



# Mauritania

## Geographic Futures

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This page explores Mauritania's current and projected future development, examining various sectoral scenarios and their potential impacts on the country's growth. It explores eight individual sectoral scenarios that include education, governance, health and demographic, trade and infrastructure-related outcomes, and combines the impact of these eight scenarios for Mauritania up to 2043 - the end of the third ten-year implementation plan for the African Union Agenda 2063. The analysis offers insights into policy actions that could enhance Mauritania's developmental trajectory.

For more information about the International Futures modelling platform we use to develop the various scenarios, please see [Technical Site](#).

## Summary

We begin this page with an **introductory** assessment of the country's context by looking at current population distribution, social structure, climate and topography.

- **Mauritania** is the most arid country in the Sahel, with over 75% desert, and the largest in the region with a surface area of 1 030 700 km<sup>2</sup>. This makes it the 11th-largest country on the African continent. Officially known as the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, it is a country in north-west Africa. Mauritania is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Western Sahara to the north, Algeria to the northeast, Mali to the east and Senegal to the south-west. Its capital, Nouakchott, on the Atlantic coast, is home to a third of the country's population. 90% of its territory is situated in the Sahara Desert, with vast stretches of pastoral land and only 0.5% arable land. Its population density is only five inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. Mauritania's climate is arid to hyperarid, with two distinct seasons: a hot season from March to October and a cool season from November to February.

This section is followed by an analysis of the **Current Path** for Mauritania which informs the country's likely current development trajectory to 2043. It is based on current geopolitical trends and assumes that no major shocks would occur in a 'business-as-usual' future.

- In 2023, Mauritania's **population** was estimated at around five million, with a median age of 18.2 years. Most of its population lives in the temperate south of the country, with more than 57% of the population living in urban areas. In the Current Path, Mauritania's population will reach 8.3 million by 2043. In 2023, the fertility rate was 4.7 births per woman and life expectancy was 71.7 years. The country had a moderate infant mortality rate of 32.7 deaths per 1000 live births. In the Current Path, Mauritania's fertility rate and life expectancy will respectively decline to 3.5 births per woman and increase to 76.9 years in 2043. Mauritania's Human Development Index (**HDI score**) was 0.57, placing it 158th out of 193 countries. The HDI loss due to inequality is 30%, and the Gini coefficient is 32.6.
- Mauritania's **GDP** measured at market exchange rates (MER) has more than quadrupled, rising from US\$2.9 billion in 1990 to US\$8.1 billion in 2023. In the Current Path, GDP will reach US\$16.8 billion in 2043. Average growth rates over this period are expected to stabilise at around 4.0%.
- Mauritania is a lower-middle-income country. Using the purchasing power parity (PPP) measure, **GDP per capita** has improved modestly over the last thirty years. It was US\$5 530 in 2023, below the average of US\$6 225 for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, Mauritania's GDP per capita will reach US\$5 775 by 2043.
- The **poverty** rate in 2023 saw about 1.4 million people, representing 27.6% of the population, living below the poverty line of US\$3.65, far below the average of 48.5% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, the poverty rate in Mauritania will reach 30.9% in 2043, a figure that will remain below the average of 34.8% for lower-middle-income African countries. However, using the US\$2.15 poverty line, 294 190 people (representing 5.8% of the population) lived in extreme poverty, far below the average of 23.4% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, this poverty rate will increase to 6.4% in 2043.
- To promote its medium- and long-term development, Mauritania has drawn up a **National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity** (SCAPP-2016-2030), in line with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015-2030). This strategy supports the vision for the future, entitled 'The Mauritania we want in 2030', based on the values of Sunni and tolerant Islam, social cohesion and peace, equity and solidarity, national unity, justice and democracy, transparency and human rights within a framework of good

governance. It aims to achieve strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with a view to satisfying the essential needs of all citizens and ensuring their well-being.

