



**USAID | MALI**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Water for the World Country Plan

### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/Mali plans to focus its water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) portfolio on promoting sustainable, high-quality water and sanitation service delivery. Through investments in small-scale water systems and an emphasis on improved governance, financial resources management, and maintenance of local water and sanitation systems, USAID will promote Mali's journey to self-reliance, in alignment with the USAID Water and Development Plan (Plan) under the USG Global Water Strategy 2017-2021. Given the fluid political environment, USAID will rely on real-time information and analysis to continuously assess progress and adjust interventions or approaches within its WASH portfolio, as necessary.

### II. INTRODUCTION

Mali has a population of about 20 million, with an estimated 41 percent living under the extreme poverty line.<sup>1</sup> Ninety percent of Mali's poor live in rural or peri-urban areas, concentrated in the south where population density is highest. Only 68 percent of the rural population has access to a working basic drinking water service, while 27 percent of the rural population is using unprotected water sources or surface water for drinking and domestic uses.<sup>2</sup> An estimated 30 percent of the water infrastructure serving rural areas and small towns is not operational. Less than half of the population in either rural or urban settings has access to even basic sanitation services that hygienically separate excreta from human contact.

1 October 2019 <https://databank.worldbank.org>

2 <https://washdata.org/>

### III. WATER AND SANITATION CONTEXT IN MALI

Sustainable and equitable access to water is a critical element for stability and development in Mali. The entire country is characterized by what the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) calls “economic water scarcity,” which is caused by a lack of investment in water or a lack of human capacity to satisfy the demand for water, even in places where water is abundant. Symptoms include inadequate infrastructure development; high vulnerability to seasonal fluctuations in water; and inequitable distribution of water, even when infrastructure exists. In addition, virtually all areas of Mali that are not close to a river experience physical water scarcity, when there is not enough water to meet all demands. Symptoms of physical water scarcity can include severe environmental degradation and increased occurrence of conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Government of Mali Water and Sanitation Priorities*

The Government of Mali’s (GoM) [2019-2023 national strategy](#) for economic growth and sustainable development includes WASH as an objective, aiming to attain 100% access to at least basic services by 2030, in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mali’s decentralization process transferred asset ownership and contracting authority for WASH services to the communes; however, structural weaknesses in local government procedures and personnel systems still hinder implementation, including the lack of funding transfers from national and regional tax revenues to the communes. Since a landmark 2017 decentralization law passed, communes have been delegated responsibility for planning, financing, constructing and overseeing water and sanitation infrastructure. A commune is the lowest level of formal government. Interestingly, fecal sludge collection services and treatment are also responsibilities of communes now, but the structural weaknesses mentioned above have favored the informal emergence of the private sector in fecal sludge management, which is not the case for potable water systems.

The process for devolved services and funding at the commune level starts with a five-year planning process (Programmes de Développement Économique Social et Culturel, or PDSEC) that captures development objectives, medium-term investment needs, challenges and opportunities. Funding includes all sources: national government, donors, private sector, and locally-generated revenues. However, GoM funding for communal PDSEC plans is up to the presidentially-appointed governor of each region, and therefore, decentralized funding becomes politicized and cannot be relied upon for basic and necessary infrastructure services like WASH. The GoM signed a bylaw in 2018 that requires all piped water systems in rural and semi-urban areas to be managed under a three-way contract with the water operator, the commune, and an independent contractor who monitors the technical and financial performance of the water systems and reports back to the stakeholders (Suivi Technique et Financière, or STEFI).

#### *Government of Mali’s Current and Planned Strategies and Approaches*

The WASH sector in Mali is actively undergoing reforms. Both the Water Law and Water Policy have been technically validated and are under review by the Conseil de Ministres. The National Drinking Water Program and National Sanitation Programs are in the process of being costed and will be submitted for review and approval by the Conseil once the Water Policy has been signed. The terms of an October 2018 bylaw for regulation of the drinking water sector have

3 <http://www.fao.org/resources/infographics/infographics-details/en/c/218939/>

been incorporated into the “National Policy and the Programme Sectoriel Eau et Assainissement (PROSEA II),” which will guide the sector to the end of the Sustainable Development Goal period in 2030. The GoM supports communes to include WASH in their PDSEC requests, although, as mentioned above, the commitment to provide funding has not followed.<sup>4</sup> A separate law regulates private investment in public service delivery through the framework of Public Private Partnerships.<sup>5</sup>

