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MALI TRANSITION INITIATIVE (MTI)

QUARTERLY REPORT

PROJECT YEAR 2 AND FISCAL YEAR 2015, 1ST QUARTER
OCTOBER 1, 2014 – DECEMBER 31, 2014

January 2015

This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by AECOM's MTI Team in Mali and the MTI PMU in Arlington, Virginia.

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Prepared by:

AECOM International Development
2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A&E	Architectural and Engineering
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
COP	Chief of Party (AECOM)
CR	Country Representative (OTI)
DDGS	Direct Distribution of Goods and Services
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GNI	Global News Intelligence
GUC	Grant Under Contract
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
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 l'unicité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
NAG	Northern armed groups
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PAT-Mali	<i>Programme d'Appui à la Transition du Mali</i>
PMU	Program Management Unit
RPM	Regional Program Manager
SOM	Senior Operations Manager
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
TAP	Transition Activities Pool
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Mali Transition Initiative (MTI), also known as PAT-Mali, in June of 2013. During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2015, MTI continued to engage in activities aimed at attaining a peaceful resolution to the current conflict in Mali. The Program implemented activities that engaged communities throughout the nation and across international borders including activities that communicated outputs of the peace negotiations in Algeria. During this quarter MTI implemented a total of 47 activities, out of which 29 were new activities worth \$1,264,812, and 18 were a carryover from the previous quarter. This was attained despite degradation in the security environment in northern Mali, the presence of Ebola in Bamako, and the transition to a new management team.

COUNTRY SITUATION & POLITICAL UPDATES

During the quarter the security situation in northern Mali deteriorated as the peace negotiations between the Malian government and the Northern Armed Groups (NAGs) stalled in Algiers. Despite an early sense of optimism following the second round of negotiations in September, the parties failed to reach an agreement after two additional rounds of talks in October and November. The main points of contention were the territorial status and mode of governance of northern Mali. A new round of negotiations is set to take place in Algiers in January 2015.

This lack of progress translated into deadly clashes between the NAGs who have sided with the Malian government and those who oppose it; notably in Bamba (Gao Region). Attacks against UN Mission and Malian government representatives have intensified. Early in October nine MINUSMA soldiers were killed on the Menaka-Ansongo road by an IED. In November the convoy transporting the Malian Minister of Agriculture was attacked during an official visit to Gao region, killing two and injuring nine people.

On October 23rd Malian officials confirmed the country's first case of Ebola; a two-year girl from Kayes who had recently returned from Guinea. This made Mali the sixth country affected by the disease. On November 12th two new cases, unrelated to the first, were declared in Bamako. Panic quickly spread after it was learned that the country's most prominent private clinic, Pasteur, had failed to diagnose a Guinean Imam who came for treatment, leading to the contamination of a doctor and a nurse, and eventually the shutdown of the clinic. Fortunately, Malian health authorities were able to contain the epidemic, and only eight cases were declared total.

BUDGET INFORMATION

December-14	Amount Approved	Amount Spent To Date	Balance
Operations (Including TAP Fees)	\$10,800,000.00	\$7,199,626.39	\$3,600,373.61
TAP	\$10,550,000.00	\$4,329,019.06	\$6,220,980.94
Total	\$21,350,000.00	\$11,528,645.45	\$9,821,354.55
Percentage Operations	51%	62%	33%
Percentage Activities	49%	38%	59%

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS & MAJOR ACTIVITIES

During the quarter, the program achieved significant progress on moving forward construction activities. Work officially started on three major projects: Douentza High School Reconstruction (MTI027), Timbuktu High School Rehabilitation (MTI060), as well as the Rehabilitation of the Harber Maiga Cultural Center in Niafunke (MTI070). Moreover, the rehabilitation of Douentza's

Independence Plaza (MTI027) as well as the Timbuktu Tribunal President’s Residence (MTI069) were completed. This progress enabled the program to move forward with the development of new construction activities, notably the Rehabilitation of Gao’s Independence Plaza, which will likely become the MTI’s signature infrastructure activity in Gao Region.

In December, the program successfully held a winter university in Timbuktu for members of the #Ensemble platform as well as youth leaders from across Timbuktu and Gao regions (MTI099). Six international consultants from Morocco, Senegal, and Côte d’Ivoire travelled to Timbuktu to facilitate the workshops, which took place at the Ahmed Baba Institute. This activity led to the creation of new civil society organizations in Timbuktu and Gao.

