunities	26
Web Resources	26
<b>Medical Equipment</b>	<b>26</b>
Overview	26
Leading Sub-Sectors	26
Opportunities	27
Web Resources	27
<b>Pharmaceuticals</b>	<b>27</b>
Overview	27
Leading Sub-Sectors	27
Opportunities	27
Web Resources	27
<b><i>Customs, Regulations &amp; Standards</i></b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Trade Barriers</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Import Tariff</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Import Requirements &amp; Documentation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Labeling/Marking Requirements</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>U.S. Export Controls</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Temporary Entry</b>	<b>29</b>

<b>Prohibited &amp; Restricted Imports</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Customs Regulations</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Standards for Trade</b>	<b>30</b>
Overview	30
Notify U.S. Service	30
Standards, Testing, Inspection and Certification	30
Publication of technical regulations	30
Contact Information	31
<b>Trade Agreements</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Licensing Requirements for Professional Services</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Web Resources</b>	<b>31</b>
<b><i>Investment Climate Statement</i></b>	<b>32</b>
<b>0-Executive Summary</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>1-Openness to and Restrictions upon Foreign Investment</b>	<b>33</b>
Policies Toward Foreign Direct Investment	33
Limit on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment	34
Other Investment Policy Reviews	34
Outward Investment	35
<b>2-Bilateral Investment Agreement and Taxation Treaties</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3-Legal Regime</b>	<b>36</b>
Transparency of the Regulatory System	36
International Regulatory Considerations	37
Legal System and Judicial Independence	37
Laws and Regulations on Foreign Direct Investment	38
Competition and Anti-Trust Laws	39
Expropriation and Compensation	39
Dispute Settlement	40
Bankruptcy Regulations	41
<b>4-Industrial Policies</b>	<b>41</b>
Investment Incentives	41
Foreign Trade Zones/Free Ports/Trade Facilitation	43
Performance and Data Localization Requirements	43
<b>5-Protection of Property Rights</b>	<b>43</b>
Real Property	43
Intellectual Property Rights	44
<b>6-Financial Sector</b>	<b>45</b>
Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment	45
Money and Banking System	47
Foreign Exchange and Remittances	48
Sovereign Wealth Funds	49

<b>7-State-Owned Enterprises</b>	<b>49</b>
Privatization Program	50
<b>8-Responsible Business Conduct</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>9-Corruption</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>9.1-Political and Security Environment</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>9.2-Labor Policies and Practices</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>9.3-OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>9.4-Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>9.5-Contact for More Information</b>	<b>59</b>
<b><i>Trade &amp; Project Financing</i></b>	<b>59</b>
Methods of Payment	59
Banking Systems	60
US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks	60
Financing Web Resources	61
<b><i>Business Travel</i></b>	<b>62</b>
Business Customs	62
Travel Advisory	62
Visa Requirements	63
Currency	63
Telecommunications/Electric	63
Transportation	64
Language	64
Health	64
Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays	64
Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings	65
Travel Related Web Resources	65

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# Doing Business in Mali

## Market Overview

Despite the residual effects of a multidimensional crisis that included a 2012 coup d'état, a separatist insurrection, and ongoing terrorist threats, Mali's economy has sustained strong economic growth rates at above 5 percent per year since 2014 and similar performance is expected in 2017. The country, while facing significant development challenges, is open for business and sees importing high quality American products and partnerships with U.S. firms as an attractive new frontier.

Opportunities for well-targeted, price-competitive U.S. exports to Mali's private sector may be found in agriculture, agro-industry, telecommunications, mineral exploitation, defense, power generation and distribution equipment, machinery, new and used clothing, computers, processed foods, vehicles, electronics, consumer goods, office equipment, and water resources. Malian government contracts for donor-supported development projects offer additional opportunities. Such projects might require equipment and technical services for hydroelectric and solar power generation and distribution, irrigation, telecommunications, public health, and agricultural and agro-industrial development. France has traditionally supplied Mali with many imported goods, but imports from other countries, particularly China, have gained market share. Malian entrepreneurs are eagerly looking to diversify from traditional business networks to new business partnerships with Europe and the United States.

*Brief synopsis of commercial environment:* Mali's economy depends on two major products – gold and cotton. These two goods represented 79 percent of Malian exports in 2016. After reaching an unprecedented record production of 66 tons in 2002, gold output declined during the following years due to exploitation difficulties. However, as old mines have closed and new ones have come on line, Mali has seen a surge in exports reaching approximately 50 tons of gold in 2016. Current mapping suggests Mali has 800 tons of gold reserves. The Government of Mali has made mining sector diversification a development priority. Opportunities also exist in uranium, bauxite, phosphates, iron, and manganese.

Cotton is Mali's second largest export. Expanding cotton production has increased Mali's foreign exchange receipts. After ranking first in 2003-2004 and second in 2004-2005 among African cotton producers with respectively 600,000 and 624,000 metric tons of production, cotton output dropped at the end of last decade, reaching a low of 196,000 tons in 2008, due to poor rainy seasons and a drop in the global price of cotton, prompting farmers to experiment with more lucrative crops. Cotton production increased from its low point to 445,143 and 456,000 tons respectively during the 2012 and 2013 seasons as many farmers returned to cotton farming due to

higher world prices. Production in 2016 reached 645,000 tons due to good rainfalls, subsidies, and inputs provided by government authorities. Some experts, however, suggest cotton yields may fall in the coming years with decreasing soil fertility.

Eighty percent of Mali's population is involved in farming, livestock, or fishing. Domestically manufactured goods include textiles, agricultural implements, cosmetics, batteries, paint, plastics, processed foods, cement, cigarettes, and beverages. Construction materials (including cement), chemicals and pharmaceuticals (including fertilizers), vehicles and spare parts, machinery, electronics, telecommunications, mining equipment, and most other manufactured items are imported. Although French products traditionally dominate imports in many areas, Chinese imports are rapidly increasing.

Exports of U.S. goods to Mali totaled \$38 million in 2014 and \$73 million in 2016. This consisted mainly of exports of pharmaceuticals, chemicals, vehicles, machinery, computers and electronic products, and agricultural products. Imports to the United States from Mali amounted to \$4.8 million in 2014 and \$4.3 million in 2016. Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the principal U.S. imports from Mali are arts and animal/vegetable products.

*Host country business attitudes toward the United States:* Mali maintains good relations with the United States. Since 1992, the government has placed a strong emphasis on free trade and private enterprise as evidenced by economic reform policies supported by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, the United States, and other donors. Mali welcomes foreign investment. The government promotes the privatization of public enterprises. Mali's investment, mining, oil, and commercial codes offer duty-free importation of capital equipment and tax benefits for ventures in priority industries, and unhindered repatriation of capital and profits. Mali is eligible for AGOA, OPIC loan guarantees, investment financing, and insurance programs, but is no longer eligible for EXIM Bank financing programs. The United States resumed its assistance programs in Mali in September 2013, following the inauguration of a democratically elected government. Assistance had been suspended after the March 2012 coup d'etat. Since 2013, The United States has provided over \$1 billion in support to the Malian people.

## **Market Challenges**

Despite Mali's progress in improving its business environment, corruption remains the largest barrier to doing business. The World Bank's Doing Business Report ranked Mali at 141 out of 190 countries for ease of doing business in 2017 (against 143 in 2016). The process for new business registration takes 8.5 days on average. Other challenges include a limited power supply and poor transport infrastructure. There is insufficient commercial bank credit in the market, and interest rates are high.

Insufficient skilled labor poses a challenge in industries, such as industrial mining, which requires more advanced skills. Mali is landlocked, with a small domestic market for consumer goods, and suffers from severe poverty. Recent political and security crises in Mali, and corruption on major trade corridors between Mali and its neighbors, have added further hurdles to international trade.

### **Market Opportunities**

*Major business opportunities include:* chemical/pharmaceutical products, construction materials, mineral exploitation, water resources development, livestock, hides/leather, food and beverage processing, machinery, energy (turbine-generated and solar), and new and used clothing imports. International tenders as part of donor-funded development projects offer prospects to sell agricultural, construction, irrigation, telecommunications, and computer equipment and services.

### **Market Entry Strategy**

*Nature of local and third country competition:* French enterprises have a historical advantage over Americans in business relations with Malians, including a common business language, historical commercial links, greater Malian familiarity with French cultural and business traditions and product names, as well as generous French trade financing and export subsidies. Cheaper Chinese imports dominate many markets. Mali imports consumer goods, commodities, and petroleum products from Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, as well as from South Africa, China, Japan, Belgium, UK, Brazil, and North America. The West-African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) member countries (including Mali) have a common external tariff (TEC) which lifts barriers among member countries and harmonizes tariffs outside the WAEMU boundaries. The TEC aims to further increase trade among WAEMU countries. Visiting Mali is important for business development, to assess conditions, and to make contact with potential business partners. Security considerations have limited business and tourist travel to Mali since 2012.

# **Political Environment**

## **Political Environment**

More information about Mali is available on the Mali page on the Department of State website and from other Department of State publications and other sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

### **U.S.-MALI RELATIONS**

The United States established diplomatic relations with Mali in 1960, following its independence from France. In 1992, Mali moved from a one-party state to multiparty democracy. In March 2012, Mali's elected civilian government was removed in a military seizure of power, and an interim administration was subsequently put in place. Mali re-established democratic rule in September 2013. Despite a peace agreement signed in June 2015 with various armed groups, and the presence of UN peacekeeping and French forces in the country, terrorist groups are still active in northern Mali, and implementation of the peace accord has faced a number of challenges

U.S.-Mali relations have been strong for decades and have been based on shared goals of strengthening democracy and reducing poverty through economic growth. Except during the 2012 crisis, the country's democratic government has significantly reduced poverty and improved the quality of life for many Malians. However, Mali remains near the bottom of the Human Development Index, notably in health and education. Mali continues to face security challenges.

The United States is committed to international efforts to help Mali restore peace and stability throughout its territory following the 2012 rebellion in the north, a coup d'etat, and the loss of the northern two-thirds of the country to violent extremist groups. French counterterrorism forces and the MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) peacekeeping mission have been working since 2013 to help restore and maintain Mali's territorial integrity. The Algiers Peace Accord was signed by all parties on June 20, 2015. The accord provides an opportunity for Mali to regain the path towards stability and prosperity. The peace accord's comprehensive plan includes mechanisms to: demobilize armed militias; reform the Malian military; institute crucial political and institutional reforms; jumpstart development in northern Mali; and lay the foundations for durable reconciliation between Mali's diverse communities. The United States will continue to support Mali in achieving its goals of peace and economic development, recognizing that progress will require sustained leadership on the part of the Malian government and commitment from the other accord signatories to implement their obligations under the peace accord.

## U.S. Assistance to Mali

U.S. foreign assistance to Mali totaled more than \$125.1 million in FY 2016 with \$117 million expected for FY 2017. First and foremost, U.S. assistance to Mali seeks to support the country's fragile peace and implementation of the June 20, 2015, peace accord. Key U.S. interests in Mali include promoting a stable democracy and improved governance; promoting regional security by combatting terrorists and traffickers who seek to exploit ungoverned spaces in the Sahel; reducing chronic vulnerability by improving social development and increasing sustainable livelihoods; and encouraging economic growth, opportunity, and development by supporting sustainable development and increased U.S. economic investment. From these interests our mission goals include: (1) Promote Democratic Institutions, Responsive Governance, and Respect for Human Rights; (2) Enhance Domestic and Regional Security and Effectively Counter Transnational Threats, Including Terrorism and Crime; (3) Advance Inclusive Social Development; (4) Increase Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods; and (5) Engage with Malians to Create More Diversified U.S.-Malian Partnerships and Exchange Opportunities while Protecting the Wellbeing of U.S. Citizens.

U.S. foreign assistance is administered through a whole of government approach that includes but is not limited to the long-standing in-country presence of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the National Institutes for Health (NIH), and the Department of Defense (DOD). Furthermore, Mali is a focus country for U.S. assistance priorities and initiatives, including but not limited to: Women, Peace and Security (WPS), the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSTCP), the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), Global Climate Change (GCC), Feed the Future (FTF), Resilience, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the President's Emergency Plan For Aids Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), and Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Death (EPCMD). On October 9, 2015, the U.S. government, through USAID, signed a formal agreement with the Government of Mali to implement USAID/Mali's new 5-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy.

USAID/Mali's projected \$690 million investment for FY 2016-2020 will seek to advance the following goal: "Malians secure a democratic, resilient, and prosperous future" through four objectives: 1) Stabilization of conflict-affected areas reinforced (i.e: support for humanitarian assistance and transition to development in Mali's northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal); 2) Fostering improved public trust in government (i.e: through improved public service delivery -- especially health, education, and justice; administration of justice and respect for human rights; and citizen participation in Malian electoral processes; 3) Increased resilience and adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and households (through mitigation of

climate change, countering violent extremism, economic diversification and strengthening human capital); and, 4) increased prosperity through advancing socio-economic well-being (particularly through improving health services and adopting healthy behaviors, reducing poverty and malnutrition through investment in agriculture, and promoting early grade reading for boys and girls). Underlying this goal is the understanding that a democratic, resilient, and prosperous future is unattainable if the country, as a whole, does not benefit from sustained and equitable development. U.S. programming will focus on achieving tangible peace dividends and continuing our commitment to working with all Malians.

### Bilateral Economic Relations

The March 2012 military coup and subsequent events led to a major political, economic, and humanitarian crisis. In addition, the suspension of the multilateral and bilateral assistance by Mali's major development partners deprived the government of 85 percent of its investment resources, further weakening the private sector. The country was in recession in 2012 with a negative economic growth rate of -1.3 percent. Nevertheless, over the past three years, Mali has been on a path to recovery.

Mali's economy is growing and foreign investment is beginning to return in key sectors such as energy. The structural adjustment facility agreements signed between the IMF/World Bank and Mali since 1992 encourage foreign investment. The government's national strategy to fight poverty as presented to the IMF, World Bank, and other donors emphasizes the role of the private sector in developing the economy. Mali is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which aim to reduce trade barriers, harmonize monetary policy, and create a common market.

### Mali's Membership in International Organizations

Mali and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, IMF, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. Mali is also one of 15 member countries of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and one of 12 member countries of CILSS (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel).

### Bilateral Representation

The U.S. Ambassador to Mali is Paul A. Folmsbee; other principal embassy officials are listed in the Department's Key Officers List.

Mali maintains an embassy in the United States at 2130 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-332-2249).

More information about Mali is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

[Department of State Mali Page](#)

[Department of State Key Officers List](#)

[CIA World Factbook Mali Page](#)

[U.S. Embassy: Mali](#)

[USAID Mali Page](#)

[History of U.S. Relations With Mali](#)

[Human Rights Reports](#)

[International Religious Freedom Reports](#)

[Trafficking in Persons Reports](#)

[Narcotics Control Reports](#)

[Investment Climate Statements](#)

[Office of the U.S. Trade Representative Countries Page](#)

[U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics](#)

[Export.gov International Offices Page](#)

[Millennium Challenge Corporation](#)

[Library of Congress Country Studies](#)

[Travel Information](#)

## **Selling U.S. Products & Services**

### **Using an Agent to Sell U.S. Products and Services**

U.S. exporters should identify a local agent or distributor to assist in bringing goods to market in Mali. The U.S. Embassy in Bamako encourages American businesses to meet with the Embassy's Commercial Office when traveling to Mali. The U.S. Embassy can provide business overviews, give market suggestions, and provide fee-based services. These include an International Company Profile (ICP) to provide due diligence research on a prospective partner, and a Gold Key Service to design a tailored schedule of meetings with potential partners and/or distributors.

### **Establishing an Office**

Establishing a business in Mali has been simplified through the creation of the "guichet unique," or one-stop shop, at the Agency for Investment Promotion API-Mali. API-Mali has English-speaking staff who can respond to queries from interested businesses as well as an active website with information on forms and applications. The World Bank's Doing Business Report for Mali in 2017 noted that an average of five separate procedures and 8.5 days were required to establish a business in Mali.

### **Franchising**

Limited franchising opportunities exist in Mali such as in soft drink bottling, courier services, and gasoline service stations.

### **Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is not feasible. U.S. firms should seek a local agent or distributor who speaks French and is familiar with local business practices and regulatory requirements. The Embassy Commercial Section can provide agent distributor service (ADS) to firms that make a request through U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Centers.

### **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

There are opportunities for joint ventures and licensing in some manufacturing and import sectors. Malian law does not have local content requirements.

### **Selling to the Government**

The government of Mali finances public works projects through borrowing from Multilateral Development Banks.

Foreign donors are often involved in many major procurement offers; however, the government does offer separate tenders for other projects. Promising sales opportunities may exist under open bidding procedures as required by multilateral

development institutions. With increased donor assistance following the May 2013 Brussels Donors' Conference, where over \$3.25 billion was pledged, as well as the recent focus on development following the signature of the peace accord, there may be opportunities to bid on new substantial government contracts.

In October 2015, the Malian government presented its development strategy for the northern regions at an international conference hosted by the OECD. The government announced that it would set aside nearly \$500 million in development programming over 2015-2017. International donors also announced pledges of nearly \$3.5 billion in donor support to accompany Mali's economic and political recovery. Mali is not party to the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement nor to a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States.

### **U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (African Development Bank, World Bank)**

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help American businesses learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects, and advocate on behalf of American bidders. Learn more by contacting the Commercial Liaison Offices to the [African Development Bank](#) and the [World Bank](#).

### **Web Resources**

[Commercial Liaison Office to the African Development Bank](#)

[Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

### **Distribution & Sales Channels**

Distribution and Sales networks are largely informal and not well developed for most products outside of Bamako.

### **Express Delivery**

The publicly owned post office, Office National des Postes du Mali, is the main express delivery service company in Mali alongside private international companies like DHL and TNT. Some private firms exist. Delivery from New York or Washington to Bamako can take 24 to 72 hours.

## **Selling Factors & Techniques**

French is the business language. Entrepreneurs or their local agents must be proficient in French. Sales and technical literature must be in French. Attractive payment/financing arrangements may be crucial since European and Chinese competitors often provide such options. Competitive pricing, more than quality, often determines purchasing decisions in Mali.

## **eCommerce**

### **Overview**

Most products are sold through brick-and-mortar retail. eCommerce has yet to be developed in Mali as Internet penetration remains low. The UNCTAD eCommerce Index ranking for 2016 shows that Mali is the 131th country out of 137 in terms of eCommerce. This ranking shows that only seven percent of Malians use Internet and one percent the credit card. The Government of Mali created a Ministry of Digital Economy and Communication, and a Regulatory Authority for Telecommunication and Postal Services. An authority in charge of protecting personal data has been also created. Despite high-speed internet penetration in major cities, eCommerce remains marginal in Mali.

### **Current Market Trends**

eCommerce represents a marginal part of total commerce in Mali.

### **Domestic eCommerce (B2C)**

Domestic eCommerce between business and consumer is insignificant in Mali.

### **Cross-Border eCommerce**

Cross-border eCommerce is not significant in Malian total international commerce. Only a limited number of consumers have recourse to major international eCommerce companies.

### **B2B eCommerce**

B2B eCommerce is not common in Mali due to the perceived risks involved. Malian businesspeople usually stress the lack of confidence and funding when importing large quantity of goods from the international market.

### **eCommerce Services**

eCommerce services are generally limited to the initial matching of partners. Payment is generally made in cash, including for large sums.

## **eCommerce Intellectual Property Rights**

eCommerce intellectual property rights are managed by the Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (AGETIC). AGETIC is also in charge of assigning domain names. AGETIC is linked to Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Mali is a member of the African Intellectual Property Rights Organization through the Centre Malien de Promotion de la Propriete Industrielle (CEMAPI ) that deals with industrial property rights in Mali.

## **Popular eCommerce Sites**

[Bisugu](#)

[Sougouba](#)

[Cefib](#)

[Famib Mali](#)

[HB Technologies Mali](#)

[Zone Affaire](#)

[Happy Cosmetique](#)

[Perle Noire](#)

[Mali Pages](#)

## **Online Payment**

While mobile banking allows more Malians to access banking services, online payment is not well developed in Mali, which hampers the development of eCommerce.

## **Mobile eCommerce**

Mobile eCommerce is more frequent in the services sector, mainly for the payment of electricity and water bills. Mobile payment is contributing to the development of eCommerce by avoiding the risks associated with online payment.

## **Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is not widely used by Malian companies. A few companies take advantage of well-known websites to reach out to consumers.

## **Major Buying Holidays**

In addition to popular Christian holidays and New Year's Day, Muslim holidays Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fit'r, and Mawloud are the main buying holidays in Mali.

### **Social Media**

Social media are more and more used for advertisements. The most important social media are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Viber, Imo, and WhatsApp.

### **Trade Promotion & Advertising**

Advertising is increasingly used in Mali. Several daily newspapers (l'Essor, les Echos, Nouvel Horizon, Soir de Bamako, Republicain, l'Independant and Info-Matin) and weekly newspapers (Observateur, Reflet, and Aurore) run advertisements. Radio and television advertisements in French and local languages are often more effective because Mali's literacy rate is only 26.7% and even the largest newspapers have relatively small distributions, limited to Bamako and the regional capitals of Kayes, Sikasso, Segou, and Mopti.

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### **Pricing**

Price is the single most important factor in selling in Mali, followed closely by generous trade terms/financing packages for investors. A recent law on competition underscores the firm's freedom to price products. The government, however, often intervenes to control the prices of foodstuff as well as petroleum products. The Value Added Tax (VAT) rate is fixed at 18% of the selling price. Companies collect VAT.

### **Sales Service/Customer Support**

Offering customer support is a new phenomenon, but particularly important for vehicle or equipment/machine sales arrangements, given the harsh environmental conditions and lack of well-developed downstream service facilities.

### **Protecting Intellectual Property**

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective management of their intellectual property. For background on these principles please link to our article on Protecting Intellectual Property and also Corruption.

## **Due Diligence**

The U.S. Embassy highly recommends conducting due diligence for establishing a business or when choosing a Malian distributor or partner company. The embassy's Commercial Section can perform International Company Profiles (ICP) and Gold Key Services (GKS) for a fee, through Department of Commerce Export Assistance Centers.

## **Local Professional Services**

Finding a local attorney is highly recommended for establishing a business, and essential for resolving business disputes and litigation. When seeking a lawyer please be aware that a phone call may be more effective than an email.

## **Principle Business Associations**

Business associations are organized by sector and are open to foreign nationals including U.S. businesses. The main associations are the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie for trade and industry, the Chambre d'Agriculture for agriculture, and the Chambre des Mines for mining operators. There are also market wide associations such as the Conseil National du Patronat. The Council can represent employers and industries during negotiations with the government and unions. Currently it represents 40 business associations and seven local councils from different regions of Mali. The business associations and Conseil National du Patronat have taken an active role in defending the interests of the private sector in judicial cases as demonstrated in a case relating to the cancellation of an executive order on copyrights. In addition, the Conseil National du Patronat organizes trade exhibitions and business to business networking sessions to increase connections between local businesses and foreign ones. Business associations carry weight in political decisions. They permit their members to be informed about major activities relating to their sectors.

## **Limitations on Selling US Products and Services**

There are no limitations in manufacturing sectors or services where only citizens or a subset of the population in that country are allowed to own or sell.

## **Web Resources**

[Export-Import Bank of the United States](#)

[Country Limitation Schedule](#)

[OPIC](#)

[Trade and Development Agency](#)

[SBA's Office of International Trade](#)

[USDA Commodity Credit Corporation](#)

U.S. Agency for International Development

## **Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports & Investments**

There are opportunities for well-targeted, price-competitive U.S. exports to Mali of agriculture products such as fertilizers, hybrid seeds, and grain and nut grinding mills; agricultural equipment such as tractors and husking equipment; veterinary supplies, medical equipment, and pharmaceuticals; cotton ginning and textile production equipment and spare parts; gold mining and ore processing equipment; power generation and distribution equipment; new and used clothing; computers, especially Windows-compatible PCs and software; processed foods, especially dried or long shelf-life items; sedans, four-wheel drive utility vehicles and motorcycles; electronics, office equipment, telecommunication equipment; and irrigation systems/pumps.

Malian government contracts for donor-supported development projects also present export opportunities in the areas of hydroelectric and solar power generation and distribution equipment; irrigation systems; public health - generic drugs and supplies; and telecommunications - digital or analog telephone switching and radio telephone equipment. The Government of Mali is re-structuring the poorly-managed electric utility EDM and is pursuing private-public partnerships to increase capacity by at least a third. There are significant power outages throughout the year, and particularly during the hot season. This has prompted the government to seek foreign investment in buy, operate and transfer (BOT) operations both for hydro and solar energy production. Implementation of these projects has been slower than anticipated. Additionally, the mobile phone ownership rate continues to increase. The rate was 40% in 2010 and 60% in 2013; since then ownership has continued to expand. A third private telecommunications operator was granted a license in 2013 but an ongoing court case and financial difficulties have delayed the start of operations. The government of Mali expects to open competition for licensing a fourth telecommunication operator. Investment opportunities also exist in mining, livestock and poultry transformation, as well as the agricultural sector.

The U.S. Embassy cautions U.S. investors that importing gold from Mali is a high-risk activity. The embassy knows of numerous cases where gold was “switched out” just prior to being loaded onto an airplane, or where Malian transporters absconded with advance fees paid by the U.S. client. Please be advised that there is essentially no recourse for recovering money because of a gold scam.

Upon arrival in Mali, it is recommended that you visit the “guichet unique,” or one-stop shop, of the Agence pour l’Investissement (API) and the National Directorate for Commerce and Competition (DNCC) where you will receive all relevant information about procedures and fees.

## The Agency for Investment in Mali

### **Energy**

#### Overview

Electricity production in Mali is dominated by hydraulic (55%) and thermal (44%) sources. There is a continuously growing demand (at 15% per year) and an ever widening gap between available supply and demand. The state owned energy company EDM is poorly managed and heavily subsidized by the government and regional multinational banks. There is an immediate and short term demand on the EDM residential and commercial network of at least 180 MW, on isolated networks of at least 60 MW, and by large industrial companies of at least 200 MW.

Lack of energy is the main constraint on development of the mineral sector. Irregular electricity supply prompts many firms to use generators. From 2008 to 2011, energy consumption by major mining companies increased by 189% or 136 MW. Energy sector development is a foremost government priority. European companies and NGOs have developed relationships with their Malian counterparts in the solar energy sector by undertaking off-grid electrification projects, mainly in the rural areas. The Government of Mali authorizes EDM or the Malian Agency for Rural Electrification to buy electricity produced by private companies.

#### Leading Sub-Sectors

Major water improvement and access projects funded by Islamic Development Bank and the European Union are ongoing but unmet water demand for drinking and agriculture will remain for many years.

#### Opportunities

The Government of Mali is actively looking for partnerships to develop the estimated 800 MW of hydroelectric power yet to be exploited, unlimited solar energy, and over 300 MW of biomass. The government also seeks to increase the production capacity of EDM, improve the reach of rural electricity grids, and manage the entire production chain. While this proves Mali's most attractive sector for foreign investment, project implementation has been slow and U.S. firms have faced frustrating delays. In 2016, Mali passed a law governing public-private partnerships (PPP) and in early 2017 an office was established to implement the law, expedite PPPs, and ensure PPPs are successfully enacted.

**Power Africa:** Launched in 2013, Power Africa is a market-driven, U.S. Government-led public-private partnership to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. It

also serves as a one-stop shop for private sector entities seeking tools and resources to facilitate doing business in Africa's power sector. In 2016, the Electrify Africa Act unanimously passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law, institutionalizing Power Africa and establishing two goals; to add 20,000 MW of generation capacity and expand electricity access to 50 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020. In bringing together more than 140 of the world's top companies, development institutions, and financial entities, Power Africa employs a transaction-centered approach to directly address key constraints to project development and investment in the power sector. These interventions aim to de-risk investments and accelerate financial close -- from facilitating project bankability with financing and risk mitigation, to providing technical and transaction support, to engaging with host-government counterparts. Learn more about [the full Power Africa toolbox](#) or [other opportunities offered by Power Africa](#).

#### Web Resources

[Electricite du Mali \(EDM\)](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## Agricultural Sector

### Overview

Agricultural activities represent around 33% of GDP and employ nearly 80% of Malians. Mali has important and underexploited agricultural potentialities, especially in the south and center of the country. A state owned enterprise, l'Office du Niger, manages around 127,000 ha of organized agricultural lands primarily through governing land transactions and water management. The state encourages foreign and national private investors to undertake agricultural activities in the Office du Niger's lands. In addition to subsidies allocated to producers of cotton, the Malian government dedicates 15% of its budget to the agricultural sector. Despite investment opportunities, Malian agriculture depends strongly on erratic rainfalls and is vulnerable to fluctuating commodity prices. Climate change is adding greater stress on natural resource management and has caused decreased production yields.

	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	5,736,092***	6,878,500***	8,045,669***	8,798,408***
Total Exports	274.8** (US\$450 million)	279.9**(US\$458.8 million)	292.1** (US\$478.8 million)	271.3**(US\$ 444.7 million)
Total Imports	162.2*(US\$ 265.9 million)	143.4* (US\$ 235 million)	152.1*(US\$ 249 million)	154.3* (US\$253 million)

\*\*\*Cereals in tons

\*\*Food production in billion CFA

\*Cotton exports in CFA billion

### Leading Sub-Sectors

Mali's agricultural production is largely dominated by cotton and cereals (rice, millet, sorghum, and wheat). Many agricultural sub-sectors, such as shea butter, mangos, peanuts, cashews, and biofuels remain largely underexploited and provide a unique opportunity for investors. Significant opportunities also exist in modernizing Mali's poultry and livestock production and transformation sectors.

### Opportunities

There are opportunities in the agricultural machinery supply areas, fertilizers, agribusiness, farming, irrigation tools, livestock, poultry, import/export, and animal feed. The Malian government decided to increase the state support to agricultural sector by allocating at least 15% of the state's budget each year. The government's aim to modernize and equip the agricultural sector may provide business opportunities.

## Web Resources

[The Ministry of Farming and Fishing](#)

[The Ministry of Agriculture](#)

[The Chamber of Agriculture's Website](#)

[The Office du Niger's website](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Construction**

### Overview

The construction sector is growing thanks to continually strong population growth and increasing demand for homes. Local Malian companies such as ACI and SEMA play important roles in housing construction and planned industrial zones. Public-private partnerships have led to a large surge in public housing construction. Funding structures between the state, private banks, private construction firms, and real estate companies have led to thousands of new homes.

### Leading Sub-Sectors

Population growth and urban migration will lead to increased demand for housing and construction materials. For example, in 2015 the Malian government unveiled plans to construct 20,000 public housing units. As the government seeks to increase economic development in northern Mali, there will be many infrastructure projects consisting of official buildings, roads, bridges, and airports construction.

### Opportunities

The government launches frequent bids related to public housing construction and other projects. The government encourages private-public partnership in order to increase private sector involvement in infrastructure projects, including in the housing sector. Important companies and international organizations also launch bids for construction.

## Web Resources

[Office Malien de l'Habitat](#)

[ACI](#)

[SEMA](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Oil and Gas**

### **Overview**

Mali must import petroleum products for electricity production as well as private and public sector consumption. State subsidization of petroleum products via the National Office for Petroleum Products (ONAP) puts a strain on public finances. The IMF is working with the government to reform petroleum subsidies. The major companies Shell and Total are mainly responsible for gas import and distribution, but local distributors are also active.

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Mali has numerous sediment basins in the center and north. It seeks to encourage oil exploration in these regions. There has been little exploration to date, and no production. Mali will continue to import petroleum products for the foreseeable future, principally through neighboring countries.

### **Opportunities**

Increasing energy consumption will increase demand for petroleum products. In the short and mid-term, Mali will continue to import petroleum products.

### **Web Resources**

[Ministry of Mines](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Mining and Minerals**

### **Overview**

Gold production dominates Mali's natural resource sector, with Mali being the third largest gold exporter in Africa. Gold is by far Mali's most important export, comprising nearly 70% of total exports in 2016. The price of gold fluctuates with the world market price. The sector has experienced some difficulties as unproductive mines have been closed, and others face imminent closure. However, three new mines are expected to open this year with a capacity of 20 tons a year. Two smaller mines opened in 2015. Gold panning contributes approximately 10% of gold exports. Over two million people, representing more than 10% of the population, depend on the mining sector for income.

	2014	2015	2016	
Total Local Production	49.8 tons	50 tons	50 tons	

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Mali also has other mineral prospects as the majority of the territory remains largely unexplored and unmapped. The Ministry of Mines estimates 800 tons of gold deposits, 2 million tons of iron-ore, 5,000 tons of uranium, 20 million tons of manganese, 4 million tons of lithium, and 10 million tons of limestone.

### **Opportunities**

As the government seeks to reduce dependency on gold and diversify the mining sector, foreign firms have a unique opportunity to support this expansion. Mali has also formalized and reformed the process of registering and delivering research and exploitation permits to mining companies.

### **Web Resources**

[Ministry of Mines](#)

[Chamber of Mines](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Medical Equipment**

### **Overview**

Major clinics, hospitals, and labs lack medical equipment. The used medical equipment sector is growing.

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Biomedical test tools, medical imagery tools, diagnostic instruments, etc.

## Opportunities

Importers search for used and affordable medical equipment.

## Web Resources

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Pharmaceuticals**

### Overview

U.S. companies enjoy a competitive advantage in the sector of pharmaceuticals. Illegal imports and the import of counterfeit pharmaceutical products pose real problems in Mali and represent about 55-60% of the market or CFA 60 billion according to the Ordre des Pharmaciens du Mali. Besides traditional wholesalers and retailers, there is an important informal sector that imports and sells pharmaceuticals without authorization. The only pharmaceutical factory has been hit by financial difficulties and produces only limited products for domestic consumption.

### Leading Sub-Sectors

Mali imports numerous pharmaceutical products and the sector is dynamic. Due to lack of factories, expertise, and infrastructure, Mali will continue to import important quantities of all kinds of pharmaceuticals for years to come. Illegal imports will also continue.

### Opportunities

The likelihood of successful pharmaceutical sales will be greatly increased by using a local representative with an existing distribution network of small and large pharmacies. Having local partners that are also registered with Mali's pharmaceutical guild and the Ministry of Health will also ensure the Malian authorities can provide support in cases of identification of counterfeit medicines and illegal importation.

## Web Resources

[Ordre des Pharmaciens du Mali](#)

Embassy Bamako's Commercial Section: [BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

# **Customs, Regulations & Standards**

## **Trade Barriers**

There are no legal or regulatory barriers to investment and trade by foreign companies. There is no discriminatory treatment against non-national firms. Business registration procedures have been simplified. There are no restrictions on the repatriation of capital or profits, however some non-tariff measures exist according to sector or product. The embassy advises U.S. companies to contact the National Directorate for Commerce for more information regarding the product to be imported or exported.

## **Import Tariff**

The Government reduced or eliminated import tariffs on many goods in 1994. The Government has reinstated some taxes on a case-by-case basis. The external common tariff (TEC) of the West-Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) has been in effect since January 2000. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) recently instituted its own TEC in January 2015. The Government of Mali eliminated export tariffs in 1990, with the exception of a 3 percent fee on cotton and gold exports.

## **Import Requirements & Documentation**

Documentation is required for those wishing to import to Mali. This can usually be obtained within one day upon presentation of proof of citizenship and a certificate of good conduct. Companies wishing to import must present proof of official business status.

The import of non-accredited or authorized pesticides is forbidden. The import of vegetable products requires a phytosanitary certificate and an import permit. The import of foodstuffs, animal feed, and food additives require marketing authorization. The Order N°2015-1535 provides more details on products that import or export are banned or restricted in Mali.

[General information on the process of importing to Mali](#)

## **Labeling/Marking Requirements**

Requirements are monitored by the National Directorate of Industries (DNI) under the Ministry of Industry and Investment Promotion and the Standard and Quality Control Agency, (AMANORM) as well as the Agency for sanitary security of foodstuff, ANSSA.

## **U.S. Export Controls**

Some export controls exist. Bulls fewer than five years of age and cows of reproductive age cannot be exported except under special agreements for breeding purposes. Live animals, meat and plant exports require health certificates. Handicraft exports require authorization from the ministry in charge of culture and tourism. Handicraft export authorizations are issued through the National Museum. Mali concluded cultural protection and cultural property agreement with the United States in 1994 and 1997 respectively to discourage the export of Malian antiquities.

Order N°2015-1535 provides details on products whose imports or exports are banned or restricted in Mali.

A list that consolidates eleven export screening lists of the Departments of Commerce, State, and the Treasury as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of potential parties to regulated transactions is available.

## **Temporary Entry**

Goods and equipment may be granted temporary entry for display at trade shows, use on construction projects, or for other temporary purposes.

## **Prohibited & Restricted Imports**

Narcotics and foreign products labeled as originating in Mali are prohibited imports. The following products require prior approval from the concerned ministry: medicines, veterinary products, vehicles larger than sedans, arms and ammunition, tobacco products, and fishing nets with holes less than 50 millimeters in diameter.

Order N°2015-1535 provides a list of products whose imports and exports are banned or restricted in Mali.

## **Customs Regulations**

A customs union among WAEMU states was established on January 2000. In early 2003, the government signed a decree authorizing customs valuation on the transactional value of goods as required by the WTO.