The 2004 Health and Environment Policy addresses hygiene and WASH plans for health centers. Mali also has a WASH Strategic Plan for schools, including menstrual hygiene, that was developed in 2017. In 2019, Mali developed a National Water Hygiene Sanitation and Nutrition Strategy, which is integrated into a 2020-2024 Multisector Nutrition Plan. The GoM further manages a national database to track communes that have been certified as “Open Defecation Free.” The National Water Office (DNH) has a database with GIS coordinates for all modern water points and publishes an annual WASH sector review.<sup>6</sup>

The government’s allocation to WASH was 2.62 percent of the national budget in 2018, more than doubling from 1.23 percent in 2017. This rate constitutes 10 to 15 percent of the total financing of the sector by all actors.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, Mali estimated the cost of achieving SDG 6 at \$162M per year for basic services and \$668M annually to meet universal access to safely managed water and sanitation services--meaning there is a deficit of \$415M per year. The GoM is exploring innovative financing mechanisms, more efficient use of existing resources, and mobilization of domestic financing through private investments to reduce the gap.<sup>8</sup>

### *Challenges and Opportunities in the Sector*

**Demographics:** Mali has a very high population growth rate of almost three percent per year, and the total fertility rate is 6.4 live births per woman. If that rate is sustained, Mali’s population could double in less than 25 years, which is particularly challenging for the WASH sector given that funding deficits already exist. Ninety percent of the population live in the southern region near the Niger and Senegal rivers, and about 68 percent of the population is rural, with five to ten percent of people living a nomadic lifestyle. Mali has a very young population with a median age of 15.9.<sup>9</sup>

**Economy and Private Sector:** With a projected growth rate of 5.1 percent, the World Bank forecasts a favorable medium-term economic outlook in Mali despite security, climate-related, and social risks.<sup>10</sup> However, this projected rate was made prior to the coronavirus pandemic. The GoM now expects a growth rate in 2020 of 0.9 percent,<sup>11</sup> which poses a real challenge for GoM WASH contributions in the near future. Despite this, the private sector has called for reforms to the business and investment climate, particularly strengthening legal certainty for small businesses and more access to microfinance loans, which would be a boost to Malian businesses in all sectors, including WASH.<sup>12</sup>

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4 [Mali Country Brief - Sanitation and Water for All](#)

5 Mali Law No. 2016-016 of December 30, 2016

6 DNH 2018 annual report <http://www.dnhmali.org/IMG/pdf/-274.pdf>

7 [Mali Country Brief - Sanitation and Water for All](#)

8 [Mali Country Brief - Sanitation and Water for All](#)

9 <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/mali-population/>

10 [Report: Disrupting the Gender Divide in Mali, Chad, Niger, and Guinea](#)

11 US Embassy Cable 20 Bamako 330

12 <https://www.devex.com/news/can-the-private-sector-unlock-mali-s-development-potential-82837>

**Gender:** Inadequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene pose critical health and nutrition risks to all children, but there are additional implications for the health, psychosocial well-being and mobility of women and girls who are primarily responsible for water collection in Mali. Use of sanitation facilities that are shared with other households and open defecation practices increase the risk of sexual assault for women and girls, in addition to impeding their ability to safely manage their monthly menstrual cycles in privacy and with dignity. In addition to addressing women and girls in their domestic roles, Mali's WASH program will promote women and girls as sector professionals, either through work in WASH service provision or indirectly through a range of economic opportunities that depend on water, and support increased female representation in decision-making at the institutional and community levels.

