



# SUCCESS STORY

## Hope Flows Through a New Canal

**A new canal provides small farmers with a year-round water source**



Photo: USAID/Amadou Camara

The USAID-supported irrigation canal near Niono will benefit more than 18,000 people.

Mali's government has long sought to increase the reach of irrigation systems so that the country could eventually become a net exporter of rice. But while it is estimated that a million hectares of land could be irrigated in the interior delta of the Niger River, only 80,000 hectares currently are.

In November 2004, the situation improved when a new, USAID-supported canal was inaugurated near the town of Niono. The 4.7-kilometer-long channel will irrigate 960 hectares of land for rice production, benefiting more than 18,000 people and 13 villages.

Residents in the area say they have dreamed of this canal for 30 years. The canal will make irrigation water available to farms year round, which will reduce farmers' reliance on unpredictable rainfall and stabilize their revenues. Farmers

also now have the opportunity to grow a diversified range of products according to market demand. To mitigate any negative environmental impacts that might have resulted from the new system, USAID planted trees to combat erosion, dug three wells to provide potable water and initiated an information campaign to prevent water-borne diseases. It is hoped that the canal will not only increase the food security and revenues of Niono's people, but also improve health and overall living conditions.

### Telling Our Story

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