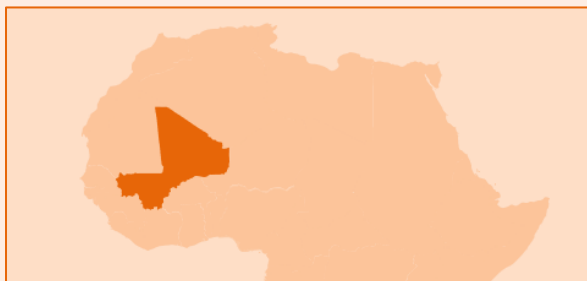


SUCCESS STORY

Support for local economic development and conflict prevention in the Tombouctou and Gao regions (ADEL)



EU Trust Fund for Africa – Sahel & Lake Chad



EUTF PARTNER:
LuxDev



COUNTRY: Mali



BUDGET:
EUR 13M



From **12/2019**
to **11/2022**

Objective of the project

To contribute to the stabilisation of Gao and Tombouctou and the resilience of the communities and local authorities.

Key successes

- > 4,598 youth supported in their professional orientation and 2,589 others benefitting from vocational trainings.
- > 793 women and men benefitting from capacity building in conflict prevention and management.
- > 877 elected representatives and local actors trained to improve transparent management and good governance.

ADEL¹ was implemented by LuxDev from December 2019 to November 2022. The project aimed to contribute to the stabilisation and resilience of the communities and local authorities of two of the regions most affected by conflicts and violence in Mali – Gao and Tombouctou – by strengthening the legitimacy of local administrations, establishing constructive state society relations and meeting social demands. ADEL is a continuation of RELAC I and II, also funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by LuxDev, which focused on local economic recovery and support to communities in the same regions of northern Mali between 2016 and 2019. RELAC I and II supported the strengthening of basic social services in 28 municipalities of Gao and Tombouctou.

The action was structured in four components aiming to: 1) boost the local economy by supporting local economic projects; 2) provide vocational training and strengthen mechanisms of professional integration for youth at the regional level (in Tombouctou Region only); 3) improve access to basic social services, through rehabilitation and improved management; and 4) strengthen the capacities of elected representatives and local actors to enhance their responsibility, accountability and legitimacy towards the population, and support implementation of conflict management mechanisms.

How did the EUTF help?

ADEL was implemented in a volatile context but nonetheless managed to achieve its objectives. The

project supported the community's socio-economic initiatives, created jobs and increased the revenue of job-holders in several key sectors. ADEL backed 107 socio-economic projects supported by cooperatives and associations (46 in the region of Gao and 61 in Tombouctou), in the sectors of agriculture, fishing, livestock and handicraft. Many activities focused on enhancing the local economy, including technical and management trainings (for 2,485 men and women), facilitating access to property titles or operating contracts (for 39 of the supported associations / cooperatives) and sustainable land management practice. Annual net profits for the supported economic activities increased by 13%, while the remuneration level of the jobs created over the project's duration increased by 45%. Moreover, the performance of associations / cooperatives improved by 28% following capacity-building on how to carry out their activities safely and efficiently..

In the Tombouctou region, the project supported professional integration mechanisms leading to the employment of 2,128 youth by the end of the project.² This was achieved with the establishment of 12 Professional Integration and Orientation Units³ across the region. Through these structures, 4,598 youth were supported in their professional orientation process⁴ (2,301 women and 2,297 men), and 2,589 (880 women and 1,709 men) benefitted from vocational trainings in 19 various fields, strongly enhancing their skills and employability.



Through improved access and better local governance, the strengthening of basic social services positively impacted social cohesion between service providers and users in target areas. ADEL strengthened the 28 municipalities that had previously received support from RELAC I and II to improve their basic social services and extended this support to 14 new municipalities. In total, the project built or rehabilitated 118 infrastructures (52 in Gao and 66 in Tombouctou) and provided 212 others with essential equipment⁵, exceeding the target of 98 rehabilitated/built infrastructures and 196 provided with equipment. The services supported were diversified, including schools, health centres, water points and socio-collective infrastructure (youth centres/councils, community radios, etc.). The project also organised trainings for the management committees in charge of these social services to enhance local governance.⁶

ADEL strengthened the capacities of local authorities and supported conflict management mechanisms:

- **The quality of the performance of local authorities improved by 44%.** This assessment was based on criteria, such as internal organisation, administrative and financial management, mobilisation of financial and human resources, local development planning and performance in terms of service delivery. By the end of the project, 877⁷ elected representatives and local actors had been trained with the aim of enabling them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities more effectively and supporting them in the transparent management of local affairs based on a culture of accountability.
- **At the same time, 793 women and men (200 in Gao and 593 in Tombouctou) benefitted from capacity-building in conflict prevention and management.** The trainings were implemented by local organisations⁸ with a robust territorial presence and which demonstrated significant commitment, enabling their reach in remote areas and in a challenging and unstable context.

¹ *Appui au Développement Economique Local et à la prévention des conflits dans les régions de Tombouctou et Gao (ADEL).*

² Of this figure, 77.5% were self-employed and 22.5% were engaged in wage employment.

³ *Dispositif d'orientation et d'insertion professionnelle (DOIP).*

⁴ The project considers that a person has been 'supported' when they have had at least three individual interviews with an orientation counsellor.

⁵ This included 119 basic and collective social services in Tombouctou, 54 in Gao, and 39 water point repair craftsmen in Gao.

⁶ *Association de Santé Communautaire (ASACO), Comité de gestion du point d'eau (CGPE), Comité de gestion scolaire (CGS).*

⁷ This included 402 in Gao and 475 in Tombouctou.

⁸ The Coordination of Women's Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations in Mali (CAFO – *Coordination des associations et organisations non gouvernementales féminines du Mali*) and the Regional Youth Councils (CRJ – *Conseils régionaux de la jeunesse*).

Disclaimer

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). Its contents are the sole responsibility of Altai Consulting and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The research for this success story was conducted from January to April 2024, was based on project documentation, and presents the situation at that moment.

• **Keys to success**

Participative planning: By adopting a bottom-up planning process, the main needs and priorities were defined at the communal level and then validated by higher-level authorities. This approach was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries who described it as transparent and inclusive, and increased local ownership of the project's activities.

Long-term engagement and continuity with previous projects: Building on LuxDev's engagement in Gao and Tombouctou since 2016, the project illustrates that significant effects are more likely when target groups, local authorities and partners have the chance to build sound mutual trust, even more in insecure contexts. In addition to being more effective, long-term partnerships allow for better anticipation of risks and bottlenecks, a quicker start to implementation, and leverage on previous investments in project structures and relationships.

Building on success

Long-term commitment fostering sustainability: The institutional, economic, and human capacities built by local institutions and associations through the consecutive LuxDev interventions (RELAC I, RELAC II, ADEL) are strong assets to promote sustainability over time without external support, despite the deteriorating security context.

ADEL adopted a comprehensive approach, strengthening local governance and the legitimacy of administrations, enhancing constructive state-society relations, and addressing social demands to bolster overall social cohesion. These strategies remain highly relevant and actionable moving forward, particularly in the context of sustained violence in the Gao and Tombouctou regions since the end of the project: in 2023, 1,192 fatalities were reported in these two regions, slightly less than the 1,241 recorded the previous year.



EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa