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# MALI TRANSITION INITIATIVE (MTI)

## ANNUAL REPORT

PROJECT YEAR I AND FISCAL YEAR 2013, 4TH QUARTER  
May 28, 2013 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

September 2013

This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by AECOM International Development Crisis Response and Stabilization Program Team.

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**Report Type:**

Annual Report SWIFT III IQC Award No. DOT-I-00-08-00050-00, AID-OAA-TO-13-00028

**Period Ending:**

September 30, 2013

**Prepared:**

November 28, 2013

**Prepared for:**

United States Agency for International Development, Office of Transition Initiative

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFISAM	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
A&E	Architectural and Engineering
APEM	Network for the Electoral Process in Mali <i>(Réseau d'Appui au Processus Electoral au Mali)</i>
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ATT	Amadou Toumani Touré
CR	Country Representative (OTI)
DDGS	Direct Distribution of Goods and Services
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GUC	Grant Under Contract
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
JCI	International Youth Chamber <i>(Jeune Chambre Internationale)</i>
LTTA	Long-Term Technical Assistance
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali <i>(Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali)</i>
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad <i>(Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad)</i>
MTI	Mali Transition Initiative
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa <i>(Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest)</i>
NDI	National Democratic Institute
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
SRS	Strategic Review Session
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives, in January 2013, USAID/OTI launched the Mali Transition Initiative (MTI), also known as, Programme d'Appui à la Transition du Mali (PAT-M), to help support the transition to democracy and long-term development.

In late 2011 insurgents mobilized historic grievances, merged with pre-existing political groups and formed an alliance of convenience with traffickers and Islamist extremists. This loosely affiliated network launched a secessionist rebellion intended to create an independent state in northern Mali. After defeats and defections, Malian soldiers angered by a perceived lack of national political leadership and the abandonment of the military, launched a coup d'état in March 2012 that removed Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré. In the ensuing chaos Mali's armed forces were routed and withdrew from the regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, allowing rebel groups to take control of all three northern regions within a matter of days.

These rebel groups became the de facto political authority in the north of Mali for nine months. In January 2013 the French military's Operation Serval halted the advance of the rebel groups south towards Mali's capital and ejected them from urbanized areas. Later that month a joint civilian and military transition council presented a political road-map to the Malian national assembly that included a timetable for elections.

On June 18, 2013, in Burkina Faso, representatives of the Malian government and Tamasheq separatist groups signed the "The Preliminary Accords for the Presidential Elections and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali." Foremost, the Accords, also referred to as the Ouagadougou Accords, formalized the cessation of hostilities between the government of Mali and Tamasheq separatists, and guaranteed democratic elections throughout Mali.

A first round Presidential election was held on July 28, 2013, with 28 candidates participating. Falling just short of an outright majority, Ibrahim Boubacar Kieta went on to defeat Soumaila Cisse in a run off just two weeks later. President Kieta was inaugurated on September 4, 2013.

Mali now faces the inter-woven challenges of re-establishing democratically elected institutions, negotiating a lasting peace settlement, addressing the consequences of violence and human rights abuses, and countering violent extremism.

In January 2013 an exploratory Mali Regional Option (MRO) was activated through an existing task order USAID/OTI implemented by AECOM International Development in Cote d'Ivoire. MRO ran for nine months and concluded in September 2013. In May 2013 a full Task Order for MTI was also awarded to AECOM International Development, which will conclude in August 2016. MTI's initial purpose was to pursue the following objectives: to increase broad-based inclusion and participation in the democratic transition; and, to promote increased access to reliable information on the transition.

With the successful August 2013 presidential elections, OTI re-targeted its objectives in line with the U.S. Government's foreign policy. USAID/OTI's overall goal is to assist in the implementation of Mali's "Roadmap for Political Transition" which includes support to national reconciliation and the reintegration and stabilization of northern Mali.