ACTIVITY APPRAISAL & UPCOMING AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

MTI cleared 29 activities valued at \$1,264,812 during the October to December 2014 period, broken down by objective in the below table. A total of 146 activities worth **\$7,727,013** in Transition Activities Pool (TAP) funds have been committed from the inception of the program through December 2014. On average, MTI has cleared eight grants per month for an average monthly value of \$432,380.

OBJECTIVE	NUMBER	AMOUNT USD
To counter violent extremism through inclusion of marginalized communities	9	\$385,626
To increase the supply and demand for a peaceful resolution to the conflict	10	\$353,223
To restore a sense of normalcy in strategic areas in the North	10	\$525,963
Total	29	\$1,264,812

FUNDING SOURCE	NUMBER	EST ACTIVITY AMOUNT USD	DISBURSEMENTS
CCF	18	\$848,776	\$27,752
DA	3	\$86,233	\$29,735
ES OCO	6	\$224,619	\$29,458
TI	2	\$105,184	\$10,132
Total	29	\$1,264,812	\$97,077

As of December 31st, the total funding available for program activities is **\$10,550,000**, out of which **\$7,727,013** is already committed. The commitment of the remaining funds, **\$2,822,987**, by the end of fiscal year 2015 requires the program to generate approximately **\$350,000** in new activities per month, which would require MTI to slightly reduce the pace attained in the current quarter.

OBJECTIVE I: INCREASING THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT

During the quarter, the program consolidated its support to the Ministry of Reconciliation by providing the resources (personnel and equipment) for setting up a strategic communications cell within the Ministry. Consulting agreements were signed with an ICT specialist (activity MTI143) as well as two senior communication consultants (activity MTI149) embedded at the Ministry. In December, MTI delivered all the ICT equipment required to make the cell operational (activity MTI131). In a meeting with USG officials, Mali’s Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed satisfaction at the weekly reports produced by GNI (activity MTI112). In the next quarter, the program will encourage the Ministry of Reconciliation to leverage the significant investments made in the communication cell and to develop a “whole of government” approach to communication on reconciliation.

In conjunction with its strategic support to the Ministry of Reconciliation, the program continued to work with the #EnsembleNousSommesUnPeuple Platform at the grassroots level to increase

knowledge about the peace process, notably by organizing a series of public debates targeting women in six major towns (activity MTI155).

OBJECTIVE 2: RESTORING A SENSE OF NORMALCY IN STRATEGIC AREAS IN THE NORTH

During this quarter, activities aimed at restoring a sense of normalcy in strategic areas of the north were focused in Goundam (Timbuktu Region) and Ansongo (Gao Region). In Ansongo, the program supported local authorities in organizing a commemorative event for members of the crisis committee which managed the town during the occupation by armed rebel groups (activity MTI168), as well as a series of meetings and debates for women in each neighborhood (activity MTI167).

OBJECTIVE 3: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH INCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

The program continued to work in Gounzoureye commune to increase the social, economic, and political inclusion of its marginalized communities. MTI successfully set up a network of traditional leaders across the commune's 13 villages (activity MTI154), and held commune-wide meetings and festivities in two of these villages. These activities serve to increase interactions both between the commune leaders and the population, and within the population itself.

In order to better understand the conservative communities along the Niger River, which are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists and inform future programming, MTI also cleared a series of research activities. The Navanti Group will produce a report on the location, size, and composition of conservative communities along the Niger River (activity MTI172), and an academic consultant from the University of Arizona will conduct a Social Network Analysis in Gounzoureye Commune, with support from a local survey firm (activities MTI173 and MTI174). Together they will examine the nature of relationships both within and between villages of this strategic commune.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

In the next quarter, MTI will prepare to support a national communication campaign to disseminate the contents of a possible peace agreement between the Malian government and the NAGs. Several activities have already been cleared for this purpose, including the Translation, Printing, and Recording of the Peace Agreement (activity MTI162) and Radio Messages for Communication about the Peace Agreement (activity MTI163).

To further its objective of countering violent extremism in Gao region, the program will work more directly to expose and engage targeted communities on ideas of tolerance, freedom, and peace, by bringing youth leaders from Kaji to Bamako to meet with civil society and government officials (activity MTI179) and piloting a reading and debate club with Gounzoureye youth (activity MTI170).