The next section compares progress on the Current Path with eight sectoral scenarios. These are Demographics and Health; Agriculture; Education; Manufacturing; the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging; Financial Flows; and Governance. Each scenario is benchmarked to present an ambitious but reasonable aspiration in that sector.

- The implementation of the **Demographics and Health scenario** will further reduce Mauritania's infant mortality rate to 15.4 deaths per 1 000 births by 2043. This will be 3.4 fewer deaths than in the Current Path. The life expectancy will improve from 78.4 years to 76.9 years in the Current Path. In addition, Mauritania's ratio of working-age population to dependants will slightly increase, reaching 1.5 - a mere 0.1 below the Current Path.
- In the **Agriculture scenario**, yields per hectare will increase to 1.9 metric tons by 2043—a 26.7% improvement compared to the projections of the Current Path. This will lead to an improvement in total agricultural production. In the Agriculture scenario, total agricultural production will increase to 3.1 million tons, almost 2 million metric tons, or 6.9%, more than the Current Path by 2043. Crop production will rise by 25.0% above the Current Path to 1.0 million tons in the Agriculture scenario by 2043. This reduces the import dependency of crops in the country compared to the Current Path. By 2043, the net import of crops will decline to 79.8 per cent of demand in the Agriculture scenario, instead of 84.6 on the Current Path.
- In the **Education scenario**, the average number of years of adult education will rise to 9.6 by 2043 which is 0.9 years more than in the Current Path. The Education scenario increases average primary school results to 22.6% in 2043, compared to 20.9% in the Current Path in the same period. At secondary level, the average results of Mauritania students will reach 36.7% in 2043, slightly above the 34.4% of the Current Path.
- In the **Manufacturing scenario**, Mauritania makes progress in industrialisation compared to the Current Path. By 2043, the share of the manufacturing sector in GDP will be about 11.2% (US\$2.0 billion)—about 1.5 percentage points above the Current Path. It means that an aggressive manufacturing transition can add an extra US\$400 million to the economy of Mauritania.
- In the **AfCFTA scenario**, the sum of Mauritania's exports and imports as a percentage of GDP will reach 115.5% by 2043. However, the AfCFTA scenario will reduce the trade deficit to 4.4% of GDP in 2043, compared to 4.5% of GDP in the Current Path. This means that Mauritania could improve its trade balance by 0.1 percentage points of GDP.
- In the **Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario**, 73.3% of Mauritania households will be using modern fuels for cooking in 2043. This figure will be higher than the average at 70% for the country's income-group peers, and at 67% in the Current Path. In the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, access to fixed broadband will rise to 23.9 per 100 people subscriptions by 2043, compared to 20.7 in the Current Path. In the case of mobile broadband subscriptions, the number will reach 150.7 per 100 people by 2043 in the Large Infrastructure scenario - compared to 150.3 per 100 people subscriptions on the Current Path.
- In the **Financial Flows scenario**, government revenue will rise to US\$3.9 billion in 2043, representing 23.4% of GDP above the average of 21.4% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa in the same year. Compared to the Current Path, the Financial Flows scenario will improve Mauritania's government revenues by just an extra US\$168.6 million in 2043.
- In the **Governance scenario**, Mauritania's score on the governance security will improve to 0.79 by 2043; at

which point it will be about 8.2% above the Current Path and slightly above the average of lower-middle-income Africa in the same year (0.7). Governance capacity will also improve in the Governance scenario, with its score increasing to 0.38 by 2043, constituting a 6.8% improvement above the Current Path. The Governance scenario will improve Mauritania's score on the Governance Inclusion to 0.36 by 2043, constituting a 6.0% improvement above the Current Path. In the Governance scenario, Mauritania aims to improve its governance practices and the Governance effectiveness is projected to rise to 2.18 by 2043, compared to the 1.94 of the Current Path.