MTI seeks to foster conditions for peaceful coexistence through reconciliation and empowering representative democracy by:

- Increasing citizen confidence in and information about the democratic process and governance;
- And promoting reconciliation and social cohesion aimed at addressing drivers of conflict.

## COUNTRY SITUATION

The transition in Mali can be seen in two ways; a repetition of history and a novel evolution of regional dynamics. Despite sounding contradictory, both are correct. The various conflicts that contributed to the 2011-2013 crises in Mali are highly complex, multi-layered, and multi-faceted. There are social, economic, political, and cultural divisions that have cut across geographic, ethnic, racial, and sectarian lines. Mali does not so much face a single transition, but several that are interwoven and imbedded in a history of secessionist rebellion and military intrusion into political life.

## HISTORY OF SECESSIONIST REBELLION

The rebellion by ethno-nationalist groups in 2011 can be seen as the fourth such insurrection against central government since Mali gained independence from France. In the 1960s a predominantly Tamasheq rebellion with limited local support was suppressed by a military campaign marked by collective punishments. In the early 1990s a coalition of numerous groups with popular support launched a substantive rebellion against the central Malian government. The rebellion was ended by the Tamanrasset peace agreement but internal schisms and spoilers to the process led to internecine violence between ethnic communities in northern Mali. The Tamanrasset agreement offered northern Mali political decentralization coupled with social and economic investment. Due to a variety of factors the agreement was delayed and implementation was broadly perceived as limited. In 2006 a small group of Tamasheq militants over-ran two military bases in the north, but the insurrection failed to mobilize local support and was ended through negotiations facilitated by Malian Tamasheq leaders.

The rebellion of 2011 was initiated by former mercenaries of Col. Kaddafi, who fled Libya after finding themselves on the losing side of that country's uprising. These insurgents fused with existing ethno-nationalist political groups to form the "National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad," known by its French acronym MNLA. The MNLA set forth an agenda of establishing an independent, secular state for all inhabitants of northern Mali to be called Azawad, a Tamasheq term for a political and spatial conception of an ethno-national homeland.

## ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS

The MNLA formed a coalition of necessity with other groups opposed to the Government of Mali that included Ansar al-Dine, AQIM and MUJAO. *Ansar al-Dine* (Arabic for Defenders of the Faith) is a Salafist organization made up predominantly of Tamasheq from the Ifogha tribe and led by Iyad Ag Ghaly. AQIM is the Anglophone acronym for *Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb*, a 2007 re-branding of an Algerian Islamist extremist group with global jihadist ambitions. MUJAO is the francophone acronym for the sub-Saharan Islamist group *Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa*, which participated in the rebellion as part of a broader strategy to impose fundamentalist Islam across West Africa. Over the past decade the corrosion of government institutions, weak rule of law, and expansion of illicit trafficking, including narcotics, had turned northern Mali into a safe haven for Islamist groups, who integrated into communities through marriage and largesse. After initial MNLA victories over peripheral military outposts, the desertion of Tamasheq soldiers from the Malian military to rebel groups had a catalytic effect on the conflict. During the first three months of 2012 the Malian army steadily withdrew from northern Mali, and Islamist groups supporting the MNLA filled the governance void left by the desertion of the Malian state.

In April 2012 the rebel alliance captured the historic city of Timbuktu, and the MNLA announced the creation of an independent state of Azawad. The rebellion was far from a benevolent liberation, a report published in May 2012 by the NGO Amnesty International documented instances of gang rape, extrajudicial executions, human rights abuses, and the use of child soldiers by both Tamasheq and Islamist groups. In May 2012, the MNLA briefly attempted to rule northern Mali in coalition with Ansar al-Dine. The MNLA were almost immediately usurped from power, and violently deposed by MUJAO. Subsequently, northern Mali became a series of fiefdoms divided up between these groups, with the Islamists taking the key regions of Gao and Timbuktu, and the MNLA retreating to the borders of northern Mali. MUJAO and Ansar-al Dine began to consolidate their rule through the imposition of a brutal interpretation of Islamic law across northern Mali, with financial and ideological backing and political leadership from AQIM.