Finally, the program will keep increasing the pace of construction activities, awarding contracts for all cleared activities with the full-time support of expatriate and local consulting engineers (funded under MTI093). These include the revitalization of the Timbuktu Peace Garden, the rehabilitation of Timbuktu High Schools basketball courts, as well as the Gao Independence Plaza rehabilitation.

SECURITY

The quarter was characterized by a degradation of the security situation in the north and the country's first Ebola cases, as well as the program's first significant security incident.

On November 12th at approximately 1:30 AM two rented vehicles that were being used as part of youth-led community reconciliation activity (MTI47) were stolen by armed bandits in the village of Fatakara, 23 km outside of Goundam town (Timbuktu Region). Fortunately, no injuries or fatalities were reported. The vehicles had been used by the grantee and no AECOM staff members were present at the time. AECOM immediately reported the incident to the UN Mission (MINUSMA) in Goundam and the local gendarmerie. The activity was temporarily suspended.

Immediately following the second outburst of Ebola in early November AECOM put in place hand washing stations in all its offices and residential compounds, distributed thermometers to staff members for self-monitoring, organized information sessions, and posted information on the virus. AECOM also made temperature monitoring compulsory for everyone visiting AECOM offices, using no-touch thermometers. Fortunately, no staff members or partners were affected by the virus.

STAFF MOVEMENT

- Regional Program Manager Olivier Girard was on leave from October 18th to November 2nd.
- Senior Operations Manager Laguerre Rutare left the program on October 31st and was replaced by Olivier Girard, who officially started in his new role on November 1st.
- Flor Rivera, who returned to Mali in September to provide surge support in operations and to support the incoming operations manager, left Mali on November 4th.
- Timbuktu RPM Michael Kauder was in Bamako from December 1st to 8th.
- Chief of Party Amanda Willett left Mali for personal leave on December 10th. Olivier Girard acted as Chief of Party.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

In November AECOM worked with Orange Mali to double the bandwidth available in its three offices. This upgrade was necessary to meet the needs of the program, particularly as AECOM has moved to an online accounting system and propriety web-based operations platform and procurement management system. The program is also anticipating moving to an online program database early in 2015. Reliable internet service continues to pose a challenge in Timbuktu and Gao, with several outages throughout the month of November.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTIONS

NEW MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

In December AECOM made the decision that new leadership was needed on the MTI program and chose to replace the COP. AECOM in consultation with OTI decided that Olivier Girard, the current Operations Manager and acting COP would be the ideal candidate to assume the new role and guarantee a smooth transition. Mr. Girard's in depth knowledge of the MTI program and AECOM's systems, as well as his proven ability to oversee the operations and compliance of multiple offices make him the ideal candidate. In addition, AECOM was fortunate to identify Raven Smith for the Operations Manager position. Ms. Smith extensive experience with other USAID implementing partners in Mali complements Mr. Girard's leadership and knowledge of the program. AECOM formally requested these changes to key personnel to OTI on December 31st.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY PEACE PLATFORM

Since June 2014, the program has developed and supported the Platform for Peace, a loose coalition of nearly 40 civil society groups, to implement a series of civic actions calling for peace, reconciliation, and national unity, under the #EnsembleNousSommesUnPeuple brand. During the quarter, MTI looked for ways to strengthen the organizational structure of the Peace Platform, by having them develop a mission statement, internal rules and regulations and a code of conduct. The program drafted a scope of work (SOW) for organizational support but unsuccessfully negotiated consulting agreements with US-based Training Resources Group (TRG) and Mali-based governance specialist Anna Diallo for its implementation. Over the next quarter, the program will have to look for alternative ways to support the organizational development of the Peace Platform.

