



The information contained in this sheet has been compiled by Jaume Portell, journalist specialising in economics and international relations, in an activity 85% co-financed by ERDF funds in the framework of the [AfricanTech](#) project (1/MAC/1/1.3/0088) within the INTERREG VI D MAC 2021-2027 initiative.

MAURITANIA

Macroeconomic framework:

According to the African Economic Outlook of 2024, the real GDP growth declined from 6.4% in 2022 to 3.4% in 2023. The decline in industrial and fisheries production was the main explanation according to the report, which adds a drop in inflation (from 9.6% to 5%) among the positive news. The rise in the price of gold and the start of gas exports in 2024, through a joined project with Senegal, will add to the country’s revenue over the next decade. The IMF projects GDP growth of 4.2% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026. In 2023, Mauritania’s GDP was \$10.45 billion.

Debt and currency

In 2012, Mauritania’s annual debt service was of \$149 million; by 2025 this sum will exceed \$500 million. 63% of Mauritania’s debt is in the hands of multilateral creditors, with AFESD (a Kuwaiti financial institution for development) in the central position. With a debt of 30% AFESD is Mauritania’s first creditor, followed by the World Bank (9%). The remaining 37% of creditors are bilateral partners, led by Saudi Arabia (16%), China (8%) and Kuwait (6%). Mauritanian ouguiya has gradually devalued, since its redenomination in 2018 (at a rate of 1 ouguiya per 10 existing ouguiyas), from 35 ouguiyas/dollar to 40 ouguiyas per current dollar. The stability of the exchange rate largely depends on the prices of gold and iron, which it exports (inflow of foreign currency), as well as the prices of its imports and debt payments (outflow of foreign currency).

Imports and exports

According to the MIT Complexity Index, Mauritania's imports in 2022 (\$5.43 billion) exceeded its exports (\$4.9 billion). Most of Mauritania's exports are tied to the mining sector: iron is primarily sold to China, its main export destination, accounting for 24% of its market share. Canada and the United Arab Emirates (which receive two-thirds of Mauritania's gold exports) are other key trading partners, with shares exceeding 10%. Beyond mining, exports of frozen fish and other fishing-related products make Mauritania an important African trading partner for Spain, which receives nearly 9% of Mauritania's exports.

Energy and food make up a significant portion of Mauritania's imports. Gasoline (7%), wheat (5%), sugar, palm oil, and chicken are among the most in-demand products, alongside cars. Most of its imports come from China (18%), Spain (6.56%), and Morocco (5.75%).

Energy and electricity:

In 2022, Mauritania generated more than 1.5 TWh of electricity, a figure three times higher than its consumption in the year 2000. 69% of this electricity comes from fossil fuels and the remaining come from renewable sources, specially from hydroelectricity (12%), wind (9%) and solar energy (8%). According to the International Energy Agency, 47% of the population had access to electricity in 2020. The mining sector is a growing consumer of electricity as the Mauritanian economy focuses on exports of iron and gold exports.

Defence:

The annual expense in defence equipment was of \$253.4 million in 2023, according to SIPRI, a Swedish institute specialized in the trading of this kind of products. This figure represents 9.61% of the government's expenses. China has been Mauritania's main provider in this sector since the year 2000.

Demographics:

In 1990 most of the Mauritanian population lived in rural areas (6 out of 10 Mauritanians). Three decades later, this proportion has taken a U-turn: now 6 out of 10 Mauritanians live in the cities, with a particular concentration in coastal areas such as Nouakchott, the capital, and Nouadhibou, a major port and the country's second most populated city. Between 1990 and 2023, Mauritania's population grew from 2 million people to 4.8 million, and during that same period the life expectancy increased from 60 years old in 1990 to 65 years old in 2022. In 2024, according to the CIA World Factbook, half of the population had less than 22 years old.

Technological innovation:

Since 2010, Internet access among Mauritania's population has skyrocketed, although it started from an extremely low base: only 2% of the population used the Internet in 2010. Since then, growth has been exponential, and by 2022, 44% of Mauritians were using the Internet.