## **MILITARY INTERVENTION**

In January 2013, extremist rebel groups advanced south reaching the town of Konna. This triggered a military intervention led by French forces and supported by an ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) peacekeeping force titled AFISAM (African-led International Support Mission to Mali). Chadian soldiers comprised the vast majority of AFISMA ground troops, and began an offensive against extremist rebel groups in tacit cooperation with the MNLA. Supporting the international military campaign, the Malian armed forces steadily redeployed across much of the north. However, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch accused the Malian army of abuse, torture, rape, and extra-judicial killing of both civilians and suspected rebels. By March 2013 the international military offensive had reached its primary objectives of recapturing urban centers in northern Mali. The swift advance of the French intervention was in part aided by significant defections from Ansar al-Dine linked MIA (*Islamic Movement of Azawad*) to the MNLA, and the retreat of many insurgents into the Malian hinterland, boarder areas, and neighboring countries. In July 2013 the United Nations authorized the deployment of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), a 12,600-strong peacekeeping force. Contributions to MINUSMA currently fall short of its proposed mandate and the French military plans to reduce its force from 4,000 to 1,000 soldiers by the end of 2013. MINUSMA and the Malian armed forces face a multi-dimensional insurgency with varying degrees of sympathy in the local population.

## **TRANSITION FROM MILITARY AUTHORITY TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Throughout this brief narrative of contemporary events the Malian government has struggled with democratic transition. In 1968 a group of officers frustrated with Mali's lack of post-colonial progress launched a military coup that overthrew its independence leader, President Kieta, and installed Lieutenant (later General) Moussa Traore. In 1991 collective dissatisfaction with General Traore's rule became manifested in popular uprisings and demonstrations that provoked violent government crackdowns on dissenters. Under the supervision of a transition committee led by then Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré (popularly referred to as "ATT" after his initials) Mali went through significant political and economic reforms. A consultative national process contributed to the writing of a new constitution that paved the way for the election of President Alpha Konare and a National Assembly. Konare was re-elected in 1997 and stepped down at the end of his constitutionally limited second term as President. Following this, Malians elected ATT as President, marking Mali's first successful democratic transition of power.

In late March 2012 frustrations with perceived incompetence and an absence of decisive leadership led to mutinies by Malian soldiers in Gao and Kati. Junior and non-commissioned officers shortly thereafter launched a coup in Bamako that resulted in limited urban fighting between rank and file "green berets" and ATT's "red beret" presidential guard. On March 24, 2012, Captain Amadou Sanogo declared himself in control of the entire country. In the absence of clear leadership, the Malian army was routed by the rebels and lost control of the north. In April 2012 an ECOWAS brokered deal transferred sovereign power to President Diouounda Traore, and appointed a transition council of civilian and military representatives, led by Prime Minister Cheick Mobido Diarra. Malian politics continued to be controlled by leaders of the coup, as demonstrated by the public beating of President Traore under the eyes of security agents and the coerced resignation of Prime Minister Diarra. However, in late January 2013 the transition council presented a political road-map to the Malian National Assembly that included a timetable for elections.

## **THE OUAGADOUGOU ACCORDS**

On June 18, 2013, representatives of the Malian government and Tamasheq separatist groups signed the "The Preliminary Accords for the Presidential Elections and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali," more commonly referred to as the "Ouagadougou Accords" due to the location of the signing ceremony. Foremost, the Ouagadougou Accords formalized the cessation of hostilities between the government of Mali and Tamasheq separatists, and guaranteed the conduct and security of democratic elections throughout Mali. Furthermore, the agreement provided a blue print for the cantonment and eventual disarmament of rebels, the return of the Malian government and military to the northern regions, and a framework for final negotiations that are expected to result in strengthening of political and financial

decentralization and increasing of social and economic investment in northern Mali. The Ouagadougou Accords not only guaranteed Mali’s transition back to democracy, but also ensured that representatives of the government of Mali, who would subsequently participate in the final peace negotiations, will be backed by the legitimacy of having won national elections.