The following links provide general information on Malian customs regulations: [Malian Customs](#) and [WIPO](#)

## **Standards for Trade**

### **Overview**

The Agence Malienne de Normalisation et de la Promotion de la Qualité (AMANORM) is the government agency responsible for standards. AMANORM created the standard Malinorm (MN) in November 2015. AMANORM is party to ISO, the ECOWAS Standards Harmonization Model, the ECOWAS quality policy, the WAEMU quality policy, the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, Codex alimentarius, CIPV, etc. AMANORM sets Malian standards on the basis of international practice.

Prior to AMANORM's creation in March 2012, the National Directorate of Industries was responsible for standards and product certification. The Agence pour la Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments provides marketing approval for foodstuff products. Those agencies are not sufficiently staffed and need capacity building. The Ministry of Mines is in charge of certification for precious metals. Quality control is not required during import.

### **Notify U.S. Service**

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other member countries. Notify U.S. is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online.

### **Standards, Testing, Inspection and Certification**

The National Agency for Sanitary Security of Food (ANSSA), National Directorate for Commerce and Competition, Directorate for Hygiene and the Control of Pollutions (Direction Nationale de l'Assainissement du Contrôle des Pollutions et des Nuisances), and the BIVAC are in charge of testing.

The National Directorate for Commerce and Competition, the Customs, the Nationale Directorate for Hygiene and the Control of Pollutions (Direction Nationale de l'Assainissement du Contrôle des Pollutions et des Nuisances), the BIVAC (control before shipment), etc. are in charge of inspection.

The National Directorate for Commerce and Competition, AMANORM, the certification bureau of diamonds, etc. are in charge of certification.

### **Publication of technical regulations**

Technical regulations are made public by AMANORM.

## Contact Information

Agence Malienne de Normalisation et de Promotion de la Qualité

Tel : +223 – 20210645

Cel : +223 – 6362 1325

Email : amanormmali@yahoo.fr

## Trade Agreements

Mali has trade agreements with all countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The United States and WAEMU, which includes Mali, have a Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

## Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

According to professional organizations, licensing or membership requirements are a prerequisite in order to practice many professions or to benefit from the services of professional organizations. Important professional organizations exist and tend to exert influence on political decisions. Some notable professional organizations include: the Ordre des Experts Comptables in the accounting field, the Ordre des Architectes in the architecture field, the Ordre des Pharmaciens for pharmacists, and the Ordre des Avocats for lawyers. Starting a commercial banks or microfinance institution requires approval from the central bank. The U.S. Embassy in Bamako advises U.S. citizens to be aware of different requirements according to sectors. Belonging to professional organizations could enable obtaining information and negotiating commercial partnerships.

## Web Resources

[Information on trade regulations](#)

# Investment Climate Statement

## 0-Executive Summary

Despite some political progress and promising economic opportunities for U.S. firms, Mali faces significant obstacles including electricity access, infrastructure, and corruption, as well as drug trafficking and smuggling challenges, primarily in the northern conflict-affected portion of the country. Instability in the northern regions has permitted terrorist groups to conduct attacks against Westerners and Malian government forces. This instability is progressively extending to Mali's center where terrorist groups are taking advantage of the minimal presence of Malian authorities and security forces. Frequent deadly clashes between livestock farmers and crop farmers are exacerbating the situation. Both Malian and foreign businesses face corruption in procurement, importation and export of products, tax payment, administrative processing, and land management.

After a tumultuous period in 2012 with slowing economic growth and heightened insecurity, Mali's economy is currently on the upswing with over 5 percent growth each year since 2014. The government developed a new regulatory framework for public private partnerships and hopes to welcome investors in the infrastructure, telecommunication, service, mining, and agricultural sectors. As a nation with development challenges, Mali continues to depend upon multilateral financial institutions including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, and bilateral donors for funding various development projects, mainly in health, infrastructure, education, and agricultural sectors. Local banks have a conservative lending strategy, but are beginning to increase their lending portfolios. At the same time, the investment climate is benefiting from the financial and economic reform processes that accompany this institutional lending.

Thanks in part to the strong bilateral relationship between the United States and Mali, the Malian private sector considers U.S. products to be high quality reliable goods and openly searches for new business partnerships with U.S. firms. Mali's strong economy (projected to grow at 5.3 percent in 2017) and eagerness to attract foreign investment have made Mali a rewarding investment destination for U.S. companies.

Table 1

Measure	Year	Index/Rank	Website Address
<b>TI Corruption Perceptions Index</b>	2016	116 of 175	<u><a href="#">Transparency</a></u>

<b>World Bank's Doing Business Report "Ease of Doing Business"</b>	2016	141 of 190	<u>Doing Business</u>
<b>Global Innovation Index</b>	2016	112 of 128	<u>Global Innovation Index</u>
<b>U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)</b>	2015	USD 1	<u>BEA</u>
<b>World Bank GNI per capita</b>	2015	USD 760	<u>World Bank</u>

## **1-Openness to and Restrictions upon Foreign Investment**

### **Policies Toward Foreign Direct Investment**

Mali generally encourages foreign investment. Foreign and domestic investments receive equal treatment. The structural adjustment facility agreements signed between the IMF/World Bank and Mali since 1992 support foreign investment. The government's national strategy to fight poverty as presented to the IMF, World Bank, and other donors emphasizes the role of the private sector in developing the economy. Mali is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which aim to reduce trade barriers, harmonize monetary policy, and create a common market.

The Malian government has instituted policies promoting direct investment and export-oriented businesses. Foreign investors go through the same screening process as domestic investors. Criteria for granting authorization under the 2012 investment code include the size of the proposed capital investment, the use of locally produced raw materials, and the level of job creation. Mali maintains a one-stop shop for prospective investors, the Agence pour la Promotion de l'Investissement (Agency for the Promotion of Investment). A new law on public-private partnerships approved by the National Assembly is supposed to reinforce the framework to attract foreign

and domestic investment in a multitude of sectors. Mali's ranking slightly increased in the World Bank's 2016 Doing Business Report to 141 of 190 economies (up from 143 of 189 economies in the previous ranking).

Mali created a Presidential Investment Council in 2011 with World Bank support. The council, chaired by the President of Mali, is comprised of foreign and national businesspeople and is aimed at improving the business climate in Mali and identifying best prospects for investment. Since the 2012 – 2013 political crises, the council has been effectively defunct. In 2011, the government also created the Agence pour la Promotion des Exportations du Mali (APEX-Mali) to promote and encourage export-oriented activities. APEX-Mali is fully functional. The Government of Mali has also revitalized an AGOA committee to encourage exports to the United States. The AGOA committee elaborated the National AGOA Strategy in order to reinforce the capacity of Malian exporters regarding the opportunities provided by AGOA.

Additional information can be found in the [2016 Doing Business Report on Mali](#).

#### Limit on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

Foreign and domestic private entities have the right to establish and own business enterprises with no restriction to forms of remunerative activities. There are some specific limits on ownership in the mining and media sector. For example, foreign investors in the mining sector can own up to 90 percent of a mining company. Foreign investors in the media companies must have a 50 percent or lower ownership stakes. The West African Economic and Monetary Union requires Malian and foreign companies to report if they will hold foreign currency reserves in their Malian business accounts and receive approval from the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank for West African States (BCEAO).

U.S. investors face the same challenges as other foreign investors including reports of unfairly applied tax collection laws, difficulties clearing goods through customs, as well as requests for bribes. Corruption in the judiciary is pervasive and foreign companies often find themselves at a disadvantage vis-à-vis Malian investors in enforcing contracts and competing for public procurement tenders.

#### Other Investment Policy Reviews

In the past three years, no other investment policy reviews have been conducted.

#### Business Facilitation

The Agency for Investment Promotion (API) is Mali's one-stop shop to make businesses easier and to promote foreign and local investments. Serving both Malian and foreign enterprises of all sizes, API has become a strong source of support for U.S. investors.

API's website provides copious information ranging from business registration, tax payment, access to social security, trade regulations, land ownership procedures, visa and residence permit regulations, and information on tax exemptions, special economic zones (free zone), recruitment of personnel, and connecting to water and electricity utilities.

Foreign companies, regardless of size, wishing to register in Mali can receive tax and customs benefits depending on the size of investment. Small and medium sized enterprises, for which the size definition varies across ministries, are also eligible for fiscal advantages. The GOM is in the process of harmonizing its registration advantages.

#### The Agency for Investment Promotion's website

Additional information on Mali's online business registration processes is available.

Mali is a member of UNCTAD's international network of transparent investment procedures. Foreign and national investors can find detailed information on administrative procedures applicable to investment and income generating operations including the number of steps, the type of companies to be created, required documents and conditions, costs, processing time, legal references, payment of taxes, access to lands and properties, getting a visa or a residence permit, subscribing to insurance, social protection, borrowing from microfinance institutions, and intellectual property-related issues.

#### Outward Investment

The GOM has no policy to promote outgoing investment. A few Malian companies invest in neighboring countries and in France.

## **2-Bilateral Investment Agreement and Taxation Treaties**

During the past six years, Mali has signed investment protection agreements with South Africa, Algeria, Senegal, and Libya. Mali has signed 18 Bilateral Investment Treaties. However, only 8 have been ratified by Mali's National Assembly and are in force: Algeria, Canada, China, Egypt, Germany, Morocco, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Mali does not have a bilateral taxation treaty with the United States.

Additional information can be found at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's website.

There are no trade agreements between Mali and the United States; however, Mali is eligible for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The African Growth and

Opportunity Act (AGOA), signed into law on May 18, 2000 as Title 1 of The Trade and Development Act of 2000, offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. Mali began AGOA eligibility on October 2, 2000. However, after the March 2012 coup d'état, the annual review panel suspended Mali's AGOA eligibility, effective January 1, 2013. Following the inauguration of the democratically elected government, President Obama reestablished Mali's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2014. However, Malian exporters, unable to adhere to technical requirements and sanitary and phytosanitary measures related to trade, take poor advantage of AGOA despite the creation of an AGOA committee and the elaboration of a national AGOA strategy.

### **3-Legal Regime**

#### **Transparency of the Regulatory System**

As reflected in agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, the Government of Mali has adopted a generally transparent regulatory policy and laws to foster competition. The commerce, labor, and competition laws are designed to meet the requirements of fair competition, to ease bureaucratic procedures, and to facilitate the hiring and firing of employees. In practice, however, the regulatory system is not transparent and international firms have had trouble enforcing regulatory requirements to the detriment of their business prospects. The investment code simplifies the application process to establish a business, and favors investments that promote handicrafts, exports, and labor-intensive businesses. There is, however, no public comment period or opportunity for citizens or businesses to comment upon proposed laws. The World Bank's 2016 Doing Business Report notes that it takes an average of five procedures and 8.5 days to establish a business in Mali. The GOM publishes the incorporation notices of new companies on the official website of the one-stop-shop, the Agency for the Promotion of Investments. The Mining Code encourages investments in small and medium mining enterprises, awards two-year exploration permits free of charge, and does not require a commitment from the exploring firm to lease the area explored thereafter. Mali is a member of Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) and implements the Accounting System of West African States (SYSCOA), which harmonizes business practices among several African countries consistent with international norms. There are no informal regulatory processes managed by nongovernmental organization or associations.

The Regulatory Authority for Public Transactions (Autorité de Regulation des Marchés Publics et des Delegations des Services Publics (ARMDS)) ensures transparency in public procurement projects and can hear complaints from businesses on public procurement related issues. It makes its decisions available on its website as well as the key laws relating to public procurement.

## International Regulatory Considerations

The investment code allows a foreign company that has a signed agreement with the government to refer to international arbitration any case that the local courts are unable to resolve.

Mali is a member of the African Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law (OHADA) and has ratified the 1993 treaty creating the Joint Arbitration Court. OHADA has a provision allowing litigation between foreign companies and domestic companies or with the government to be tried in an appellate court outside of Mali. Mali has been a member of the World Bank Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) since 1990.

Mali has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1995. Mali has not notified the WTO of any measures concerning investments related to trade in goods that are inconsistent with the requirements of Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)

## Legal System and Judicial Independence

Mali's legal system is based on civil law. Mali uses its Investment Code, Commerce Code, Labor Code, and the Code on Competition and Price to govern disputes. Mali is a member of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA, Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires) whose member countries use a standardized accounting system and business law. Ownership of property is defined by the use, the profitability, and the ability of the owner to sell or donate the property. Disputes occasionally arise between the government or state-owned enterprises and foreign companies. Some cases involve wrongdoing on the part of companies and/or corrupt government officials.