In the fourth section, we compare the impact of each of these eight sectoral scenarios with one another and subsequently with a **Combined scenario** (the integrated effect of all eight scenarios). In our forecasts, we measure progress on various dimensions such as economic size (in market exchange rates), gross domestic product per capita (in purchasing power parity), extreme poverty, carbon emissions, the changes in the structure of the economy, and selected sectoral dimensions such as progress with mean years of education, life expectancy, the Gini coefficient or reductions in mortality rates.

- All scenarios point to an improvement in Mauritania's GDP per capita. The scenarios with the greatest impact on GDP per capita by 2043 will be the AfCFTA, followed by the Governance, Agricultural and Manufacturing scenarios. By 2043, GDP per capita in the AfCFTA scenario will rise to US\$6 239, representing an 8.0% increase above the Current Path (raising GDP per capita by an additional US\$464.3). In the Governance scenario, Mauritania's GDP per capita (PPP) will increase to US\$6 009 by 2043, which represents an increase of US\$233.9 compared to the Current Path in the same year. The Agricultural scenario will increase GDP per capita to US\$5 953 by 2043, which represents an increase of US\$178 compared to the Current Path. In the Manufacturing scenario, Mauritania's GDP per capita will increase to US\$5 952 by 2043, representing an increase of US\$177 or 3.1% more than the Current Path.
- All scenarios lead to a reduction in poverty in Mauritania. However, AfCFTA, followed by the Governance and Education scenarios, are most effective at poverty reduction by 2043. The AfCFTA scenario has the largest potential to reduce extreme poverty in the country and the number of poor people will decline to 2.2 million (equivalent to 26.8% of the population), compared to the Current Path of 30.9% by 2043. The Governance scenario has the second-largest impact on poverty reduction and 2.3 million people will live below the poverty line of US\$3.65 by 2043, constituting 27.6% of the population. Finally, in the Education scenario, 2.4 million people will live below the extreme poverty line of US\$3.65 by 2043, constituting 28.9% of the population. This will be 2 percentage points lower than in the Current Path and equivalent to a reduction of about 166 000 people living in extreme poverty.

In the fourth section, we compare the impact of each of these eight sectoral scenarios with one another and subsequently with a **Combined Agenda 2063 scenario** (the integrated effect of all eight scenarios). In our forecasts, we measure progress on various dimensions such as economic size (in market exchange rates), gross domestic product per capita (in purchasing power parity), extreme poverty, carbon emissions, the changes in the structure of the economy, and selected sectoral dimensions such as progress with mean years of education, life expectancy, the Gini coefficient or reductions in mortality rates.

- By 2043, the GDP of Mauritania will reach US\$23.0 billion in the Combined scenario. This will exceed the Current Path (US\$16.8 billion), meaning that the Combined scenario will increase the size of the economy by an additional US\$6.2 billion by 2043—an increase of 37.0% compared to the Current Path. The GDP per capita for Mauritania will increase to US\$7 265 by 2043. This will be US\$1 490 higher than the projection of US\$5 775 in the Current Path.
- By 2043, the size of the informal sector in Mauritania will decline to 17.3% of GDP. At this rate, the contribution of the informal economy will be lower than the 21.0% in the Current Path. Likewise, by 2043, informal labour

constitutes 18.3% of total labour in the Combined scenario instead of 31.0% in the Current Path.

- In the Combined scenario, poverty in Mauritania will be reduced such that by 2043, only about 680200 people in the country (17.9% of the population) will be living below the poverty line of US\$3.65. This means that, compared to the Current Path, almost 494000 million Mauritanian people could be lifted out of poverty by 2043 in this scenario. In addition, inequality in the Combined scenario will further reduce below the Current Path with a Gini coefficient of 0.29 by 2043, compared to 0.30 in the Current Path.
- In the Combined scenario, life expectancy will rise to 79.1 years by 2043, 2.2 years more than the country's current trajectory for the same year. In both the Combined scenario and on the current trajectory, women are likely to live around 1.5 years longer than men by 2043.
- On the Current Path, carbon emissions from fossil fuels will increase to 3.1 million tons by 2043. In the Combined scenario, Mauritania's total carbon emissions will rise to 3.6 million tons - far below the average of 451.4 million tons of lower-middle-income countries in Africa.
- In the Combined scenario, the total energy production in Mauritania is equivalent to 12.6 million BOE - an increase of more than 4.3 million BOE above the Current Path in 2043. Over the same period, total energy demand was 36.4 million BOE. Gas production is expected to increase by 9.9 million BOE in the Combined scenario. Solar energy production should reach 1.0 million BOE compared to 0.6 million BOE in the Current Path. Oil production remains unchanged compared to the Current Path.