### NATIONAL ELECTIONS

A first round Presidential election was held on July 28, 2013, with 28 candidates. Despite concerns of violence and the risk of terrorist attacks at polling stations, the election passed without security incidents and minimal voting irregularities. Voting took place in all regions of Mali, including Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. However, participation among Malians who were displaced by the conflict as either internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees was limited. Only two candidates garnered significant support, but neither received the 50%+1 majority of votes required to win outright. Ibrahim Boubacar Kieta defeated Soumalia Cisse in the run off and President Kieta was inaugurated on September 4, 2013.

### EMERGENT INSURGENCY

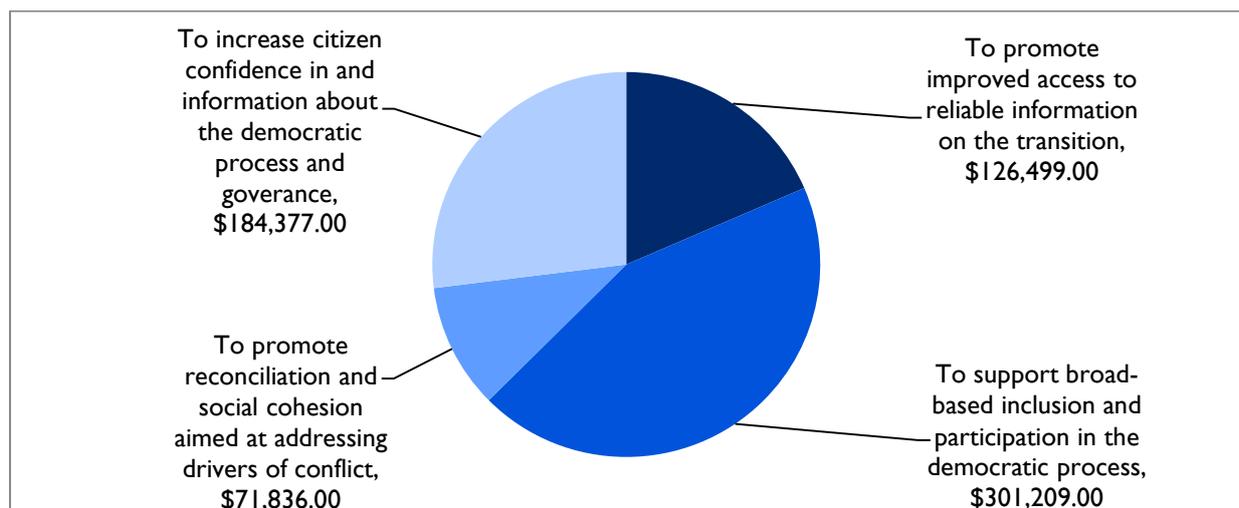
Despite the elimination of key extremist insurgent leaders, destruction of supplies and strongholds, disruption of logistical networks, and ejection of Islamist fighters from urban areas, over the past three months attacks have been launched against international and Malian military personnel and Tamasheq rebel targets. This has included infiltration of urban areas by insurgents and subsequent firefights with security forces, vehicular and manually delivered suicide attacks; improvised explosive devices; and rocket attacks on urban areas.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

24 November and 15 December 2013 – Malian Parliamentary Elections (first and second rounds)  
 4 – 7 November 2013 – Mali Transition Initiative Strategic Review Session

### ACTIVITY SUMMARY

From inception to the end of the 2013 financial year MTI cleared 19<sup>1</sup> activities over a three-month period. These activities had a combined committed value of \$683,921.00, of which \$487,126 was disbursed during the reporting period. The below graph indicates the percentage of activity commitment disaggregated by the initial two country objectives and the two revised country objectives. A list of all grants, disaggregated by country objective, can be found in Annex 1.