Although Mali's judicial system is theoretically independent, it has been subject to political influences. Numerous business complaints are awaiting an outcome in the courts. Judges and prosecutors' careers depend on the Ministry of Justice, and hence their independence is compromised. The judicial system is infested by corruption leading to flawed decisions. The dispute resolution process can take multiple years.

In November 1991, an independent commercial court was established with the encouragement of the U.S. government to expedite the handling of business litigation. Commercial courts, located in Bamako, Kayes, and Mopti, can hear intellectual property rights cases. In areas where there is no commercial court, the Local Courts of First Instance have the jurisdiction to hear business disputes. Since its inception, the commercial court has handled cases involving foreign companies. The court is staffed by magistrates and is assisted by elected Malian Chamber of Commerce and Industry representatives. Teams composed of one magistrate and two Chamber of

Commerce and Industry representatives conduct hearings. The magistrate's role is to ensure that the court renders decisions in accordance with applicable commercial laws, including internationally recognized bankruptcy laws, and that court decisions are enforced under Malian law.

The Local Courts of First Instance have the jurisdiction to hear business disputes. The Courts of First Instance decisions are appealable in the Court of Appeal and/or in the Supreme Court.

### Laws and Regulations on Foreign Direct Investment

The investment code gives the same incentives to both domestic and foreign companies for licensing, procurement, tax, and customs duty deferrals, export and import policies, and export zone status if the firm exports at least 80 percent of production. The government has reduced or eliminated many export taxes and import duties as part of ongoing economic reforms; however, export taxes remain for gold and cotton. Further information can be found in the 2000 Decree # 00-505 and in the Customs Code. The government applies price controls to petroleum products and cotton, and occasionally to other commodities, such as rice, on a case-by-case basis. During 2015, the Government of Mali decreased the price of petroleum in the Malian market per liter as a response to lower global prices. Incentives include exemptions from duties on imported equipment and machinery. Investors may also receive tax exemptions on the use of local raw materials. In addition, foreign companies can negotiate specific incentives on a case-by-case basis.

In most cases, foreign investors can own 100 percent of any business they create, except in the mining and media sectors. They can also purchase shares in parastatal companies the state has privatized or in other local companies. Foreign companies may also start joint-venture operations with Malian enterprises. The repatriation of capital and profit is guaranteed.

Despite having a generally favorable investment regime on paper, foreign investors face a myriad of challenges in practice. The most important of these include low access to financing, high level of corruption, poor infrastructure (including inconsistent electricity), a non-transparent judicial system, and the lack of an educated workforce.

The following websites provide additional more information relating to investments in Mali:

[Agency for Investment Promotion](#)

[Organization of Malian Entrepreneurs](#)

Chamber of Agriculture

Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Mines

Ministry of Economy and Finances

Ministry of Mines

Public Procurement Regulation Authority

### Competition and Anti-Trust Laws

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is in charge of reviewing free competition in the Malian market place. Order 2007, Decree 2008, and the WAEMU 2002 rules on anti-competition are the primary judicial documents that govern competition. The Tribunal of Commerce and the Regulatory Authority for Public Transactions (Autorité de Regulation des Marchés Publics et des Delegations des Services Publics (ARMDS)) are the primary judicial bodies that oversee competition-related concerns.

### Expropriation and Compensation

Expropriation of private property other than land for public purposes is rare. The Malian government has not unfairly targeted U.S. firms for expropriation. By Malian law, the expropriation process should be public and transparent and follow the principles of international law. Compensation based on market value is awarded by court decision.

The government may exercise eminent domain in various situations including: undertaking large-scale public projects, in cases of bankrupt companies that have had a government guarantee for their financing, and when a company has not complied with the requirements of an investment agreement with the government. In 2000 and 2012, the government expropriated land near the Bamako city airport for air safety reasons. Notifications of the expropriation were sent via direct mail and published in public and private media, and prior owners were compensated according to Malian law. In 2010 and 2011, the government expropriated private land on the outskirts of Bamako for the construction of low and medium income housing. The prior owners have initiated a legal case against the government, arguing that housing projects should not be considered large-scale public works projects. The government settled the case by compensating previous owners. In cases of illegal expropriations, Malian law affords claimants due process in principle. However, given the vast corruption in the land administration sector, fair court cases are rare.

## Dispute Settlement

### *ICSID Convention and New York Convention*

Mali is a member state to the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID Convention). Mali also signed and ratified the Convention of the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitrage Awards (1958 New York Convention).

Investors frequently highlight that bureaucratic burdens, bribery, and rent undermine their efforts to implement concrete projects. Since 2008, the Tax Office and a mining company transferred several cases relating to six fiscal years (2008-2013) to the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The ICSID ruled in the mining company's favor. However, the GOM then started investigating other years and reassessing the company's tax bill for those years, whether as retaliation or as part of a government-wide tightening of tax collection it is unclear. In October 2016, the situation worsened when the GOM closed the mining company's office in Bamako as a result of the company protesting the new tax bills. Under pressure by the Tax Office, the mining company finally agreed to pay a part of the assessments claimed by the Tax Office in order to reopen its office, but continues to contest the legality of the decision and still might transfer the case to the ICSID.

### *Investor-State Dispute Settlement*

Mali is a member of the African Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law (OHADA) and has ratified the 1993 treaty creating the Joint Arbitration Court. OHADA has a provision allowing litigation between foreign companies and domestic companies or with the government to be tried in an appellate court outside of Mali. Mali has been a member of the World Bank Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) since 1990. It has concluded numerous bilateral investments treaties and investment protection guarantee agreements. The U.S. Government concluded an agreement with the GOM on Private Investments Guaranty in 1964.

Despite the official agreements, U.S. investors complained about unfair practices. In 2013, an American company that was contracted to complete the MCC-funded airport renovation filed a case against the Government of Mali at the Paris Arbitration Court regarding an alleged breach of contract. The case is pending.

After 5 months of negotiations regarding a contract of 30 MW electric generation project to be implemented by a U.S. company, the Malian state-owned utility company cancelled the project in January 2017 with neither any justification nor the authorization of the Malian Public Procurement Regulatory Office. While the details of this case appear suspicious, it is one of numerous unfair treatments U.S. companies have faced in Mali.

In 2015, a U.S. company's bid for an engineering oversight project regarding the renovation of the airport was unjustly disqualified. The Authority of Regulation of Public Procurements (ARMDS) also rejected the U.S. company complaint, stating the company did not wait a requisite 72 hours before contacting the authority. The company elevated the complaint to the Administrative Chamber of the Malian Supreme Court, where the case now rests indefinitely.

Another U.S. energy company has spent three years trying to negotiate a power purchasing agreement with the GOM regarding a 15 MW hydroelectric plant in Markala. When the government changed, the new Minister involved with the project requested a new impact study which was redundant, costly, and unnecessary. The GOM has since reissued the tender which the U.S. company had believed it had won and the U.S. company may give up the project. Stories of such delays are commonplace. Many companies have spent considerable time developing relationships with high level government officials, time that felt wasted once the government reshuffled itself, as it does frequently.

#### *International Commercial Arbitration and Foreign Courts*

At the first instance, the companies are supposed to undertake amicable negotiations before engaging the Authority of Regulation of Public Procurements (ARMDS) or the courts. Failure to reach an out-of-court agreement will lead to the case being transferred to the court of first instance, the court of commerce, or international arbitration. The decisions of foreign courts are enforced as long as specified and recognized by Malian Laws. In 2016, the government of Mali paid \$26 million to a foreign mining company pursuant to ICSID's decision. Court decisions are frequently based more on corruption and political interference rather than legal merit.

#### **Bankruptcy Regulations**

Mali's bankruptcy law is part of its Commerce Code, which does not criminalize bankruptcy. According to data collected by the World Bank's 2017 Doing Business Report, resolving insolvency takes 3.6 years on average and costs 18.0 percent of the debtor's estate. Generally, the company will be sold piecemeal. The average recovery rate is 24.8 cents on the dollar.

## **4-Industrial Policies**

### **Investment Incentives**

The investment, mining, commerce, and labor codes have the stated intention of encouraging investment and attracting foreign investors. Mali has privatized a number of state-owned enterprises, and foreign companies have responded successfully to calls for bids in several cases. The investment code offers incentives to companies that reinvest profits to expand existing businesses or diversify into another relevant sector. The code also encourages the use of locally sourced inputs,

which can offer tax exemptions. Companies that use at least 60 percent locally produced raw materials in their products are eligible for certain tax exemptions. Companies that invest at least five percent of their turnover in supporting local research and development are eligible for a reduction of payroll taxes for Malian employees.

Most businesses are located in the capital city of Bamako, and the investment code encourages the establishment of new businesses in other areas. Incentives include income tax exemptions for five to eight year periods, reduced-energy prices, and the installation of water, electric power, and telecommunication lines in areas lacking public utilities.

The National Assembly approved a revised petroleum code in June 2004. The law allows an initial period of four years for prospecting, renewable for two successive periods of three years each. A 2008 amendment allows the government to expand the prospecting period for two additional years during the initial or successive phases. Prospecting and exploitation permits, as well as their renewal, are subject to the payment of fixed taxes ranging from one million to ten million FCFA (\$1,650 to \$16,500). In addition, while prospecting permit holders remain liable for the payment of taxes ranging from FCFA 500 – 2,500 (\$0.85-5.00) per square kilometer and taxes of FCFA 1,000,000 (\$1,650) per square kilometer during exploitation. Permit holders and the companies associated with those permit holders are subject to a 35 percent tax on net profits. In 2004, the GOM created a marketing office for petroleum exploration, l'Autorité pour la Promotion de la Recherche Pétrolière, or AUREP. This agency drafts, plans, and implements oil research programs, and collects data on oil reserves. Private sector petroleum investors should meet with AUREP when beginning work.

The government has identified priority sectors for furthering economic development. Special incentives are offered for investment in the following areas:

- Agribusiness
- Fishing and fish processing
- Livestock and forestry
- Mining and metallurgical industries
- Water and energy production industries
- Tourism and hotel industries
- Communication
- Housing development

- Transportation
- Human and animal health promotion enterprises
- Vocational and technical training enterprises
- Cultural promotion enterprises

### Foreign Trade Zones/Free Ports/Trade Facilitation

By law, there is no discrimination between foreign-owned firms and Malian entities with regard to investment opportunities. Companies (domestic or foreign) that export at least 80 percent of their production are entitled to tax-free status. As such, they benefit from duty free-status on all equipment and other inputs they need for their operations. To date, there are no dedicated free trade zones in Mali. The GOM encourages the cultural sector by reducing taxes on cultural goods imports. Imports of solar energy materials also benefit from special tax treatment. Short-term tax exemptions are provided by the GOM during periods of high prices of essential products. Customs agents to date have accepted letters from Ministers exempting favored parties from exemptions. The IMF is working with the GOM to stop this arbitrary exemption practice, including by explicitly making it illegal and instructing Customs to disregard any future letters.

### Performance and Data Localization Requirements

There is no requirement that Malian nationals own shares in a foreign investment or that foreign equity be reduced over time. In the case of joint ventures with the government, the government share may not exceed 20 percent ownership. Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) regulations specify that a company with less than 35 percent government equity is legally considered a private company.

## **5-Protection of Property Rights**

### Real Property

Property rights are protected by law in Mali. According to data collected by the World Bank's 2017 Doing Business Report, registering property in Mali requires 5 steps, takes 29 days, and costs 11.8 percent of the property value. Mali scored 8 against 8.4 for other Sub-Saharan African countries and 22.7 for OECD countries in the quality of land administration index, 0 being the worst score and 30 the best. The government established the Malian Center for the Promotion of Industrial Property and charged it with implementing the legal regime of property rights protection, including the WTO's agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

These structures notwithstanding, property rights are not always adequately protected in practice. For example, a U.S. manufacturer had been mired in a three-

year long legal battle with a Chinese company that was accused of infringing on the U.S. companies' trademark rights. In spite of a favorable ruling by the Supreme Court, the case was remanded to a lower court in 2010, and the U.S. Company decided not to pursue the case further.

According to the National Land Agency (Direction Nationale des Domaines et du Cadastre – DNDC), there are three types of land property classifications in Mali. There is a land title (le titre foncier), which gives full property ownership to an individual. Secondly, there is a permit for occupation that one receives after paying a fee (permis d'occupation), but not full ownership. Lastly, there are farming rights given to rural agricultural communities. All non-registered lands belong to the State. Various government entities including prefets, mayors, governors, and the Land Ministry officials are able to allocate land ownership statuses.