We end this page with a summarising conclusion offering key recommendations for decision-making.

Our analysis shows that most macroeconomic indicators are trending upwards over time. Indeed, while Mauritania is experiencing strong economic growth, it is very much subject to the extractive sector and tends to be accompanied by inequality and poverty. Moreover, the country benefits from a willingness to improve governance and a strong political commitment to implement public policies aimed at limiting the growth of the informal sector and fostering more inclusive economic growth. The low quality of infrastructure, cultural beliefs, human capital quality, lack of access to financing, high cost of electricity, weak diversification and climate change risks hamper structural transformation. The combined and sectoral scenarios show the opportunity which Mauritania has to achieve development goals, expand its economy and secure quality of life for its citizens. Diversifying its economy, integrating more deeply with its neighbours, and investing in improved agricultural production could bring many benefits to the country and its people. Though it faces many serious challenges, some of which, like its geography, cannot be changed, Mauritania has a large potential for development. Its resource endowments, progress in education and recent stability are crucial to its progress. Thus, to improve Mauritania's economy, the priority must be to diversify, notably by investing in sustainable development and infrastructure, and by fostering a resilient and inclusive private sector - especially by limiting the country's heavy dependence on the extractive sector, which makes Mauritania vulnerable to external shocks.

## Mauritania: Introduction

Chart 1: Political map of Mauritania

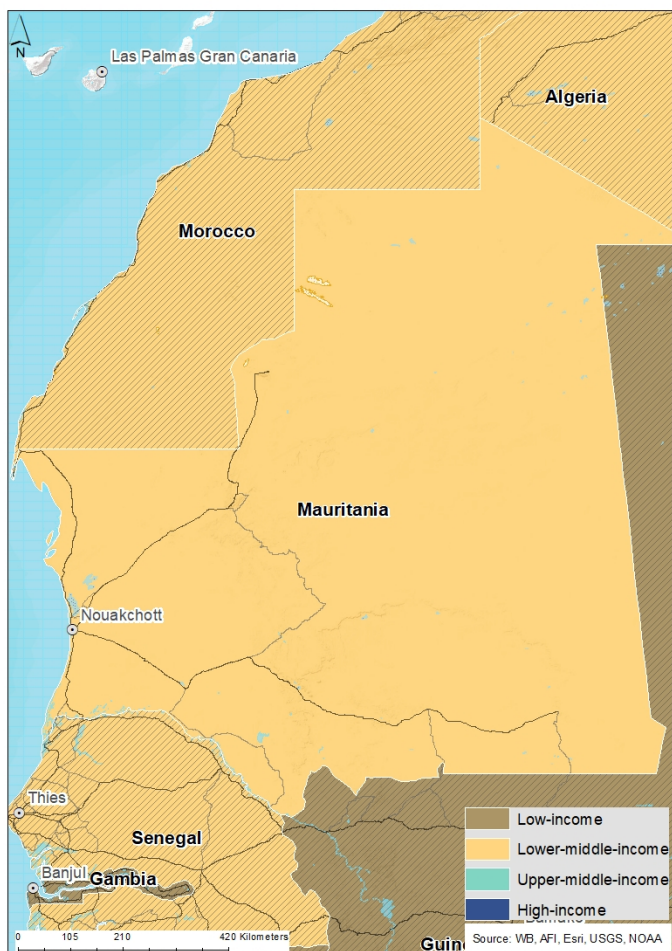


Chart 1 is a political map of Mauritania.