ANNEX A: ACTIVITIES CLEARED BY COUNTRY OBJECTIVE

ACTIVITY NUMBER	ACTIVITY TITLE	AWARDEE	EST ACTIVITY AMOUNT USD	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
Increasing the supply and demand for a peaceful resolution to the conflict						
MTI142	Organizational Development Support to the Platform for Peace.	The Platform for Peace	90,402	Cleared	12/10/2014	4/30/2015
MTI143	Boosting Ministry of Reconciliation ICT Capacity through STTA	STTA ICT Consultant	31,169	Cleared	10/15/2014	8/15/2015
MTI149	Supporting Effective Ministry of Reconciliation Communications through STTA	STTA Communications Consultants	68,050	Cleared	10/6/2014	7/31/2015
MTI155	Creating Momentum for peace: public debates for Women on the Peace Process	Ensemble Nous Sommes Un Peuple Platform	28,964	Cleared	11/7/2014	2/28/2015
MTI156	National Radio Debates on the Peace Process	DDGS - Studio Tamani Synchronized Radio Debate	14,969	Cleared	11/5/2014	1/15/2015
MTI159	Cash for Work Herder-Trail Demarcation Activity in and around Lere Town	Sous-Prefecture of Lere Commune	52,203	Cleared	11/28/2014	2/28/2015
MTI161	Empowering Platform Discussions around Peace Agreements	The Platform for Peace	12,731	Cleared	11/26/2014	2/28/2015
MTI162	Translation, Printing, and Recording of the Peace Agreement	DDGS for Peace Accords Dissemination	17,834	Cleared	11/28/2014	2/28/2015
MTI163	Radio Messages for Communication about the Peace Agreement	DDGS for Peace Accords Dissemination	27,500	Cleared	1/1/2015	4/30/2015
MTI164	Increasing Civil Society Demand for Peace through the Bamako Press	The Platform for Peace	9,401	Cleared	11/21/2014	3/30/2015
Total			353,223	10		
Restoring a sense of normalcy in strategic areas in the North						
MTI151	Rehabilitation of the Independence Plaza in Gao	Gao Town Council	242,848	Cleared	12/1/2014	6/1/2015
MTI153	Logistical Support for Regional Economic Development Conference in Timbuktu	Timbuktu Regional Council	20,508	Completed	10/28/2014	12/10/2014
MTI157	Rehabilitation of the Water System in the village of N'Tahaka	Village Council of N'Tahaka	31,677	Cleared	12/1/2014	2/28/2015
MTI158	Support for Camel Race and Traditional Festival in Goundam	Goundam Urban Commune and Ras El Ma Mayors Office	38,225	Cleared	11/28/2014	2/15/2015

ACTIVITY NUMBER	ACTIVITY TITLE	AWARDEE	EST ACTIVITY AMOUNT USD	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
MTI160	Timbuktu Social Cohesion Storytelling Pilot Activity	Réseau des Communicateurs Traditionnelles pour le Développement	11,729	Cleared	11/28/2014	2/13/2015
MTI167	Support of Inter-community debates among women in Ansongo town	Mouvement des femmes pour la Paix	39,060	Cleared	12/10/2014	1/10/2015
MTI168	Conference and Commemorative ceremony for the Ansongo crisis committee members	Ansongo Prefect	9,996	Completed	12/1/2014	12/29/2014
MTI169	Rehabilitation of the water and electricity systems of Ansongo high school	Ansongo Cercle Local Government	52,624	Cleared	12/10/2014	3/31/2015
MTI175	Riverside Festival Series	Timbuktu Regional Council	47,796	Cleared	12/29/2014	2/28/2015
MTI178	Repairs to Gossi Water Supply System	Commune rurale de Gossi	31,500	Cleared	12/29/2014	5/31/2015
		Total	1,264,812	10		
Countering violent extremism through inclusion of marginalized communities						
MTI137	Survey of Gao Madrasa Education Facilities	Centre d'Animation Pédagogique de Gao	21,003	Cleared	11/1/2014	2/15/2015
MTI147	Youth Reconciliation Initiative in Goundam Cercle	Club de la Jeunesse du Monde	27,500	Cleared	10/15/2014	1/31/2015
MTI150	Rehabilitation of Women's Market Garden in the ultra-conservative Kadji area	Dar-Al-Salaam Neighborhood in Kadji Village	33,769	Cleared	11/3/2014	2/20/2015
MTI154	Network of Leaders and Activities for Reconciliation in Gounzoureye	Gounzoureye Rural Commune	109,917	Cleared	11/15/2014	6/30/2015
MTI170	Reading and Debate Club in Gounzoureye	Gounzoureye Rural Commune	11,357	Cleared	12/23/2014	3/31/2015
MTI172	Research on the "Reformist" Movement Along the Niger River	DDGS to Navanti	68,836	Cleared	12/15/2014	2/28/2015
MTI173	Social Network Analysis Consultant	STTA Consultant	36,348	Cleared	12/10/2014	9/30/2015
MTI174	Local Firm to Support Gao Social Network Analysis	DDGS - Social Network Analysis Local Firm	60,000	Cleared	1/6/2015	9/30/2015
MTI179	Dialogue Tour for Kaji Youth Leaders	Gounzoureye Rural Commune	16,896	Cleared	1/1/2015	2/28/2015
		Total	385,626	9		