

Business in Mali
FIELD AFRICA



Mali Market Overview

Opportunities for well-targeted, price-competitive U.S. exports to Mali's private sector may be found in agriculture, agro-industry, telecommunications, mineral exploitation (mining and processing, especially of gold), machinery, new and used clothing, computers, processed foods, vehicles, electronics, consumer goods, office equipment, and water resources.

Malian government contracts for donor-supported development projects offer additional opportunities. Such projects might require equipment and technical services for hydroelectric power generation and distribution, irrigation, telecommunications, public health, and agricultural and agro-industrial development. France has traditionally supplied Mali with many imported goods, but imports from other countries have gained market share. Malian entrepreneurs are open to new competitive supply sources.

Market Challenges

Business is conducted in French and few Malians speak English. Marketing and technical literature must be produced in French. There is insufficient commercial bank credit and interest rates are high. Other business constraints include limited power, communications, insufficient skilled labor and transport infrastructure; landlocked location distant from major markets; a small domestic market for consumer goods; and severe endemic poverty. The September 2002 political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire added further hurdles to the entry of imports and the exit of exports.

Market Opportunities

Chemical/pharmaceutical products, construction materials (other than cement), mineral exploitation, especially gold mining and processing, water resources development, livestock and hides/leather, food and beverage processing, machinery, energy (turbinegenerated and solar), and new and used clothing imports are among business growth areas. International tenders as part of donor-funded development projects offer prospects to sell agricultural, construction, irrigation, telecommunications, and computer equipment and services.

Market Entry Strategy

Conducting market tests with sample goods has proven to be effective especially for consumer goods. Exporters should conduct promotional campaign, using the media and local languages, relying on existing distribution networks that cover the country nationwide.

Contact Details

If you would like to further discuss your research requirements, please contact our fieldwork director on:

- tel: (+27) (0)31 277 2050
- fax: (+27) (0)31 202 1982
- email: info@fieldafrica.com