Mauritania is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Western Sahara to the north, Algeria to the northeast, Mali to the east and Senegal to the south-west. Its capital, Nouakchott, on the Atlantic coast, is home to 28% of the country's population. 90% of its territory is situated in the Sahara Desert, with vast stretches of pastoral land and only 0.5% arable land. Its population density is only 5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

Mauritania's climate is arid to hyperarid, with two distinct seasons: a hot season from March to October, when temperatures can exceed 40°C in the desert, and a cool season from November to February, with averages of 25 to 30°C. Annual rainfall varies considerably, from 100 mm in the north to 600 mm in the south, exacerbating the challenges of desertification and water stress. Most of its population of approximately 4.5 million people lives in the temperate south of the country, with more than 57% of the population living in urban areas.

Mauritanian society is multi-ethnic, made up mainly of three groups: the Bidhanes ('white Moors', 30%), the Haratines ('black Moors', 40%) and various sub-Saharan groups (Halpulaar, Soninké, Wolof, 30%). Arabic is the country's official language, although French is widely used in administration and local languages dominate in the south.

Historically, Mauritania was a [crossroads](#) between the Ghana and Mali empires. It was a French protectorate in 1903 and later gained independence in 1960. Its post-colonial history has been one of several coups d'état (1978, 2005, 2008) and a gradual trend toward democracy, cemented by the 1991 Constitution.

In 2019, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani was elected president in the country's first peaceful transition. Mauritania's politics are based on a semi-presidential republic form. The president holds office for five years, renewable once, and the country has a bicameral parliament with the 157-member National Assembly. The legal system is a blend of French civil law and Sharia law. Though there has been development in democracy, problems still exist, including entrenched slavery ([about 90 000 people in 2018](#)), restriction of civil liberties and corruption. Following the 2024 elections, Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, former Chairman-in-Office of the African Union (AU), [is](#) continuing his efforts to fight corruption, empower young people and improve education, agricultural transformation and security.

Mauritania's geopolitics are dominated by liberal ideologies, reinforced by multilateral institutions that support inclusive policies and free trade. Mauritania has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 31 May 1995. Mauritania ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, which entered into force on 1 January 2021. Mauritania joined the Arab League in 1973, and Arabic is the country's official language. Mauritania is also a member of the United Nations and the AU.

Mauritania's economy is mainly based on mining, which accounts for around 30% of GDP. The country is a major exporter of iron (10% of world exports), as well as gold and copper. Mauritania has been listed by the [World Bank](#) as a lower-middle-income country (LMIC) since 1995. Mauritania's GDP per capita stood at US\$5 183 in 2023.