<sup>1</sup> The total number of activities cleared between May 28, the date of the award of the Mali Transition Initiative task order and 30 September was 21, however, funding for two of these activities came from the activity funding remaining from the regional option.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE OUAGADOUGOU ACCORDS

MTI's first activity<sup>2</sup> MTI013 utilized a variety of media to communicate the importance and contents of the "The Preliminary Accords for the Presidential Elections and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali." More commonly referred to as the Ouagadougou Accords, due to the fact they were negotiated in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, this Agreement provided both a framework for final negotiations between the Government of Mali and separatist rebel groups and a ceasefire that guaranteed the conduct of national elections.

As Mali had not yet transitioned from the council appointed by those responsible for the April 2012 military coup to democratic institutions when the accords were signed direct engagement and work with government of Mali institutions was limited. As such, MTI awarded MTI013 through a direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS) activity, with efforts coordinated with the "negotiator's office"; a group of volunteers specially empowered by the transitional government of Mali to engage with the armed non-state actors. MTI procured translation services to produce written versions of the Agreement into Bambara, Songhoi, Tamasheq, Peulh, Bwa, Soninke, and Arabic – the primary languages of Mali. The National Institute of Non-Formal Education and National Languages certified the translations as official. The document was then formatted, printed and disseminated across Mali in each of the translated languages and the original French text.

MTI complemented dissemination efforts of the accords document with an in-kind grant under contract (GUC), MTI015, awarded to a local theater group, Chamadie Comedy. The grantee developed an original 10-minute performance on the content and importance of the accords. Chamadie Comedy performed for representatives of the negotiator's office, USAID/OTI, and the US Embassy for final review. Incorporating feedback, the grantee recorded their performance in four languages: Bambara, Songhoi, Tamasheq, and Arabic. Recordings of the video were then uploaded and disseminated through social media, and broadcast on Malian national television by ORTM and the private network Africable under activity MTI013. Chamadie Comedy also conducted a public performance of their skit in Bamako.

Through these two activities, MTI increased access to information on the Ouaga Accords, eliminating the barriers that literacy and language often pose in Mali and mitigating the risk that false or distorted information could lead to disruption of the national elections. These activities generated confidence in the commitment of the parties to the negotiations and that following the elections, the government would assure a lasting, permanent solution to address grievances in northern Mali.

### PROMOTING TRANSPARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The Presidential elections of 2013 were an essential component of Mali's transition. First they brought an end to the governing council appointed by those who led the April 2012 coup d'état, and resulted in the inauguration of a popularly elected president and the restoration of formal diplomatic relations with the international community. The lifting of foreign policy and funding restrictions imposed by donors, international funding institutions, and numerous countries, including the United States, was conditioned on the conduct of free and fair presidential elections. MTI is now free and encouraged to work with Malian government institutions. Second, the successful conclusion of transparent elections provided Mali with a President and his representatives with the legitimacy to participate in negotiations with rebel groups on behalf of the entire country. In order to stimulate broad-based, non-partisan political participation and promote transparency during the Malian presidential elections MTI implemented several GUC and DDGS activities.

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<sup>2</sup> MTI's activities are numbered to continue seamlessly from MRO. The activities of the two programs are now combined in a single consolidated database.

Activity MTI014 partnered MTI with international NGOs including the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to provide surge support that increased awareness of the electoral process. This DDGS activity provided air time on Malian television channels for a 2-minute video of the Code of Good Conduct agreed to by all candidates to the presidential elections, designed by NDI. The video aired 36 times on ORTM National TV during the first round and 13 times during the runoff elections. This same video aired on Africable TV 30 times and on Africable-Maisha TV 16 times. In addition, the program supported the production and airing on Africable-Maisha TV of a short 10-minute film on the electoral process. MTI also procured printing services for posters explaining the voting process and flyers detailing the importance of free and fair elections produced by IFES and IRI.



