USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MALI COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

APRIL 2023

The Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment (DECA), a flagship initiative of the Digital Strategy, supports USAID Missions to better understand, work with, and support country digital ecosystems. The DECA looks at three pillars of a country's digital ecosystem: (1) Digital Infrastructure and Adoption; (2) Digital Society, Rights, and Governance; and, (3) Digital Economy. The Mali DECA was carried out between May 2022 and October 2022. It included desk research, 63 key informant interviews, and was guided by USAID/Mali's 2022-2026 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

Mali has made great strides in building out its connectivity infrastructure, but political instability and conflict hinder further investment. The Government of Mali has laid over 3,000 kilometers of fiber optic cable, deployed computers and satellite connections to schools, and is actively prioritizing villages in Kenieba, Bafoulabe, Kita, Nara, Douna, Sikasso, and Bougouni for future deployment. However, mobile network operators and the government face steep obstacles. Political turmoil has slowed legislative momentum and violence hinders construction of new connections and keeps deployment costs high. While the Government of Mali's commitment to digital development is aspirational, at the legal level, various gaps exist, mainly in the regulation of cybersecurity, interoperability, data protection, open data, and e-commerce. Mali's civil society and media have historically enjoyed freedom of expression, but new policies threaten the freedom of the press and increase organizations' needs for cybersecurity awareness and tools. Meanwhile, insurgent groups are accelerating their use of social media to disseminate propaganda, and the information war between international actors continues to deepen the crisis. In this context, Mali's broader population needs better tools to counter disinformation.

MALI'S DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM AT A GLANCE
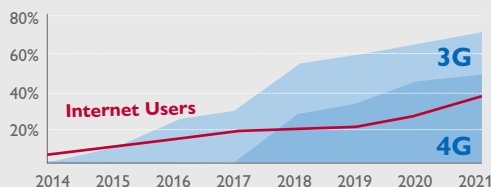
INTERNET ACCESS & USE

MNOs: Orange, Malitel, Alpha Telecom

Population covered by at least 3G mobile network: (ITU 2021)

68%

Network coverage:

Active mobile broadband subscriptions: (ITU 2021)

40%

Cost of 1GB of mobile broadband data as percent of GNI per capita: (A4AI 2021)

5.04%

INTERNET AND DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

UN E-Government Development Index: (2022)

34%
168/193 COUNTRIES

Global Cybersecurity Index: (2020)
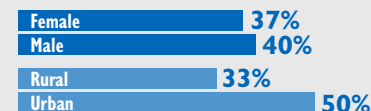
10.14
160/182 COUNTRIES

DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION (Findex 2021)

Mobile money account: **29%**

38% **Made or received a digital payment:**

Female	37%
Male	40%
Rural	33%
Urban	50%

DigitalFrontiers
SCALING DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

DAI
Shaping a more livable world.

RELEVANT POLICIES, REGULATIONS, & LEGISLATION

- **Key government entities**: *Ministère de la Communication et de l'Economie Numérique (MCEN), Autorité Malienne de Régulation des Télécommunications/TIC et des Postes (AMRTP), Direction Nationale de l'Economie Numérique*
- **Digital Strategies**: Mali Numerique 2020–successor under development.
- **Cybersecurity:** Cybercrime Law No. 2019-056
- **Data Protection**: Protection of Personal Data law No. 2013-015
- **Digital Finance**: Startup Act (adopted in 2019, not yet enacted as of 2022); BCEAO issues Wave Mobile Money regional e-money license (April 2022)

KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Digital literacy: Mali's low level of literacy and a lack of locally-tailored content make it challenging to roll out inclusive digital development programming. Less than one third of adults in Mali can read and write, and while voice communication tools are popular, tools for interconverting speech and text are not available for many Sahelian languages.	**Promote digital inclusion**: Invest in locally relevant and accessible content: Broadening voice-based options to account for Mali's linguistic diversity is key. Partnerships with organizations working on natural language processing can broaden the list of languages already available for machine translation.
Disinformation: Mali's conflict has moved into the digital space, as insurgent groups and global powers leverage social media to communicate their plans, spread propaganda, and target new recruits. Without tools to identify disinformation, members of Mali's broader population can fall victim to these tactics, escalating conflict and eroding support for Mali's military and peacekeeping forces	**Empower CSOs, media, and citizens to counter disinformation**: Malian civil society and media need support to strengthen their capacity to fight disinformation and counter cyber threats. This will require engagement with major digital rights and freedom CSOs to better understand and learn from local conflict dynamics and multi stakeholder collaboration to build a "watch list" of key issues in the country and map mis, dis, and malinformation sources.
Digital economy policy: Mali does not have a policy framework to guide the development of the e-commerce sector. Domestic e-commerce and cross-border e-commerce between businesses and consumers are insignificant. Low public trust in digital financial and e-commerce services leads to underutilization	**Support the adoption of a new comprehensive framework for the digital economy**: As Mali emerges from sanctions and plans for democratic elections, it is crucial to coordinate policies to ensure a comprehensive framework for Mali's digital economy. Multi-stakeholder coordination is essential to support the adoption of financial inclusion, financial education, and e-commerce national strategies.

For more information, please see the Mali DECA report.