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# MALI TRANSITION INITIATIVE (MTI)

## FINAL REPORT

PROJECT YEAR 3 AND FISCAL YEAR 2016, 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER

April 2016

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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## FINAL REPORT

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	<i>Appui à la Cohésion Communautaire et les Opportunités de Réconciliation et Développement</i>
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CMA	Coordination of Azawad Movements <i>Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad</i>
COP	Chief of Party (AECOM)
CR	Country Representative (OTI)
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DDGS	Direct Distribution of Goods and Services
EM	Engagement Manager
GUC	Grant Under Contract
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>
MPI	Mali Peace Initiative
MTI	Mali Transition Initiative
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
TAP	Transition Activities Pool
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. In line with the rapidly evolving situation in Mali and in support of U.S. Government's foreign policy objectives, USAID/OTI's overall goal was to assist Mali in finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. OTI's objectives in support of Mali's transition have evolved over the life of the project to reflect changes in Mali's political landscape, and include:

- Increasing the supply and demand for a peaceful resolution to the conflict ;
- Restoring a sense of normalcy in strategic areas in the North;
- Countering violent extremism through inclusion of marginalized communities.

The program closed on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 after 34 months of performance. The program experienced a smooth close-out process. The Timbuktu office closed as scheduled on February 29<sup>th</sup>. The Gao and Bamako offices, as well as most program expendable and non-expendable property, were transferred to USAID/Mali's Mali Peace Initiative (MPI) program. MPI, also known as ACCORD (*Appui à la Cohésion Communautaire et les Opportunités de Réconciliation et Développement*), was designed by the USAID mission in Mali as a follow-on activity to the MTI program.

## COUNTRY SITUATION & POLITICAL UPDATES

The security situation remained complicated during the second quarter of fiscal year 2016. Periodic assaults on Malian and Minusma troops by jihadists have continued. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, armed gunmen believed to be jihadists attacked the Nord-Sud Hotel, which hosts the EU's military training mission in Bamako. This attack, which occurred in the ACI2000 neighborhood where US Embassy and the MTI office are located, underscores the lack of improvement in security in Bamako and Mali after the Radisson Blu Hotel attack in November 2015 and the continued threat of extremist violence.

Difficulties at the political level remain also numerous in Mali. The establishment of transitional authorities in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, the cantonment, disarmament and integration of young combatants, as well as other dimensions considered under the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, advance sluggishly. There seems, however, to exist a circumspect goodwill on the parties and the discussions continue.

## BUDGET INFORMATION

March 2016	Amount Approved	Amount Spent To Date	Balance
<b>Operations (Including TAP Fees)</b>	\$12,888,513	\$11,484,399	\$1,404,114
<b>TAP</b>	\$10,503,731	\$10,490,370	\$13,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,392,244</b>	<b>\$21,974,769</b>	<b>\$1,417,475</b>
Percentage Operations	55%	52%	11%
Percentage Activities	45%	48%	0%

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

During the quarter, the program closed all of its remaining 43 activities. The program was able to complete its rehabilitation activities on time, including the Wabaria community Center (MTI230), the multifunctional platforms for women (MTI232), Menaka radio station building (MTI251) as well as the Menaka High School library and administration building repairs (MTI274).

From February 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, MTI supported Think Peace, in partnership with Morocco think tank TICVE, to organize a public policy workshop on countering violent extremism (MTI277). This activity was a perfect follow-on to the CVE youth agenda training that was held in November 2015 (MTI266) and allowed Think Peace to work with current and former senior civil servants, university professors, religious leaders and other civil society activists to develop a better understanding as well as an advocacy tool to engage with the Malian government on the issue. The workshop did produce, after some back and forth between TICVE, the participants and Think Peace, a short document outlining recommendations for a more comprehensive all-of-government approach to CVE. Supporting emerging policy discussions on CVE at the national level represents a valuable conclusion to the pilot CVE work conducted by MTI at the grassroots level in one commune of Gao Region. Program staff came to the conclusion that to advance CVE objectives in the villages and nomadic settlements throughout Mali, local officials need legislative tools to enable them to lead the conversation in their communities.