**Grantees on election day, supported by MTI016.**

that expressed the activities' key themes: “Je suis Malien, nous sommes tous Malien” (*I am Malian, we are all Malian*); and “Je suis Malien, je vote. Mon vote n’est pas a vendre.” (*I am Malian, I vote. My vote is not for sale*). As French is a gendered language support was drawn from MTI014 to provide additional t-shirts with the message in the appropriate female noun; Je suis *Malienn*e. On Election Day, JCI volunteers deployed to assist voters in locating their correct polling station.

Through activity MTI016 MTI supported the International Youth Chamber of Mali (JCI) to distribute information on voting and messages promoting participation in the elections and electoral transparency in 27 locations. Central to the JCI’s activities was the dissemination messages of peaceful co-existence and rejection of vote buying, with members disseminating information prior to the election in public forums such as community centers and markets. MTI printed leaflets on behalf of JCI, provided volunteers with pre-paid cell phone credit to ensure coordination of efforts, and commissioned t-shirts for distribution at events

Through DDGS activities MTI017 and MTI019, MTI partnered with Mali’s two mobile phone operators, Orange Mali and Malitel, to send an SMS blast to mobile phone users across the country. The message encouraged voting and provided a number that Malians could send an SMS to in order to receive the location of their polling station. By sending the national identification card (NINA) number to the Direction General des Elections (General Directorate of Elections, or DGE) server, voters received their polling station locations via text. More than 3.3 million messages were sent via Orange and Malitel during the first and second round.

Despite a peaceful and successful first round Presidential Election, over 400,000 ballots were discarded as null. MTI supported the Network for the Electoral Process in Mali (APEM), through the provision of airtime on local radio stations and the national Malian television station ORTM, to carry out a campaign to raise awareness about how voters could avoid their votes being discarded. Support from GUC activity MTI018 MTI provided a cumulative total of 2,995 broadcast of APEM’s announcement by 50 local radio stations, and a separate video was broadcast by ORTM 65 times.

During the second round of the Presidential Election activity MTI020 supported the deployment of trained election support technicians equipped with laptops and NINA card scanners loaded with the voter registry to 359 strategically selected polling stations. During the first round, technicians, who had worked throughout the lead up to the elections, were not deployed on Election Day due to funding shortages. Many viewed this as a major oversight, which likely prevented thousands of voters from casting their ballot as they were unable to identify their polling stations. Some voting centers hosted upwards of 30 polling stations, making it challenging and time consuming for voters, who did not know their exact polling station number, to vote. Technicians were able to provide voters with their polling station location and number within seconds of scanning the NINA card. Through the DDGS activity



**Grantee on election day, supported by MTI020.**

MTI provided per diem and transportation costs directly to these technicians via mobile money, ensuring their timely deployment throughout the country for the second round presidential election.

MTI supported the Malian NGO SOS Democratie through activity MTI021, an in-kind grant to set up, operate, and raise awareness of an election information hotline. A volunteer-run, non-profit organization, SOS Democratie had been working since February 2013 to increase voter participation through a range of civic engagement activities. MTI provided phone credit and advertisement of two hotline numbers where voters could ask questions and report electoral irregularities. SOS Democratie volunteers documented and plotted incidents on an open source map that provided real-time information for election monitoring. SOS Democratie was supported by volunteers fluent in four local languages, making the hotline accessible to citizens in all eight regions of Mali.

In the first three months of its implementation MTI completed a range of in-kind GUC and DDGS activities which increased broad-based inclusion and participation in the democratic transition. In the midst of its operational start-up, MTI's immediate support to Malian civil society organizations and use of innovative technology had a catalytic impact on the country's transition back to democracy.