**Climate:** Mali has abundant water resources along the Niger and Senegal Rivers, and in the Inner Niger Delta in the center of the country. Almost all of Mali's major urban centers are located along these rivers, and they will continue to have adequate access to water resources as long as there is sufficient capital to provide water treatment and distribution infrastructure. All populated areas located away from rivers face significant water stress. Mali's central and northern regions face lower rainfall, higher temperatures and increased rainfall variance as a result of climate variability. These factors threaten agricultural production and undercut the reliability of surface and groundwater resources.<sup>13</sup>

**Civil Society:** CN-CIEPA/WASH is a national coalition of all the civil society actors in the WASH sector in Mali. It represents unions, journalists, women's groups and umbrella organizations of farmers' organizations to address issues of access to drinking water and sanitation from several points of view and with different advocacy approaches.<sup>14</sup> The CN-CIEPA coalition has provided a platform for major development partners in WASH (GIZ, Helvetas, USAID and WaterAid, among others) to come together and agree upon common implementation approaches, as well as to influence GoM priorities.

**Conflict:** The use and depletion of water resources is one of the fundamental sources of inter-community conflict in central Mali. Conflict awareness should therefore be at the heart of responsible decision-making on all projects affecting water resources. The "Civil Society White Book on Peace and Security in Mali," released in 2019, is the result of three years of quantitative and qualitative studies on the needs and perceptions of security of local civil society actors. Noting that the root causes of the current Mali peace and political crisis, such as structural state weakness, are yet to be addressed and that few of the 2015 peace agreements have been implemented, Malian civil society organizations propose a suite of national and regional policy recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the current national and international responses to the security situation in Mali, including on the need to invest in water service delivery to foster resilience and prevent conflict.<sup>15</sup>

## IV. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Mali's High Priority Plan Country Goal is: *Sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water, sanitation services and hygiene behaviors improved to support Mali's governance, resilience and prosperity*, which links directly to the Development Objectives in the 2015-2020 Mali CDCS.<sup>16</sup>

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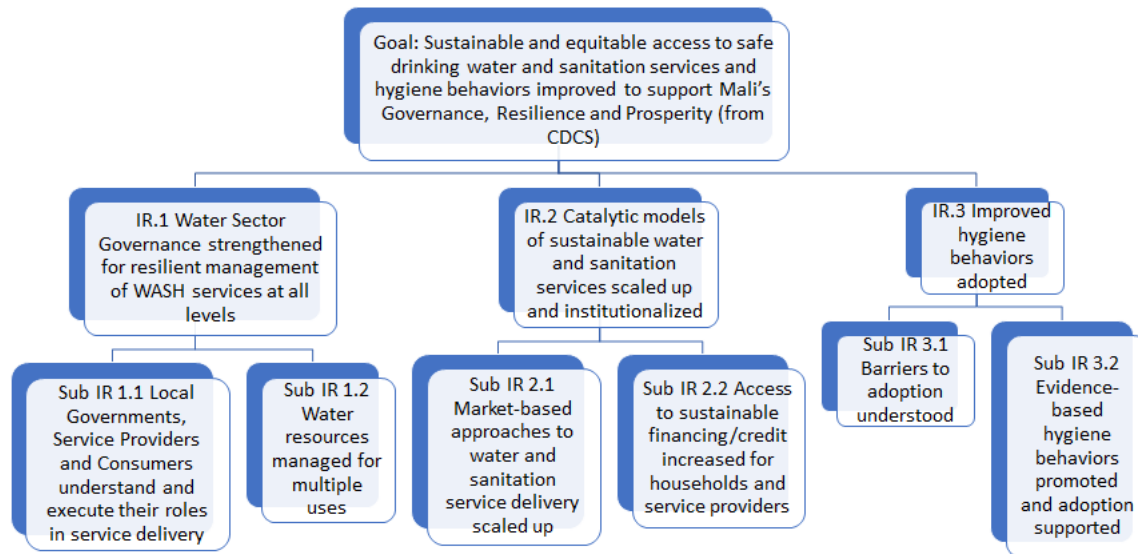
13 ClimateLinks. 2013. [Mali Water Resources](#)

14 <https://www.cn-ciepa.org/>

15 [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/livre\\_blanc\\_english\\_summary\\_online.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/livre_blanc_english_summary_online.pdf)

16 [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Mali\\_CDCS\\_2015-2020.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Mali_CDCS_2015-2020.pdf)

The Results Framework is shown below:



## Theory of Change

A key lesson learned from Mali's CDCS 2015-2020 is the importance of systematically addressing issues of leadership, governance, finance and management at all levels, particularly at local levels. A combination of effective governance and financing models and appropriate water and sanitation infrastructure is needed to ensure long term sustainability of domestic and productive water services, and such investments are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Mali's Theory of Change is:

*IF governance of small-scale systems are strengthened to finance, operate, maintain and repair water and sanitation infrastructure at the community level; and*

*IF support for construction of sustainable (environmental, financial, and operational) water and sanitation infrastructure is realized and sustained at the local level; and*

*IF systems of accountability and transparency are put in place and empowered at local levels;*

*THEN improved WASH services will support enhanced health, resilience and stability in Mali.*

USAID/Mali's goal is to move beyond direct service provision and focus on water sector governance and financing, and build the capacity of professional water and sanitation service providers and local government oversight that can improve access and quality of services at the commune level. USAID/Mali's engagement in WASH will contribute to all four Development Results of the USAID Water and Development Plan in the [USG Global Water Strategy 2017-2021](#).

## *Relationship to the Journey to Self Reliance*

USAID's Self-Reliance metrics stress the centrality of WASH to development goals: the Child Health Index aggregates drinking water and sanitation access with child mortality, and the Government Effectiveness Index includes drinking water and sanitation access as indicators of public services. Increasing Mali's commitment and capacity in the WASH sector are critical to accelerating self-reliance. This Plan increases commitment by working with the GoM at national, regional and local levels to prioritize rural water services for domestic and productive uses through the local government planning process (PDSEC). This Plan increases capacity by concentrating WASH Directive funds into small-scale water systems to support implementation of the national Water Law and Water Policy and the draft WASH sector plan (PROSEA II).

USAID emphasizes private sector engagement in the financial oversight of village water-user associations for potable water systems, as well as formal contracts for fecal sludge collection and treatment, when possible, to improve sustainability and self-reliance. Likewise, USAID seeks to improve governance structures and systems at the commune level for WASH systems to operate sustainably and to be self-reliant.

## *Program Components*

USAID/Mali will support the provision of safe and reliable water for domestic and productive uses to rural Malian communities, with a focus on strong governance, resilience and sustainability. All infrastructure development linked to WASH improvements will include technical assistance for government and community capacity to strengthen water governance (the political, social, economic and administrative systems in place that influence water's use and management). USAID/Mali will geographically complement WASH interventions with other agriculture, health and governance programming that is ongoing or planned in the southern regions of Sikasso, Bougouni and Koutiala. These regions are more stable and mostly free from conflict, where improved governance and community ownership is most likely to transform assistance into sustained and self-reliant WASH systems.

This Plan is costed based on prior year resources still available for programming and the FY 2020 estimated allocation of \$9.44 million. Other current and planned Mission activities, particularly Feed the Future, Governance and Health programs also contribute to the mission's WASH objectives.

## **V. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

WASH is one of the nine thematic groups for donor coordination in Mali, and USAID participates in this group.<sup>17</sup> There is also an active WASH Cluster that meets in the Bamako District and all regions in Mali to coordinate emergency response. The GoM is an active participant in the global Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. Under these auspices, the GoM acts through the SWA Framework<sup>18</sup> to organize annual sector meetings of all stakeholders to ensure WASH coordination and to review progress towards the SDGs and the elimination of inequalities.

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17 <https://www.maliapd.org/tableau-synthetique-des-gt/>

18 <https://www.sanitationandwaterforall.org/about/our-work/priority-areas>

Other bilateral and multilateral donors are active in the sector as well. Germany's GIZ and KfW have been working closely with the GoM in support of sector reforms and capacity building under their Programme Eau Potable et Assainissement (PEPA) since 2015. In 2019, Belgium began a new rural and semi-urban water supply project in Koulikoro. The World Bank's portfolio in Mali focuses on education, health, agriculture, and energy, including loans to improve water and sanitation in Bamako. Nine out of 16 new African Development Bank (AfDB) projects are for water and sanitation, energy and transport sectors; however, AfDB's Bamako City Sanitation Project (\$22M approved in early 2017) was canceled for persistent failure to meet the loan conditions. USAID/Mali convenes monthly partner meetings to share technical and security information, and envisions a multisectoral, quarterly WASH meeting in the future.