## ACTIVITY APPRAISAL

MTI cleared six (6) activities valued at **\$133,754** during the January to March 2016 period, broken down by objective in the below table. These activities were designed both to seize windows of opportunities, such as the Development of a Malian National CVE Policy (MTI277) and the Printing and Distribution of Peace Agreement document (MTI276) and to support the close-out process, such as the program's closing ceremony in Timbuktu (MTI273) and Transmitting MTI's Lessons Learned: Materials for a Public Event at USIP (MTI278).

OBJECTIVE	NUMBER	AMOUNT USD
To counter violent extremism through inclusion of marginalized communities	1	\$24,145.42
To increase the supply and demand for a peaceful resolution to the conflict	2	\$36,617.52
To restore a sense of normalcy in strategic areas in the North	3	\$72,991.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$133,753.95</b>

FUNDING SOURCE	NUMBER	EST ACTIVITY AMOUNT USD	DISBURSEMENTS
CCF	2	\$37,519.24	\$37,519.24
DA	1	\$47,163.22	\$47,163.22
ES OCO	1	\$24,145.42	\$24,145.42
TI	2	\$24,926.06	\$24,926.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$133,753.95</b>	<b>\$133,753.95</b>

A total of **231** activities worth **\$10,503,798** in Transition Activities Pool (TAP) funds have been committed during the lifetime of the program, out of a \$10,550,000 in available activity funds.

### OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASING THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT

During the second quarter of 2016, MTI printed and distributed 25,000 copies of the Peace Agreement in local languages (MTI276). Copies were distributed to the US Embassy's Political Section, MINUSMA's Public Affairs office, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who it turn redistributed its copies to the President's Office and the Ministry of Justice.

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

During the quarter, MTI completed the drilling of two deep water wells and equipped them with photovoltaic pumping equipment, in the town of Ber, located 60 km east of Timbuktu (MTI254). This in-kind grant with the local municipal government was particularly challenging due to the presence of

armed groups and general insecurity in the area, which limited the number of suppliers willing to operate there. While the initial intention was to clean two existing wells with air pressure, it became clear that these wells were silted beyond repair. The only operator who bid on the well drilling work experienced serious difficulties with his equipment, which delayed the project by two months. Nevertheless, MTI was able to complete the project on March 5<sup>th</sup>. In the program's communication to the authorities and the population, local staff made clear that this activity was conducted following the signature of the Peace Agreement on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, as a peace dividend.

MTI used some of its remaining activity funding to expand the functionality of Lafia Radio Station in Timbuktu Town (MTI275). Radio Lafia, operated by independent journalists, is well respected by the UN Mission (MINUSMA), local authorities as well as civil society leaders. Lafia's daily news and press review gives the pulse of the region's political and security situation. In the month of February, MTI was able to procure a new photovoltaic system, to give the radio energy autonomy, as well as a new 50m antenna, which significantly increases the radio broadcast range outside city limits. Radio Lafia used this opportunity to invest their own funds in building repairs, demonstrating their willingness to make the most of this investment by USAID.

During the quarter, the program was also able to complete, albeit with some delays, the radio rehabilitation projects in Gossi (MTI183) and Ansongo (MTI180). Noticing a lack of capacity to operate the new radio equipment in Gossi, MTI staff dispatched a radio technician from the Ansongo station (Radio Aadar Koukia) to provide one week of capacity building training in Gossi, and create a synergy between the two stations.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH INCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, MTI inaugurated the Gounzoureye Commune's youth center (MTI230), located in Wabaria. This community center, equipped with a photovoltaic system, 30 laptops and other IT equipment, as well as an outdoor amphitheater for projections and other cultural activities, was designed as a training and cultural facility for youth for Gounzoureye's 13 villages. In February, MTI's ICT Officer Jonas Dougnon conducted a week of IT training for 11 youth who were selected to act as volunteer facilitators at the new center. Unfortunately, due to delays in implementation, MTI wasn't able to capitalize on this investment for other cultural or dialogue activities. The program also used some of the remaining ES OCO funding to support the rehabilitation of the neighboring deep water well. This well, which was producing less than 5 cubic meters of water per day, can now give the population of Wabaria more than 20 cubic meters of water per day, due to an improved water tower and photovoltaic pumping system.

On January 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, MTI inaugurated seven (7) multifunctional platforms for women in Gounzoureye Commune (MTI232). These platforms, which comprise a diesel engine powering a grain husker and grain mill, are strategically positioned between the more "moderate" and "conservative" villages of the commune as a tool to reinforce social cohesion between women. Anecdotal evidence collected one month after the commissioning of the platforms suggest the weekly management meetings held by users are indeed a positive factor of social cohesion.