### **SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION IN DOUENTZA**

MTI's first geographically targeted cluster of activities focused on Douentza Cercle, which was occupied by extremist rebel groups for nine-months and became the symbolic front-line during the conflict. Insurgents governed Douentza through a brutal interpretation of Sharia law that included the use of public corporal punishments and the repression of traditional cultural practices. The impacts of the occupation further embittered relationships between historically divided communities, prevented customary conflict resolution mechanisms, and engendered new sectarian tensions. Extremist rebels not only banned formal education but also used school buildings as fortified positions, which were later badly damaged during the military intervention that recaptured the town.

MTI partnered with two cultural organizations to conduct a study-tour and lay the foundation for inter- and intra-ethnic reconciliation activities. Eight well-respected Dogon and Peulh community representatives, including women and youth leaders, conducted a participatory tour of 15 Douentza communes where tensions and conflicts had been reported. GUC activity MTI022 provided these representatives with logistical support to conduct public forums that facilitated discussions on the state of community relations and gauged their needs and priorities in terms of reconciliation. In order to ensure a better coordination of the field study, through short-term technical assistance (STTA) activity MTI024, MTI retained the services of a senior consultant familiar with the area to accompany the cultural organizations. In order to provide national coverage and generate momentum for broader civil society involvement in social reconciliation, MTI engaged a professional filmmaker through DDGS activity MTI029. The filmmaker and his crew accompanied the Peulh and Dogon delegation in the final days of their Douentza tour, filmed public restitution sessions, and conducted interviews with key stakeholders.

In addition to promoting social reconciliation MTI provided assistance to the restoration of essential services and the rehabilitation of facilities in northern Mali. For example, DDGS activity MTI025 procured the services of an architectural and engineering (A&E) consulting firm to conduct a site visit and evaluate the rehabilitation of the Douentza high school (Lycée). Under this activity, the A&E consulting firm provided a comprehensive report on the integrity of the school complex, measured all existing structures, developed schematic drawings and estimated the rehabilitation costs. The preliminary survey allowed MTI, the local government and Ministry of Education to prioritize and plan for the required rehabilitation. Furthermore, the survey provided MTI with the financial



**Damaged Douzenta school building to be restored with MTI assistance.**

information needed to determine the program could support rehabilitation of the schools buildings. Rehabilitation is slated to be carried out in financial year 2014.

As part of MTI's efforts to ensure transparency and community engagement with the transition activities it is supporting a hotline was set up for reporting on the Douentza activity cluster. Through DDGS activity MTI023, MTI covered the cost of developing an open-source software platform, the personnel operating the platform over an initial period of six months, as well as publicity and advertising to raise awareness of the hotline and its purpose. The personnel who will be engaged to respond to the hotlines are

fluent in the dominant languages spoken in Douentza, making the hotline accessible to everyone regardless of their literary rate. This was developed in collaboration with Yeleman, a Malian ICT firm which previously developed SOS Democratie's successful citizen's hotline used during the 2013 Malian Presidential Elections. Malian citizen can express their views and concerns via SMS or phone calls that the platform and volunteers log, respond to, and analyze for trends.

In recognition of the dynamic nature of violent conflict MTI has sought to support local reconciliation efforts to mitigate against drivers of future conflict. The program's support to Douentza has included development of activities aimed at restoring the communities' tattered social fabric and rehabilitation of essential buildings destroyed as a result of the occupation. MTI assistance to local partners in Douentza will continue through financial year 2014, notably ensuring rehabilitation of the high school.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

### **USE OF MOBILE MONEY**

MTI utilized an innovative "mobile money" payment method that ensures secure transfer of payments to beneficiaries, partners, and vendors located in rural areas. Mobile money has been utilized by the implementing partner to make operational payments to vendors in locations such as Timbuktu, several days travel from the Bamako field office, and to cover expenses such as hotel and fuel costs without losing financial oversight or control. Similarly, per diem and travel cost payments to local partners through mobile money have allowed MTI to rapidly process a large number of small transactions and avoided the transportation of hard cash to insecure areas or those without access to formal banking institutions. However, transfers require recipients to enroll in the mobile money system, which at times has caused confusion, leading to delays in receipt of money transferred.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE IN-KIND MECHANISM**