The current lack of a nationwide land registry causes competing claims for land. As different government structures at the local, regional, and national level are involved in land administration, investors and communities often encounter multiple attributions of the same land. As a result, frequent conflicts occur because of opaque land registration. In June 2015, the Minister of Lands ordered the demolition of fifty houses built on lands belonging to a real estate company in the locality of Souleymanebougou. More recently, the government ordered the demolition of houses built in lands allocated by the state to the construction of housing projects.

### Intellectual Property Rights

There are two primary agencies involved with the protection of intellectual property rights: the Malian Office of the Rights of the Author (BUMDA) and the Malian Center for the Promotion of Intellectual Property (CEMAPI). The CEMAPI is the primary agency for industrial property rights violation claims, while the BUMDA covers artistic and cultural works. Mali is a member of the African Property Rights Organization (IAPO) and works with international agencies recognized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Patents, copyrights, and trademarks are covered.

In 2014, the GOM adopted a National Strategy for the Development of Intellectual Property Rights (SNDPI). According to the strategy, which is intended to encourage innovation and protect inventors, the Ministry of Industry will provide two years of funding for the initiative. However, it has yet to fund the action plan or implement it. Despite limited progress with a National Strategy, intellectual property rights have been weakened and are the object of fierce debate. In February 2015, The Supreme Court cancelled an Executive Order on Copyrights, which sought to update copyright laws to include modern technology. The National Council of Employers (Conseil National du Patronat) considered this Executive Order to be too broad in that it created

royalties, which were interpreted by the business community to be taxes on cybercafés, phone companies, and internet downloading sites. The Council of Ministers adopted in March 2016 a new draft law related to intellectual property rights with the support of well-known artists. The new draft law on intellectual property rights is a result of a dialogue between the Government of Mali, the National Council of Employers, and artists associations. The law builds upon consensus of international norms including the Beijing Treaty of June 24, 2004 (rights on interpretations and executions of audiovisual works), the Marrakech Treaty of June 27, 2013 relating to the access to printed texts for visually impaired, and the fourth meeting of regional copyrights observatory of ECOWAS held in Banjul on May 2013. More broadly, the law determines the conditions of protecting and exploiting works of art, license-fee, sanctions, and remunerations. The National Assembly voted to approve a number of these international treaties related to intellectual property rights in 2016.

There are significant intellectual property rights violations in the artistic sector as well as in the pharmaceutical sector. According to the Malian National Pharmaceutical Association, nearly 50 percent of pharmaceuticals sold in Mali are counterfeit. Each week the BUMDA conducts search and seizures of markets for pirated artistic products. On average, the BUMDA inspectors seize three to four thousand CDs each week. Movies and books are also pirated. Children are often involved in selling counterfeit products such as clothes, CDs, and books. In the past counterfeit products were imported from places including from Guangzhou, China, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. However, BUMNDA has seen a shift in the type of counterfeit product to ones being produced in Mali and Nigeria.

[Additional information on Intellectual Property in Mali](#) including access to recent ordinances and laws is available.

For additional information about national laws and points of contact at local IP offices, please see [WIPO's country profiles](#).

## **6-Financial Sector**

### **Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment**

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) statutes and the BCEAO (the West African Central Bank) determine the banking system and monetary policy in Mali. BCEAO headquarters are located in Dakar, Senegal. Commercial banks enjoy considerable liquidity. The majority of banks' loanable funds, however, do not come from deposits, but rather from other liabilities, such as lines of credit from the BCEAO and North African and European banks. In spite of having sufficient loanable funds, commercial banks in Mali tend to have highly conservative lending practices. Bank

loans generally support short-term activities, such as letters of credit to support export-import activities and short-term lines of credit and bridge loans for established businesses. Small and medium sized businesses have difficulty obtaining access to credit.

In order to strengthen the banking sector, WAEMU raised the minimum stockholders equity capital required of banks and financial institutions to FCFA 10 billion (\$16.5 million) and FCFA 3 billion (\$5 million) by a date still to be determined by the regional WAEMU Council of Ministers. The first step of this measure consisted of increasing the minimum stockholders equity capital requirement to FCFA 5 billion (\$8.2 million) for banks and FCFA 1 billion (\$2.5 million) for financial institutions by the end of 2010. WAEMU has made it a requirement for any new banks and financial institutions in the region to abide by the increased minimum stockholders equity requirement. This measure has had mixed results in Mali. Of the 96 banks surveyed by the Banking Commission of the WAEMU, 82 met the new measures (85 percent). In Mali, however, eight out of fourteen banks met the criterion (57 percent).

Portfolio investment is not a current practice, although the legal and accounting systems are transparent enough and are similar to the French system. In 1994, the government instituted a system of treasury bonds available for purchase by individuals or companies. The payment of dividends or the repurchase of the bonds might be done through a compensation procedure offsetting corporate income taxes or other sums due to the government.

The WAEMU stock exchange program based in Abidjan has a branch in each WAEMU country, including Mali. One Malian company is quoted in the stock exchange. The planned privatization programs of the electric company EDM, the telecommunications entity, cotton ginning company CMDT, and the Bamako-Senou Airport offer prospects for some companies to be listed on the WAEMU stock exchange.

The Government of Mali first participated in the Sovereign Credit Rating Program in 2002, sponsored by the U.S. government. As part of this program, Fitch Ratings won a competitive contract to conduct the ratings. The U.S. Treasury Department provided technical assistance to the Malian Ministry of Economy and Finance with the support of the U.S. Department of State. Fitch completed its evaluation in 2004 and awarded a B- to Mali. Parallel to this effort, Standard and Poor's awarded Mali a BBB- rating in 2005 through a UNDP-funded program. Standard and Poor's has not rated Mali since 2005. In December 2009, Fitch Ratings affirmed Mali's long-term foreign and local currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) at B- with Stable Outlooks, Country Ceiling at BBB-, and short-term foreign currency IDR at B. After completion of the State Department-sponsored rating program, Fitch announced in December 2009 it

would no longer provide rating or analytical coverage of Mali, and all ratings have been withdrawn. As of 2017, there has been no new rating for Mali.

Mali's IDR of B- reflects the country's high level of poverty, vulnerability to external shocks and slow economic growth. Mali consistently runs a current account deficit, due to its high dependence on energy imports and low export base. Fitch does not expect any improvement in Mali's creditworthiness in the medium to long term. However, the country's external situation is not a constraint, as Mali is part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union: the FCFA is pegged to the Euro and the French Treasury guarantees its convertibility.

### Money and Banking System

Since the devaluation of the FCFA in 1994, eight new banks have opened in Mali: Ecobank (1998), BICI-M (1998), BMS (2002), BSIC (2003), Banque Atlantique (2005), Banque pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (2007), Orabank of Cote d'Ivoire (2013), and Coris Bank International (December 2013). During the past three years with available data, the return on equity for the banking sector was 13 percent in 2013, 12 percent in 2014, and 15 percent in 2015. The total assets of the 14 banks and the three financial institutions in Mali were FCFA 3, 840 billion (\$6.3 billion) as of December 2015.

In order to improve the business environment and soundness of the financial system, the Central Bank of West African Countries decided to adopt a Uniform Law on Credit Reference Bureau. The GOM decided to align its legislation on the regional requirement by authorizing the Credit Reference Bureau, whose activities include collecting and processing information from financial institutions, public sources, water and electricity companies, etc. to create the credit record of citizens. The collected information is supposed to be treated and commercialized by these companies upon the agreement of clients. The system is also supposed to increase the solvency of borrowers and to improve access to credit.

The microfinance sector has grown rapidly. From 2000 to 2013, the number of new branches operated by microfinance institutions has increased from 342 to 700 and the number of beneficiaries from 253,705 to over 1 million. The stock of deposits of microfinance institutions grew from FCFA 14 billion (\$23 million) to FCFA 53 billion (\$87 million), and the stock of credit grew from FCFA 16 billion (\$26 million) to FCFA 60 billion (nearly \$100 million) over the 2000 to 2013 period. Despite this growth, microfinance institutions suffer from poor governance and management of resources, and have not put in place all government regulations or regional best practices to ensure sufficient financial controls and transparency.

## Foreign Exchange and Remittances

### *Foreign Exchange*

The Malian investment code allows the foreign transfer and conversion of funds associated with investments, including profits. As a West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) member, Mali uses the Franc of the Financial Community of Africa (FCFA) as its currency. Linked to the Euro, the FCFA is fully convertible at a rate of Euro 1 = FCFA 655.957 as of April 2017. No parallel conversion market exists as the FCFA is a fully convertible currency supported by the French treasury, which ensures a fixed rate of exchange. The FCFA has not been devalued since January 1994.

The CFA franc zone consists of 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, each affiliated with one of two monetary unions. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo comprise the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon comprise the Central African Economic and Monetary Union, or CAEMC.

As of March 2017, the U.S. dollar exchange rate was 607 FCFA for one U.S. dollar. Local currency exchanges are available at Malian banks.

There are no limits on the inflow or outflow of funds for repatriation of profits, debt service, capital, or capital gains. In the FCFA zone, there is no limit on the export of capital provided that an exporter has adequate documentation to support a transaction and the exporter meets the domiciliation requirement. Most commercial banks have direct investments in western capital markets.

To physically carry foreign currency into the WAEMU zone, non-WAEMU residents need to declare currency valued in excess of 1 million FCFA (\$1650). For export, non-WAEMU residents must declare values upwards of 500,000 FCFA (\$825) in foreign reserves.

Article 12 of the Malian Investment Code of 2012 states that foreign investors are authorized to transfer abroad, without any authorization, all payments relating to business operations in Mali (this includes net profits, interest, dividends, income, allowances, savings of expatriated salaried employees). The capital and financial transactions (such as buying and selling stocks, assets, and compensation from expropriation) are free to transfer abroad but are subject to declaration requirements to the Ministry of Finance. These transfers must be done through authorized intermediaries such as banks or financial institutions).

### *Remittance Policies*

Mali is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Mali's most recent mutual evaluation can be found.

Although Mali's Anti-Money Laundering Law designates a number of reporting entities, very few comply with their legal obligations. While businesses are technically required to report cash transactions over approximately \$10,000, most do not. Despite the operation of a number of al-Qaida-linked terrorist and armed groups in northern Mali, the country's Financial Intelligence Unit, the National Information Processing Unit (CENTIF) receives relatively few suspicious transaction reports (STRs) concerning possible cases of terrorist financing. With the exception of casinos, designated non-financial businesses and professions are not subject to customer due diligence requirements. The U.S. Department of State's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) considers Mali as a "monitored" country. Additional information is available.

### **Sovereign Wealth Funds**

Mali does not have a sovereign wealth fund.

### **7-State-Owned Enterprises**

Private and public enterprises compete under the same terms and conditions. No preferential treatment is given to State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), although they can be at a competitive disadvantage due to the limited flexibility they have in their management decision-making process. Malian law guarantees equal treatment for financing, land access, tax burden, tax rebate, and access to raw materials for private firms and SOEs.

Mali is in the process of privatizing its SOEs, but a number of SOEs still exist. There are five major state-owned or partially state-owned enterprises: the electricity utility – Energie du Mali (EDM); the telecommunications entity – SOTELMA; a cotton ginning company – CMDT; a cigarette company – SONATAM; and the Bamako-Senou Airport.

The government is active in the agricultural sector: the Niger River Authority (Office du Niger) controls much of the irrigated rice fields and vegetable production in the Niger River inland delta, although more private operators were granted plots of land to develop. Under a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funded irrigation project, Mali granted titles to small private farmers, including women. An adjacent tranche developed with MCC was to have been open to large-scale private investment through a public tender process. However, all MCC projects were suspended as a result of the coup d'état of March 2012 and discontinued when the projects reached the end of their implementation deadline. The national cotton

production company, CMDT, which is yet to be privatized, provides financing for fertilizers and inputs to cotton farmers, sets cotton prices, purchases cotton from producers, and exports cotton fiber via ports in neighboring countries.

The government is still active in the banking sector. The state owns shares in six of the 14 banks in Mali – BDM (28.6 percent share), BIM (10.5 percent share), BNDA (36.5 percent share), BMS (74.6 percent share), BHM (98 percent share), and BCS (3.3 percent share). While the government no longer has a majority stake in the Malian Development Bank (BDM), it has significant influence over its operations, including the privilege to appoint the head of the Board of Directors.

In addition, the electricity and water company, EDM, remains majority-owned by the government following a failed privatization attempt. Senior government officials from different ministries make up the board of SOEs. Major procurement decisions or equity raising decisions are referred to the Council of Ministers. Government powers remain in the hands of ministries or government agencies reporting to the ministries. No SOE has delegated powers from the government.