## **SECURITY**

In the early morning of February 5<sup>th</sup>, AQMI conducted an attack inside Timbuktu Town, targeting a facility used by MINUSMA. Fortunately, this facility was no longer in use at the time of the attack, limiting the number of victims. Four attackers and one Malian military were killed in the incident. This attack disrupted MTI's plans to send the Operations Manager to Timbuktu to oversee in person the close-out of the office. The close-out was conducted by local logistics staff, as well as the HR and Administration Manager.

In response to the attack on the Radisson Hotel in Bamako in November 2015, as well as the attack on a crowded café and hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on January 15<sup>th</sup>, MTI reduced its reliance on

hotels in Bamako for expatriates by converting some of its office space in Bamako in two en-suite bedrooms to host visitors. This measure was recommended by AECOM's corporate security manager. Home office staff as well as the Gao/Timbuktu RPM have been regularly hosted at the Bamako office since January without difficulty.

## **STAFF MOVEMENT**

- COP Olivier Girard, SOM Raven Smith, and RPM Alejandro Carnero attended the After-Exit Review and stayed in Washington DC from February 28<sup>th</sup> to March 04<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- OTI Acting Country Representative Jessica Bryant assumed CR duties starting in January 2016. She was present in Mali from January 9<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Associate Program Manager Will Ethridge travelled to Bamako from January 18<sup>th</sup> to February 17<sup>th</sup>, and again from March 16<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, in order to support the close-out of the program.
- During the quarter, COP Olivier Girard and RPM Alejandro Carnero travelled to Timbuktu to participate in the close-out ceremony of the Timbuktu Office. On January 19<sup>th</sup>, a ceremony was organized at the Ahmed Baba Institute with former grantees and partners to discuss the achievements of the program. In the evening a staff party was organized at the office to thank everyone for their hard work of the past two years.

## **OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **FINAL PROGRAM EVALUATION**

From January 11<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, MTI supported the visit of two expatriate evaluators from Social Impact, who came to carry out MTI's final program evaluation. Throughout the months of December and January, MTI extensively supported the evaluators by setting up meetings with grantees and partners (Ministry of National Reconciliation, US Embassy, DGE, etc.) and supporting their in-country logistics needs, particularly for their travels to Timbuktu and Gao.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, Social Impact delivered the first draft of the final evaluation report. While the report did contain some positive elements, the MTI team expressed concern at the predominant focus on the program's monitoring and evaluation systems, and the lack of attention given to the program's achievements. USAID/OTI provided extensive feedback to Social Impact and request a thorough revision of the report. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Social Impact produced a revised version of the report.

### **CLOSE-OUT PROCESS**

The close-out plan initially called for the closing of the Timbuktu office at the end of January, the Gao office at the end of February and the Bamako office at the end of March. Due to ongoing activities in Timbuktu, namely the Ber water project (MTI254) and the rehabilitation of Lafia Radio Station (MTI275), MTI pushed back the close-out to the end of February. In December 2015, USAID announced its intention to sole source to AECOM a follow-on activity, named Mali Peace Initiative, or ACCORD, to continue supporting the peace process and expand the geographical scope of countering violent extremism (CVE) programming. This activity is expected to begin by April 1<sup>st</sup>, immediately after the end-date of MTI. As part of this follow-on activity, AECOM expects to maintain MTI's Bamako and Gao Offices.

### **PROPERTY TRANSFER**

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, MTI received approval from the contracting officer to dispose of its assets to one of the following four partners: Mali Peace Initiative – ACCORD, Mali Livestock for Growth (LAG – also implemented by AECOM in Mali), and NGOs Mercy Corps and Terre des Hommes. During the lifetime of the program, MTI also used non-expendable equipment on loan from the USAID/Mali Education team, including two (2) vehicles. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, AECOM received authorized from USAID/Mali's Contracting Officer to dispose of this equipment to the implementing partner for the Education Emergency Support Activity (EESA).