Mali has benefitted from decades of traditional development assistance and local organizations and networks suitable for partnership with MTI; many likely created in response to the availability of donor support. After initial enthusiasm, working to develop and implement activities with organizations accustomed to receiving direct funding often demanded a lot more time and effort than anticipated. There was a high-expectation that local partners would either receive significant honoraria for participating in activities, or direct funding for procurement as opposed to MTI procuring items to provide in-kind contributions to activities. Organizations struggled to accept or understand OTI's in-kind model and often got frustrated or in some cases became disinterested in implementing agreed activities. MTI experienced greater ease working with informal groups or organizations.

## **PROGRAM APPRAISAL**

As the Mali Transition Initiative started at the end of May 2013 this reporting period only covers just over three months. MTI successfully opened two field offices simultaneously in Bamako and Mopti,

whilst ensuring a seamless envelopment of the existing MRO program. In addition to furnishing these offices, a total of thirty-one Malian staff were recruited to ensure programmatic roll out in central and northern Mali. At the conclusion of FY2013 MTI had secured an office in Timbuktu and was in the process of making necessary improvements. In the midst of operational start-up MTI immediately began to implement TAP activities and ensured a substantive contribution by USAID/OTI to Mali's historic return to democratically elected institutions. Activity development accelerated, and the program achieved targets based on the funding obligated, while developing successful strategic activities in the north. During a Strategic Review Session (SRS) scheduled for 4 – 7 November 2013, USAID/OTI and AECOM Staff will review and hone the program strategy.

## ANNEX I: GRANTS CLEARED BY COUNTRY OBJECTIVE

Grant #	Grant Title	Committed Funds
<b>To promote improved access to reliable information on the transition</b>		
MTI013	Communicating the Ouagadougou Peace Accords	\$8,683
MTI015	The Ouagadougou Interim Peace Agreement through Comedy	\$9,160
MTI017	Increasing Voter Turnout and Awareness	\$30,738
MTI019	SMS Text Message for Voter Education in the Runoff Presidential Election	\$65,733
MTI024	STTA Support for Douentza Reconciliation Study	\$7,123
MTI029	Recording of the Douentza Reconciliation Study	\$6,302

Grant #	Grant Title	Committed Funds
<b>To support broad-based inclusion and participation in the democratic process</b>		
MTI014	Increasing Information on Presidential Elections	\$77,513
MTI016	Volunteer Mission to Improve Youth Voter Turnout	\$49,100
MTI018	Voter Education for the Runoff Presidential Election	\$49,108
MTI020	DDGS for Technical Support to find Voting Booths	\$40,633
MTI021	Using platform to increase Awareness about Elections and Voting in Mali	\$2,835
MTI022	Douentza Reconciliation Study	\$19,480

Grant #	Grant Title	Committed Funds
<b>To support broad-based inclusion and participation in the democratic process</b>		
MTI023	Douentza Cluster Activities Support Hotline	\$48,256
MTI025	Architecture and Engineering Services for Douentza High School Reconstruction	\$14,284

Grant #	Grant Title	Committed Funds
<b>To increase citizen confidence in and information about the democratic process and governance</b>		
MTI034	Repair and Installation of Generator-Timbuktu Governor's Office and Fuel Supply	\$14,897
MTI035	Emergency Maintenance and New Generator for Timbuktu Water Supply	\$90,292
MTI038	A&E Services for Douentza Infrastructure Rehabilitation--Phases II and III	\$79,188

Grant #	Grant Title	Committed Funds
<b>To promote reconciliation and social cohesion aimed at addressing drivers of conflict</b>		
MTI030	Cash-for-Work in Five Villages in Soumpi Commune, Niafunke Cercle	\$61,493
MTI032	Workshop on the Ouaga Accords to Promote Reconciliation Across Timbuktu	\$10,343