## Mauritania: Current Path

Chart 2: Population structure in the Current Path, 1990-2043

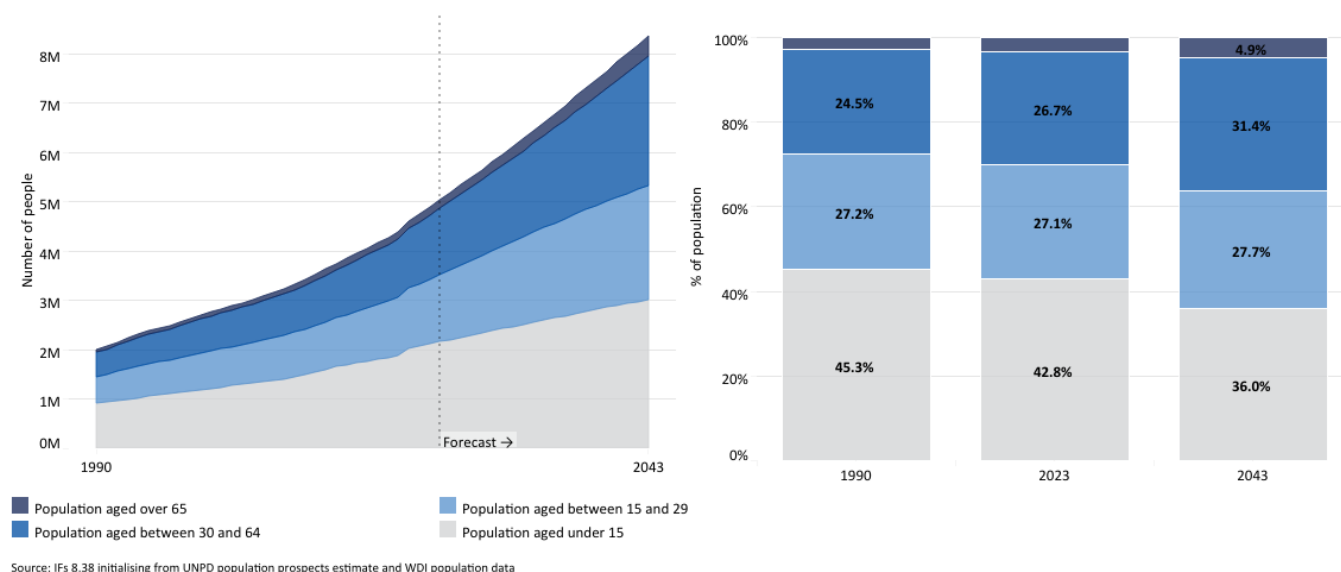


Chart 2 presents the Current Path of the population structure, from 1990 to 2043.

The population of Mauritania has been growing steadily over the last three decades, rising from 1.9 million in 1990 to 5.0 million in 2023, a growth rate of almost 157.4%. However, its population is far smaller than the average for LMICs in Africa and represents barely 0.4% of that of sub-Saharan African countries. In the Current Path, Mauritania's population will reach 8.3 million in 2043, and is forecast to remain far below the average for LMICs in Africa.

In 2023, the fertility rate was 4.7 births per woman, higher than the continent's average of 4.1 births per woman and 3.9 for African LMICs. In the Current Path, Mauritania's fertility rate will decline to 3.5 births per woman in 2043. This high rate is a major factor contributing to the country's positive demographic growth, and can be explained in part by local traditions and practices. In Mauritania, procreation is often considered an important value, and families tend to favour having a large number of children. On the other hand, poverty and lack of resources - economic hardship and lack of opportunities - can push families to have more children to provide labour and social security in times of need.

The Mauritanian median age was 18.2 years in 2023 - far below the average for Africa LMICs. In the Current Path, the median age in Mauritania will reach 22.0 years in 2043, and will remain below average for LMICs in Africa. The youth of Mauritania's population is certainly an asset in terms of human capital for the country, but it also represents a certain risk or pressure for governments in terms of public policies for social insertion. Life expectancy in Mauritania will improve from 71.7 years in 2023 to 76.9 years in 2043, reflecting a positive trend, higher than the average for LMICs in Africa (72.4 years).

Mauritania's population structure has not changed significantly since the 1990s. For instance, Mauritania's population aged under 15 has fallen only from 46.6% of the population in 1990 to 42.9% in 2023. In the Current Path, this drop will continue to 2043, when the under-15 population is estimated to decline to 36.0% of the population. However, the working-age population (age 15–65) proportion slightly increased from 53.1% in 1990 to 53.8% of the population in 2023. Between 1990 and 2023, Mauritania's dependency ratio (the ratio of youth and elderly to the working age population) was about 1.2:1 - slightly below the average ratio of 1.4:1 for LMICs in Africa in 2023. In the Current Path, this ratio will increase to 1.41 by 2043. However, it will remain below the 1.61 average for lower-middle-income countries in Africa by 2043.

Mauritania's low demographic dividend means that the working population is smaller than the dependant population. This limits the potential for economic growth, as there are fewer people of an age to contribute to the country's development.

Chart 3: Population distribution map, 2023



Chart 3 presents a population distribution map for 2023.

Mauritania has one of the lowest population densities in the world, estimated at around 0.04 persons per hectare, far lower than the African lower-middle-income countries average of 0.8 persons per hectare in 2023. The majority of Mauritania's population is young and rapidly growing, with a diverse ethnic make-up. Around 70% of the population are Bidhanes and Haratines, and 30% are of African origin.

The population is very unevenly distributed, with the majority living in the south (around 85% over 20% of the land surface area). The desert north has a very low population density (0.4 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), while the Ouergha river area is denser (20 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>). Mauritania's most populous regions are the capital (Nouakchott: 28.0%) and the southern regions such as Gogol (9.0%), Assaba (9.0%), Brakna (8.0%), Hodh Ech Chargui (7.8%), Trarza (7.3%) and Guidimaka (7.3%), not to forget the large region of Hodh Ech Chargui, which is as much part of the South as the North (12.0%).

In the Current Path, Mauritania' population density will reach 0.08 people per hectare, and will remain far lower than the African lower-middle-income average of 1.2 people per hectare by 2043.

Chart 4: Urban and rural population in the Current Path, 1990-2043

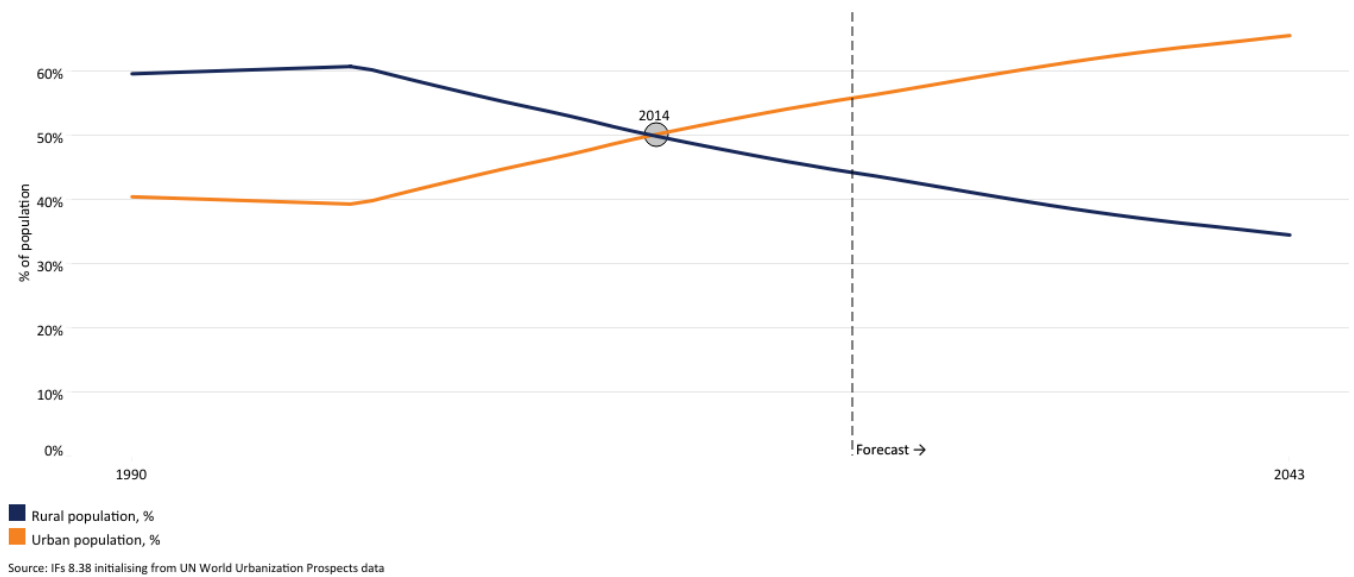


Chart 4 presents the urban and rural population in the Current Path, from 1990 to 2043.

Urban growth in Mauritania has undergone a spectacular boost since the 1990s, mainly as a result of the rural population drain. Indeed, while in 1960 Mauritania had no town with more than 10 000 inhabitants, with an urbanisation rate of 3% (i.e. a total of around 65 000 urban dwellers), between 1990 and 2023 the country's urban population rose from 40.4% to 55.8% - higher than the average of 48.6% for LMICs in Africa in 2023.

