



REGIONAL PROFILE



One of the nearly 500 Malians employed as a result of a large order for Hallmark stitches a gift bag. USAID provided information, samples, and financial quotes from three West African countries to Hallmark before it made its decision. "Without the technical assistance and on-the-ground support, this project would not have been possible," said Hallmark's Frank Masterson.

WEST AFRICA SNAPSHOT

Twenty-one Countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé & Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Population: 314.9 million (2008)
Income per person: \$1,806 (yr) (2008)

Source: World Bank Development Indicators

USAID IN WEST AFRICA

<http://www.usaid.gov/westafrica/>

OVERVIEW

Political instability, poor governance, corruption, lack of institutional and technical capacity, environmental vulnerability, infectious diseases, and lack of private sector investment opportunities are some of the major constraints to development in West Africa. To address these enormous challenges, USAID's West Africa Regional Mission, located in Accra, Ghana, complements and enhances USAID's bilateral programs, supporting unique and innovative regional activities and providing a range of services to assist other USAID missions in the region. The program works with local, regional, and international partners to support the region's development in four key areas: competitive market economies, regional health issues including HIV/AIDS, agriculture for trade and food security, and conflict prevention and peace-building mechanisms.



PROGRAMS

PEACE AND SECURITY

Conflict and instability are enormous impediments to development in West Africa. USAID's programs are working to enhance the capacity of civil society groups and regional organizations to alleviate the causes and consequences of conflict, and promote strategic cross-border priorities, such as combating extremism, corruption, and trafficking.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

To effectively respond to shared health problems in the region, USAID is assisting West African countries in developing networks of nongovernmental and public sector organizations able to coordinate national and regional responses to persistent problems such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. USAID has joined in a partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to provide technical support to the many recipient governments in the region in managing and implementing the Fund's activities. This has the potential to ensure more effective use of the resources that the Fund provides throughout West Africa. In addition, USAID is supporting efforts to coordinate national responses to the threats of swine and avian influenza.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Increasing agricultural growth and ensuring food security are critical to West Africa's economic development and the health of its people. At a



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WEST AFRICA

REGIONAL PROFILE CONTINUED

regional level, USAID can best achieve this by working with and strengthening African institutions. USAID's programs are designed to promote greater agricultural productivity, strengthen early warning and response systems, and improve livelihoods. USAID promotes the objectives of the Obama Administration's Feed the Future Initiative and is addressing specific market information and regional trade issues. USAID also promotes the development of biotechnology policies and regulations to raise agricultural productivity and rural incomes.

While West Africa possesses a rich natural resource base, weak institutions, poor management, political instability and some of the world's highest levels of corruption consistently undermine efforts to put the region's resources to work for the good of its people. West Africa's energy resources, if managed properly, are a potential source of economic development and can contribute to global energy markets. USAID's programs promote the sound management and viable use of the region's natural resources to reduce poverty and promote stability. USAID accomplishes these goals by enhancing regional environmental policy and planning, increasing the quality of and accessibility to critical baseline information and best practices, and improving the transparency, governance, and productivity of natural resources in strategically important areas.

If economies in West Africa are to grow fast enough to reduce poverty, then they must be able to compete and trade. USAID focuses on trade competitiveness in global markets as a way to foster productivity and increase the effectiveness of African institutions in promoting a vibrant private sector. USAID-supported Trade Hubs in Ghana and Senegal directly strengthen firms, especially those that process or manufacture products with strong growth potential and a favorable impact on historically disadvantaged groups such as women. The Hubs play a central role in increasing exports of new types of products to the United States under the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act. With assistance from the Accra Hub, two Malian companies exported over 100,000 *bogolan* (mud cloth) bags for Hallmark's Product (RED) line.

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