## ANNEX A: ACTIVITIES CLEARED BY COUNTRY OBJECTIVE

ACTIVITY NUMBER	ACTIVITY TITLE	AWARDEE	EST ACTIVITY AMOUNT USD	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
<b>Increasing the supply and demand for a peaceful resolution to the conflict</b>						
MTI276	Printing and Distribution of Peace Agreement	DDGS	\$36,059.99	Closed	2016-01-27	2016-03-31
MTI278	Transmitting MTI's Lessons Learned: Materials for a Public Event at USIP	DDGS	\$557.53	Closed	2016-02-22	2016-03-04
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$36,617.52</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Restoring a sense of normalcy in strategic areas in the North</b>						
MTI273	Closing ceremony for MTI in Timbuktu	DDGS	\$1,459.25	Closed	2016-01-13	2016-01-20
MTI274	Equipping of Menaka high school's administration building and library	Conseil de Cercle de Menaka	\$47,163.23	Closed	2016-01-18	2016-03-01
MTI275	Improving functionality of Lafia Radio Station in Timbuktu	Radio Lafia de Timbuktu	\$24,368.53	Closed	2016-01-20	2016-03-01
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$72,991.01</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Countering violent extremism through inclusion of marginalized communities</b>						
MTI277	Developing a Malian National CVE Policy	Think Peace	\$24,145.42	Closed	2016-02-03	2016-03-15
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$24,145.42</b>	<b>1</b>		

## ANNEX C: SUCCESS STORIES



### TRANSFORMING LIVES – MALI

## A Community Center gives hope to young people in Gounzoureye



*Photo by : Ibrahim Ahmadou*

**Telling Our Story**  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

**March 2016** – During the 2012 crisis in Mali, the population of Gounzoureye Commune proved particularly vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. Some communities largely sided with the armed occupants, with whom they shared economic as well as ideological interests.

MTI began working in Gounzoureye in June 2014 to increase the social, economic and political inclusion of these marginalized communities. Significant evidence shows that these interventions have improved trust and communication between antagonistic neighborhoods and villages.

Several projects also sought to generate conversations on the ideas of freedom and tolerance. Along these lines, MTI established a community center for youth at the mayor's compound which was equipped with computer lab, internet connection, and a film screening area. A solar energy system, also installed as a part of the activity, reduces long-term operations costs.

A representative from the Mayor's Office says the Municipality has benefitted enormously from the solar system: "the constant cuts of electricity are just a bad memory and with the internet we do not need to go to Gao Town for information."

Eleven young people from different villages were trained on computer skills. They will train other youths at the computer lab. One of them, Moussa Oumar, told us, "Internet is a marvel. If you want to learn English you can do it by yourself, if you want to learn how to raise chickens you will find information. If people here understand, this will be a revolution. We have for the first time a real opportunity to educate ourselves. I am eager to train other youths".

"There is nothing like this in Gao town, were are going to be swamped by Gao people coming here", jokes the Mayor, Abdoukader Younassa Maiga.

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Web: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) keyword search: Political Transition*



## TRANSFORMING LIVES – MALI

### Multifunctional Platforms bring women together in Gounzoureye



Photo by : Ibrahim Ahmadou

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

**March 2016** – The occupation of northern Mali by extremist groups in 2012 left the Commune of Gounzoureye scarred and divided. A number of villages known for their large reformist Wahhabi communities, which have long been marginalized by the rest of Gao's population and have suffered from inadequate access to basic services, sided with extremist elements.

In order to address these divisions, MTI promoted the inclusion of marginalized communities through activities that brought neighborhoods and villages together. One of these activities provided seven fully equipped multifunctional platforms and placed them in strategic locations to encourage interaction between women from villages with preexisting conflicts. The platforms allow women to process cereals and charge electronic equipment, while offering them a space to congregate.

A woman in the Bagoundje 1 neighborhood tells us: "beyond lightening our household tasks, the platform will be a place for discussion for women, we are very happy with it". The leader of an extremely conservative neighborhood previously associated with extremists by its neighbors says, "Our communities never mixed as they are doing today and I'm very happy with that." Finally, the head of the conservative community of Kadji-Darsalam: "I am confident that this platform will serve as a space for exchange for all women of the neighborhood."

At Sadou Koira during the inauguration ceremony, an inhabitant expressed his satisfaction in the following way: "With the time we save in household work by using the platform, we will see other women and discuss our personal problems."

The platform's management committees, composed of female users, is also a key factor of sustainability and social cohesion.

Contact: Josh Litwin, [jlitwin@usaid.gov](mailto:jlitwin@usaid.gov) and follow us on Twitter @USAIDOTI  
Web: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) keyword search: Political Transition