

# MOROCCO-MALI PARTNERSHIP INSPIRED BY ISDB

## Lightens Rural Communities through Solar Energy

Mali's sun-baked sandy plains extend for thousands of kilometres as much of the West African nation straddles the Sahara Desert.

The scorching, arid heat coupled with negligible rainfall and regular droughts makes living in these conditions incredibly tough.

This is why most of the country's population of almost 20 million inhabits the south, where the tropical climate is more hospitable.

Here, rural life is less daunting than in the north but there is a common factor making life outside urban zones almost impossible – lack of power.



## The Challenge

More than half of Malians live out in the countryside and 83% of them have no access to electricity, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Such basic deprivation leaves thousands of people trapped in a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities.

Agriculture is the country's main industry, employing 80% of the workforce and exporting cotton, rice, corn, vegetables, and livestock.

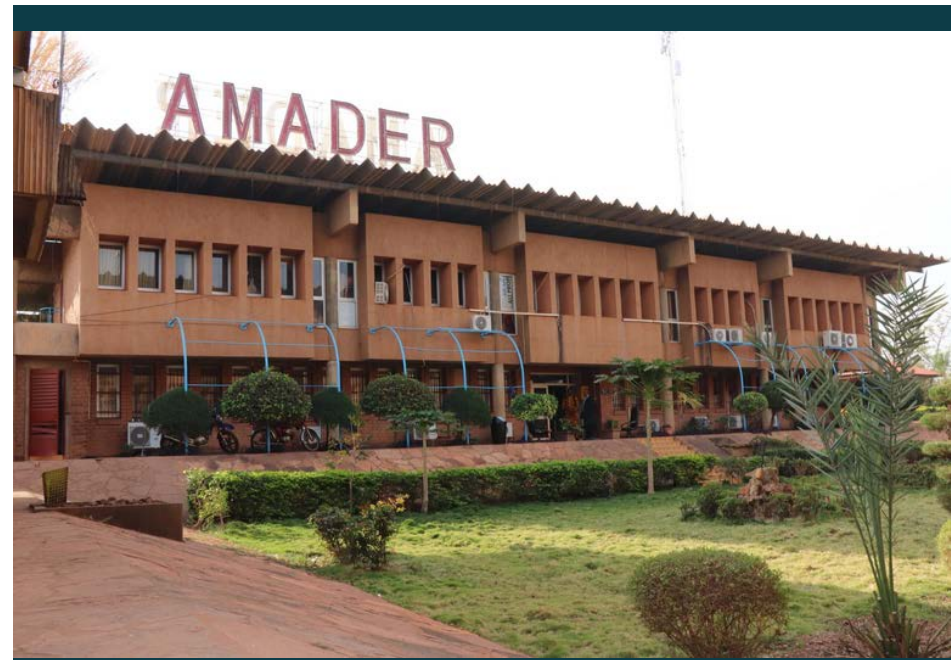
There is huge potential to grow this sector, provide jobs, and boost the economy if it can rely on a dependable supply of electricity.

Solar-generated power networks can drive water pumps to irrigate land, agricultural machinery and other industrial equipment, which can provide households and businesses opportunities for economic growth.

The government declared increasing rural electrification from its current rate of less than 20% to 80% as a priority under its national development plan.

Solar would be the source - providing a sustainable method of diversifying Mali's energy mix.

However, the challenge was exacerbated by a lack of finance, capacity, and knowledge on how to achieve such a challenging task across a country which is the 8th largest in Africa.





## The Solution:

The answer was sought just over 1,000km north in Morocco, where the National Office for Electricity and Potable Water (ONEE) had pioneered the provision of solar power and attained a 97% rate of rural electrification.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) was in continuous dialogue with the Mali Government about its energy dilemma but also had collaborative history with ONEE. So, the matchmaking could begin.

The aim was to pair these two countries together under the bank's innovative "Reverse Linkage" scheme, where nations can share skills and experience for their mutual benefit. The IsDB negotiated with the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation to connect ONEE with the Malian Agency for the Development of Domestic Energy (AMADER).

The Bank then provided US\$15 million to fund a consultation and design process to create a customised and sustainable rural electrification network – delivering affordable and reliable power to remote communities.

## The Result:

From 2015 to 2018, this ground-breaking project delivered electricity to 35,000 people in 24 villages from two solar plants via a network of more than 180km of power lines.

ONEE collaborated with AMADER to share knowledge for the system's design, operation, and maintenance. It also offered vital help with training and recruitment.

At the end of the three years, AMADER had the experience to develop and expand solar power technology to other rural areas of Mali – providing jobs and boosting the economy in doing so.

The benefits of this program extended beyond just the provision of electricity. First and foremost, the quality of life was enhanced for those living in remote communities.

In addition, farming practices and productivity improved, providing scope for expansion and the creation of more jobs.

## Unique Vision:

IsDB's unique "Reverse Linkage" collaboration thrived on a perfect synergy between the two partners for capacity sharing.

Mali's AMADER gained access to Morocco's expertise while Morocco was able to showcase its skills to an international audience. Both countries also underlined their commitment to the initiative with financial contributions.

The Mali-Morocco partnership is another potent example of South-South cooperation bringing hope and restoring pride.

The power of their mutual co-operation was matched only by the power they provided to those who needed it most.