SOEs are required by law to publish an annual report. They hold a mandatory annual Board of Directors meeting to discuss the financial statements prepared by a certified accountant and certified by an outside auditor in accordance with domestic standards (which are comparable to international financial reporting standards). Mali's independent auditor general conducts an annual review of public spending, which may result in the prosecution of specific cases of corruption.

Mali is not party to the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

### Privatization Program

The government's privatization program for state enterprises provides investment opportunities through a process of open international bidding. The government publishes announcements for bids in the government-owned daily newspaper *L'Essor*. The process is non-discriminatory: however, there have been many allegations of corruption. In the past several years, the government has privatized parastatal enterprises including the International Bank of Mali (BIM), the telecommunications company, Société des Telecommunications du Mali (SOTELMA), and Huilerie Cotonnière du Mali (HUICOMA). The Malian government continues to hold shares in the company for cotton production (CMDT) and many other banks. The national electricity company (EDM) is partially owned by the state. However, private investors have recently sought to reduce their ownership share, while the government has considered options to privatize the energy distribution portion of the company.

## **8-Responsible Business Conduct**

There is no general awareness or defined standard of responsible business conduct in Mali among producers or consumers. Despite the creation of the Malian Agency for Normalization and the Quality Promotion (AMANORM) and the National Agency for the Sanitary Security of Foods (ANSSA), Mali continues to produce, import, and export dangerous products and products of poor quality. Violations of hygiene and quality standards are widespread in the food-processing industry and there is no general awareness about the dangers of unsafe and toxic chemical products in food production. Labor rights are not generally observed given the large unregulated informal sector. Even the formal sector often hires workers informally which reduces employee fees such as social security, retirements, and other related benefits.

The GOM has various laws which are intended to protect against child and forced labor and business practices which can harm the environment and local communities. Despite these laws, there are frequent cases of child labor and forced labor in the mining, agricultural, services, and industrial sectors. The mining code requires owners of mining and exploitation permits to present local development plans to mitigate the health, security, hygiene, environment, and cultural heritage impacts of their mining activities. Conflicts between local artisanal mining communities and foreign mining companies over land ownership rights are frequent. Local communities have also voiced concern with the significant environmental impacts of mine closures because of the lack of government-enforced measures to restore and rehabilitate the environment. Foreign mining and oil exploration companies sometimes provide schools and health clinics to communities in proximity of their activities as a form of corporate social responsibility. These activities are not done in accordance with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, but are rather the result of individual negotiations between the company and the leaders of neighboring communities.

Mali is an active member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) since 2007 and since 2011 has been declared as a “compliant country”. The latest EITI’s report is available.

## **9-Corruption**

Corruption is the one of the greatest obstacles for foreign investment and economic development in Mali. While corruption is a crime punishable under the penal code, bribery is frequently reported in many large contracts and investment projects. Government officials often solicit bribes in order to complete otherwise routine procedures. The GOM passed laws against the illegal accumulation of wealth in 2013 and 2015. The law, however, does not force members of parliament or the executive

to declare their assets. The government has pledged to update the law. In 2016, Transparency International (TI) global corruption ranking for Mali decreased to 116 of 176 from 95 of 168 countries surveyed in 2015. Mali's perceived public corruption score, as evaluated by Malian citizens is 32 out of 100 with zero being the worst possible score.

Corruption is most pervasive in government procurement and dispute settlement. The government has addressed this by requiring procurement contracts to be inspected by the Directorate General for Public Procurement, which determines whether the procedure meets fairness, price competitiveness, and quality standards. However, there is significant political interference in procurement. Mali's international donor community has been working with the government to reduce corruption, but progress has been slow.

As evidenced in the above narratives, investors have found the judicial sector to be neither independent nor transparent. Questionable judgments in commercial cases have occasionally been successfully overturned at the Supreme Court's Court of Appeal. However, there is a general perception among the populace that while prosecution of minor economic crimes is routine, official corruption, particularly at the higher levels, goes largely unpunished.

The President created the Office of the Auditor General (Bureau du Verificateur General –BVG) in 2004 as an independent agency tasked to audit public spending. Since its inception, the BVG has uncovered several large cases of corruption. However, almost none have resulted in prosecutions. In 2011, inspectors from the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria uncovered cases of embezzlement of public and donor funds by officials at the Ministry of Health. The Malian judiciary prosecuted several high-ranking Ministry of Health officials including the Minister of Health who subsequently resigned. However, the trial resulted in an acquittal of the Minister and all 18 co-defendants, due to a lack of evidence.

In the BVG's 2013 annual report, the Auditor General announced that 17 government entities embezzled \$100 million of public funds. The BVG is not able to conduct a whole of government audit each year. The BVG's most recent report of 2014 (released in May 2015) showed that 16 government's agencies embezzled \$124 million of public fund. Mali's annual budget is usually around \$3 billion. The Cell to Support Financial Control of the Administration (Cellule d'Appui aux Structures de Contrôle de l'Administration) declared that 209 reports of corruption were sent to the Ministry of Justice for review and prosecution; however, no cases have been brought to court and successfully prosecuted.

In 2014, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed concerns over extra budgetary spending, inadequate transparency, and corruption, which led the IMF to temporarily suspend financial support to Mali in June, with certain donors including the World Bank and the European Union following suit. To address IMF and donor community concerns, the Government of Mali audited the purchase of a controversial presidential plane and over \$200 million in bloated defense contracts and has agreed to hold senior government leaders responsible for any acts of corruption. The IMF's September 2014 follow up review concluded that the Government of Mali had made preliminary efforts to address extra-budgetary expenditures, and as a result, the IMF voted in December 2014 to reestablish financing to Mali. During a January 2015 cabinet reshuffle, the implicated Minister of Economy and Finance and Minister of Investments were replaced, but were shifted into other high-level positions, including in the office of the presidency. Concrete actions remain to be seen on promises to hold government officials accountable for financial mismanagement. The clean bill of health from the IMF has led donors including the World Bank and European Union to resume budgetary support.

The scandals related to embezzlement of public funds continued in 2015 as the distribution of poor quality fertilizers to farmers showed yet again the extent of corruption in Mali and the lack of will to fight the problem. Moreover, customs agents were shown to be complicit in schemes to fraudulently import gas and petroleum products. Both foreign and domestic companies complain about tax collection as they face harassment by officials seeking bribes. In 2016, the Minister of Finance refused to reimburse a sizeable debt arguing that the lenders failed to provide supporting documents. Many observers contend collusion among government officials and businessmen artificially inflates Mali's internal debt.

Growing pressure from international donors for more transparency in public resource management led to changing the appointment process of the Directors of Finance and Equipment. As result, in March 2017, the Minister of Finance dismissed fifteen Directors of Finance and Equipment. Eighteen others were moved to other ministries. The GOM decided to create a new office to fight illicit enrichment of public servants. The new office has the authority to receive declarations of assets from public servants, to undertake investigation against government officials suspected of corruption, and to refer for prosecution if sufficient evidence is gathered against the defendant. While the government takes baby steps to fight corruption, the business environment continues to suffer from widespread corruption which couples with the deteriorated security situation to constitute the most important barriers to the promotion of investment in Mali.

*UN Anticorruption Convention, OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery*

Mali has signed and ratified the UN Anticorruption Treaty. It went into force in April 2008. Mali is not a party to the OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery.

*Resources to Report Corruption*

The Government agencies that deal with corruption are:

- The Economic and Financial Unit of Bamako (Pole Economique et Financier de Bamako). The prosecutor of the Pole Economique is Mamadou Bandiougou Diawara, (+223) 20 29 71 34
- The Auditor General (Bureau du Verificateur General). The chief auditor is Amadou O. Touré, (+223) 20 29 70 25
- The Accounts Chamber of the Supreme Court (Section des Comptes de la Cour Supreme) The chief prosecutor is Kloussama Goita, (223) 20 22 15 02
- The Comptroller of Public Services (Controleur General des Services Publics,) the Comptroller is Mme Konaté Salimata Diakité, (+223) 20 22 58 15

## **9.1-Political and Security Environment**

The 2012 -2016 Political and Security Crisis and Subsequent Negotiation Efforts:

Throughout two decades of multi-party democracy, Mali has consistently encouraged private enterprise and investment. However, a political crisis that unfolded throughout 2012 pushed the country into unprecedented turmoil, deterioration of the economic situation, and uncertainty in the investment climate. The U.S. Embassy in Bamako continues to update Travel Warnings for U.S. citizens traveling to Mali.

More information on travel warnings can be found via the [Department of State](#).

Northern Mali has long suffered from periodic episodes of violence related to inter-tribal politics, smuggling and other criminal activities, and friction between local tribes and the central government. A new wave of violence began in the first days of 2012, when several armed extremist and separatist armed groups took advantage of the influx of arms and mercenaries returning from Libya to launch a series of attacks on military installations in the North. By April 2012, they had pushed the Malian armed forces out of the three northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, and part of Mopti, effectively denying the government control of half of the national

territory. Political tensions related to the military reversals in the north led to a coup d'état, and the overthrow of Mali's democratically-elected government on March 21, 2012.

Mali began the long road toward resolution of its political crisis in April 2012, when the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mediated a transfer of power to an interim government, which was charged with organizing elections within a year's time.

The Malian government approved a "Roadmap for Political Transition," after an extensive process of broad-based consultations. The two mandates spelled out in the Roadmap were, a) the organization of presidential and legislative elections during 2013, and b) the recapture of northern occupied territories and engagement in a negotiation process with armed groups not associated with AQIM.

French and African forces intervened in Mali in response to a new extremist offensive that threatened southern Mali. Within a few weeks, the intervention forces had retaken the major northern cities, substantially reversing the 2012 extremist takeover of the north. In June 2013, coalition forces in Mali were reorganized under the auspices of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

With the supervision of the international community, Mali democratically elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in August 2013 followed by legislative elections in December 2013. Municipal elections held in 2016 completed the electoral process. Originally scheduled for 2014, these local elections were postponed four times before being held in most of Mali in November 2016. Following renewed fighting in May 2014, a roadmap for peace negotiations was signed in July 2014 to pave the way for negotiations between the armed groups and the Malian government. The Government and pro-government militias signed a peace accord on May 15, 2015 with the Coordination of Northern Armed groups following suit on June 20, 2015. Since then, few of the accord's tenets have been implemented, leaving the north in an unstable status quo. Violence from terrorist attacks and interethnic violence has also crept into central Mali since 2015.

While the Malian government, backed by MINUSMA and French forces, has taken steps to reassert control over most of the major cities, much of the north remain unstable. The terrorist group Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), long entrenched in northeastern Mali remains dangerous. AQIM has demonstrated a pattern of kidnapping hostages for ransom and launching operations against neighboring Algeria, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger. AQIM and its local affiliates have been involved in various recent terrorist attacks in Mali, including at

a restaurant in Bamako in March 2015, at a hotel frequented by foreigners in Searé in August 2015 and against the Radisson Hotel Blue of Bamako in November 2015, which lead to 21 deaths. Multiple terrorist groups active in Mali consolidated under a single banner in March 2017.

## **9.2-Labor Policies and Practices**

Labor is widely available, though skilled labor is in short supply. Reliable unemployment data is difficult to obtain. While a 2015 GOM survey found an unemployment rate of 9.6 percent, the actual figure is likely over 30 percent. The rate is generally higher for youth between the ages of 15-24, coming in at 22.5 percent according to government's 2015 survey. Workers have the right to unionize. Relations between labor and management are often contentious and strikes are common. Although a warning notice for strikes is not required in the private sector, unions generally use mediation procedures before resorting to a strike. The government has ratified all the International Labor Organization fundamental conventions protecting the rights of workers.

Since June 2014, the GOM has faced several strikes from different unions, including the national union of workers (UNTM), the union of university and basic education professors, the union of workers from the tax office, the union of workers of the national radio and television company, the confederation of unions (CSTM), the union of judges, and the union of health workers. The private sector also partakes in strikes as shown by a 2015 banking and financial sector strike. While the employers and workers often find an agreement, the movements of strikes often freeze economic activities when involving key sectors like financial system or transportation.

The Labor Code adopted in 1992 (and amended in December 2011) streamlined hiring and firing procedures. Conflicts often arise when employers terminate contracts and fire employees. Large Malian and international employers have had difficulty enforcing their rights in court, given that powerful and independent labor unions play an important role in supporting their members and in other national affairs. Compensation plan negotiations and firing procedures are time-consuming and closely scrutinized by the Ministry of Labor and the judiciary.

Although not a requirement, it is advisable to have regular contacts with labor inspectors, especially when concluding new hiring contracts or considering terminations or reductions in force.

Child labor and trafficking in persons continues to be a serious problem in Mali. The International Labor Organization (ILO) cites that over 46 percent of children in Mali engage in child labor, including the worst forms of child labor such as child

soldiering and hazardous activities in the agriculture and gold mining sectors. Cotton, artisanal gold, and rice are included on the U.S. government's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor. Additionally, rice is included on the U.S. government's Executive Order 13126 List of Goods Produced by Forced and Indentured Child Labor. The government has action plans for monitoring child labor and unsafe working conditions, however, the inspection entities are underfunded and unable to regularly conduct inspections or provide support for victims of violations. The GOM submitted a draft law to the National Assembly to align Malian law of the minimum age of employment with the ILO standard. This will increase the age of employment from 14 up to 15.

### 9.3-OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

Since 1997, Mali has been eligible for U.S. ExIm Bank programs for short and medium term insurance and guarantees for the private sector, and long term insurance or guarantees for the government in target sectors. Mali is also eligible for certain Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) programs. Mali has been a member of the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) since 1990. OPIC provided guarantee to the project of American International School in 2009 and in 2011. OPIC is also negotiating a solar energy project to be implemented by a consortium of a US and Malian Companies. The project is awaiting the GOM's approbation.

### 9.4-Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics

Table 2: Key Macroeconomic Data, U.S. FDI in Host Country/Economy

	Host Country Statistical Source		USG or International Statistical Source		USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
Economic Data	Year	Amount	Year	Amount	
Host Country Gross Domestic Product	2014	\$14,004	2015	\$12,747	<u>World Bank</u>

	<b>Host Country Statistical Source</b>		<b>USG or International Statistical Source</b>		<b>USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other</b>
<b>(GDP) (\$M USD)</b>					
<b>Foreign Direct Investment</b>	<b>Host Country Statistical Source</b>		<b>USG or International Statistical Source</b>		<b>USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other</b>
<b>U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)</b>	N/A	N/A	2015	\$1	<u>BEA</u>
<b>Host country's FDI in the United States (\$M USD, stock positions)</b>	N/A	N/A	2015	\$-2	<u>BEA</u>
<b>Total inbound stock of FDI as percent host GDP</b>	N/A	N/A	2015	\$0 percent	N/A

Table 3: Sources and Destination of FDI

<b>Direct Investment from/in Counterpart Economy Data</b>
<b>From Top Five Sources/To Top Five Destinations (US Dollars, Millions)</b>

<b>Direct Investment from/in Counterpart Economy Data</b>					
<b>Inward Direct Investment</b>			<b>Outward Direct Investment</b>		
Total Inward	3,052	100 %	Total Outward	31	100 %
United Kingdom	1,380	45.2 %	Burkina Faso	11	35.5 %
Barbados	454	14.9 %	Cote d'Ivoire	7	22.5 %
Australia	390	12.8 %	Guinea Bissau	6	19.3 %
Canada	144	4.7 %	Senegal	5	16 %
Libya	113	3.7 %	France	2	6.5 %
"0" reflects amounts rounded to +/- USD 500,000.					

*Table 4: Sources of Portfolio Investment*

No data available.

## **9.5-Contact for More Information**

Rebecca A. Taylor  
Economic and Commercial Officer  
U.S. Embassy Bamako  
ACI 2000, Rue 243, Porte 297  
Bamako, Mali  
+223 20 70 23 00  
[BamakoEcon@state.gov](mailto:BamakoEcon@state.gov)

## **Trade & Project Financing**

### **Methods of Payment**

There are different methods of payment in use in Mali: cash, check, bank cards, banking transfer, mobile banking, Western Union, and MoneyGram. Cash payment is common, including for large amounts. There are risks related to cash transactions, particularly the use of counterfeit notes.

Foreigners and Malian nationals follow the same process for opening a bank account. Generally, this requires providing of documentation that includes: proof of residence, photos, identity cards or passport, payrolls, proof of a business registration, an initial amount ranging from CFA 25,000 to 100,000.

The West African Economic and Monetary Unions authorized the establishment of the Credit Information Office (Le Bureau d'Information sur le Credit) which collects information from banks and sells them to financial institutions. The credit information office collects financial data and identity information of the borrowers and processes them as credit reports and credit scores. Any borrower who agreed to provide this information receives a report of solvency once a year.

For more information on the [Bureau d'Information sur le Cr dit](#), please visit the linked website.

## **Banking Systems**

There are no controls on foreign exchange. The West-African Central Bank (BCEAO), however, will not purchase franc notes taken outside the CFA zone. In 2016, the governors of the central banks of the two CFA franc zones explored the potential of allowing the CFA of WAEMU (8 countries from West Africa) to be used in CEMAC (6 countries of Central Africa) and vice versa to strengthen regional integration. Concerns over terrorism financing and money laundering have slowed the process. The CFA franc is a convertible currency whose exchange rate is pegged to the euro at a ratio of 655.957 CFA francs to one euro. The annual average exchange rate of CFA per dollar was 592.44 in 2016.

## **US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks**

Citibank New York and American Express Bank are the U.S. correspondents for five major banks in Mali: Bank of Africa (BOA), Banque de Developpement du Mali (BDM), and Banque Internationale pour le Mali (BIM), Banque Internationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (BICIM) and Ecobank.

### *Multilateral Development Banks:*

Foreign donors and multilateral development banks fund most infrastructure projects. U.S. firms can bid on projects funded by multilateral development banks, USAID, and other bilateral donors. Mali often takes advantages of the diversity of donors to implement large infrastructure projects funded through long term loan contracts with non-traditional donors like China, India, or Islamic Development Bank. For example, in December 2015, Malian authorities negotiated with the China Railway Construction Corporation to renovate the Bamako-Dakar railway for a cost of \$1.5 billion to be primarily funded by China. The Islamic Development Bank has over \$400 million in ongoing projects in Mali. USAID undertakes major projects funding

in the health, education, agriculture sectors. The World Bank portfolio projects exceed \$ 1 billion. While the European Union and African Development Bank are involved in infrastructure project financing, the IMF and France provide budgetary support to the Government of Mali. Mali has benefited from large debt relief in the early 2000s that allows it to take additional loans for development projects.

U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (African Development Bank, World Bank)

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help American businesses learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects, and advocate on behalf of American bidders. Learn more by contacting the Commercial Liaison Offices to the [African Development Bank](#) and the [World Bank](#).

## **Financing Web Resources**

[Commercial Liaison Office to the African Development Bank](#)

[Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

[Export-Import Bank of the United States](#)

[Country Limitation Schedule](#)

[OPIC](#)

[Trade and Development Agency](#)

[SBA's Office of International Trade](#)

[USDA Commodity Credit Corporation](#)

[U.S. Agency for International Development](#)

[World Bank](#)

[African Development Bank](#)

# **Business Travel**

## **Business Customs**

Malians place great emphasis on protocol and courtesy. Discussions should begin with an extensive exchange of pleasantries.

## **Travel Advisory**

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens against all travel to Mali due to ongoing terrorist attacks, criminal violence, and potential political instability. U.S. citizens in Mali are reminded to stay vigilant, remain aware of their surroundings, and exercise caution, especially at night.

The potential for terrorist attacks in Bamako is high. Locations frequented by Westerners and other expatriates, including but not limited to night clubs, hotels, restaurants, places of worship, and Western diplomatic missions are targets for attacks. On June 18, 2017 terrorists attacked a hotel/resort complex 24 km east of Bamako city center, a site frequented primarily by Westerners and other expatriates. This was the fourth attack on such a site in the Bamako region since 2015.

On April 28, 2017 the Government of Mali extended the State of Emergency by six months. Roadblocks and random police checkpoints, especially between sundown and sun-up, are common in Bamako and throughout the country.

Northern and Central Mali are high risk areas for terrorist attacks, armed conflict, and armed robbery. U.S. government personnel in Mali are restricted from these regions except for travel deemed to be mission critical.

Violent extremist groups targeting foreigners have claimed responsibility for multiple terrorist attacks throughout Mali over the past 12 months. In March 2017, four Al-Qa'ida-linked groups merged under the name of Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM or "Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims"). Terrorist groups are likely to continue, if not escalate, attacks on United Nations and Western targets throughout the Sahel.

Westerners have been kidnapped for profit and/or ideological motives. Several Western hostages are believed to be captive in Mali, including a U.S. citizen who was kidnapped in Niger in October, 2016.

Due to risks to civil aviation operating within or in the vicinity of Mali, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) and/or a Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR). For further background information

regarding FAA flight advisories and prohibitions for U.S. civil aviation, U.S. citizens should consult [FAA's Prohibitions, Restrictions and Notices](#).

Visitors are highly encouraged to consult the [Department of State's Consular Information Sheets for Mali and neighboring countries](#).

## **Visa Requirements**

U.S. travelers to Mali must obtain a visa in advance from a Malian Embassy or Consulate.

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign business persons to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

[State Department Visa Website](#)

## **Currency**

Mali uses CFA franc and belongs to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The CFA franc is the only currency used in Mali. Travelers are supposed to change foreign currencies against CFA franc in the currency bureaus (bureaus de change) when arriving in Mali. Bureaus de change are located in the international airport as well as in the major cities. Commercial banks also change foreign currencies against CFA franc and vice versa. Informal change is common especially in Bamako. The U.S. Embassy advises against informal exchange of currency because of potential risks including robberies. It is possible to use debit cards to withdraw cash from ATMs. Some merchants will accept credit cards; however, cash remains the most common way to make transactions in Mali. International credit networks -- particularly Visa -- are accessible, as are regional and local networks. Travelers checks are often accepted by commercial banks.

## **Telecommunications/Electric**

Local and long-distance telephones, fax, and internet services are available in Bamako and other major cities. Mali obtained internet access in 2000, and there are currently thirteen Internet service providers in Bamako including Orange, Afribone, and Malitel. There is little difference among the providers in terms of costs. Service is quite reliable but normal dial-up, VSAT, and broadband speeds are slower than in the United States. International mail is slow and not wholly reliable. Private courier services including DHL, Federal Express, EMS Postadex and Airborne Express operate in Bamako. Most business hotels are equipped with WIFI and the cybercafés are available in major and medium cities. Two different kinds of plugs are used in Mali: C and E. The voltage is 220 and the frequency is 50 Hz.

## **Transportation**

Taxis are common in Bamako and major cities, but poorly maintained and dangerous. Privately operated public transport vans and pick-up trucks, referred to as "Bachés" or "Sotramas", are poorly maintained, routinely overloaded, and dangerous. For safety reasons it is recommended to avoid using local transport vans. Intra- and inter-urban bus service is available. Passenger rail service exists between Bamako and Dakar, Senegal; however, the trip requires a minimum of 36 hours and is subject to significant delays. Most business visitors rent four-wheel-drive vehicles with drivers for in-country travel. Passenger air service does not exist in Mali to the regional airports of Kayes, Mopti/Sevare Timbuktu, and Gao, however, air travel is possible through a few private companies with contracts with the United Nations. Air travel within West Africa is common, and frequent flights are available to Addis Ababa, Paris, Nairobi, and Istanbul. Travelers should carry copies of their passports while travelling within Mali.

## **Language**

Knowledge of French is very useful. Commercial interpreters and translation services are available if required, and cost roughly \$250-350 per day.

## **Health**

All travelers must have international vaccination cards (WHO) with current yellow fever immunization documented. Mali has chloroquine-resistant malaria. It is strongly recommended that travelers take malaria prophylaxis and avoid tap water. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) has more information regarding health precautions to take while traveling to Mali.

## **Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays**

Mali is on universal time. Business hours are Monday through Thursday, 0730 to 1600,

and Friday, 0730 to 1230 then 1430 to 1730. Saturday and Sunday are non-working days.

Holidays in Mali in 2017:

January 01 – New Year's Day

January 20 – Army Day

March 26 – Day of Democracy

April 17– Easter Monday

May 01 – International Labor Day

May 25 – Day of Africa

June 25 (approximate) – Conclusion of Ramadan Celebration

September 01 (approximate) – Tabaski (Eid – Sacrifice Holiday)

September 22 – Independence Day

December 01 – Mawloud

December 08 – The Prophet’s Baptism

December 25 – Christmas

(Dates listed as “approximate” are Muslim holidays based on the lunar calendar and therefore subject to variation).

### **Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings**

Temporary entry of materials are subject to prior approval of an authorization from the customs department, when there is proof that materials will be re-exported out of the country at the end of the stay.

### **Travel Related Web Resources**

[U.S. Embassy Bamako’s Economic and Commercial Service](#)

[Mali’s Investment Promotion Agency – API Mali](#)

[U.S. Department of State Travel Notice for Mali](#)