The country first achieved parity in rural-urban dwellers in 2014. Most of the urban population is located in Nouakchott. Rapid urban growth poses challenges in terms of infrastructure, housing and services, particularly for Nouakchott's outlying informal settlements. In addition, Mauritania is currently facing major migration challenges, serving as a key transit point for migrants on their way to Europe. Nouakchott hosts around 500 000 irregular migrants, reflecting its strategic position on migration routes. The deteriorating security situation in Mali has also led to an influx of refugees, with around 170 000 Malians sheltered in the Mbera camp.

In response to the vulnerability of Mauritania's towns and cities, the government, with the support of the International Development Association (IDA), has launched the [Support Project for Decentralisation and the Development of Productive Intermediate Towns](#) (MOUDOUN). The aim of this project is to strengthen the government's efforts to make the country's inland towns and cities more productive, resilient, green and inclusive. In the Current Path, Mauritania's urban population will be around 65.5% by 2043 - an increase of 17.3 percentage points in 20 years, above the average of 57.5% for LMICs in Africa.

Chart 5: GDP (MER) and growth in the Current Path, 1990-2043

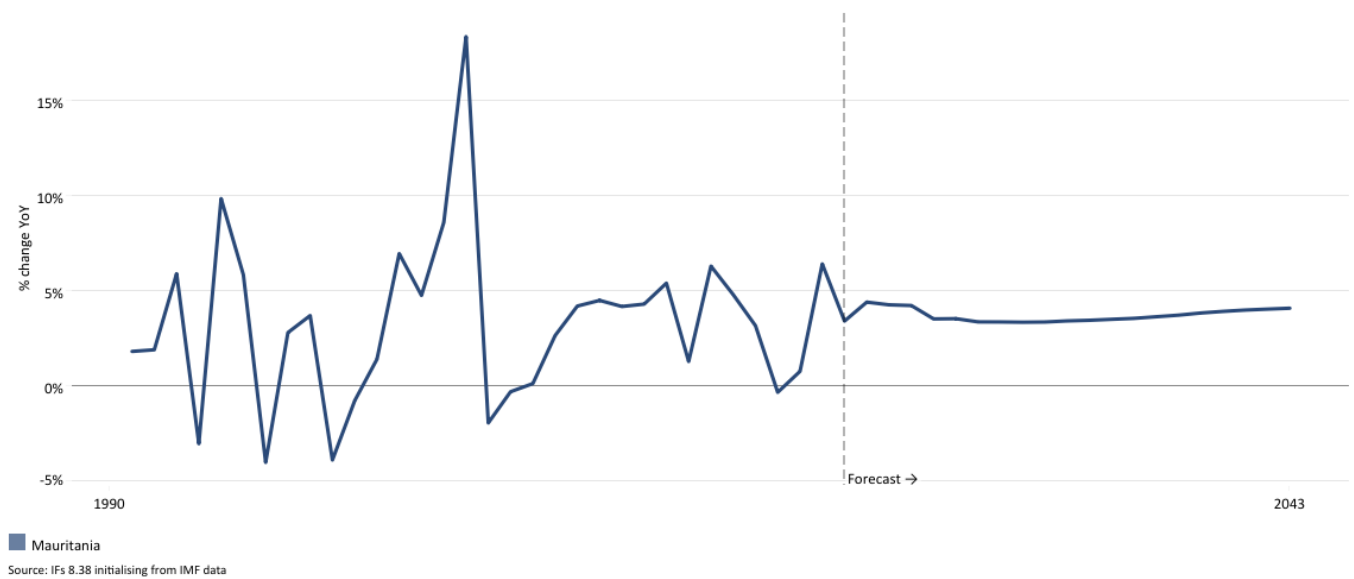


Chart 5 presents GDP in market exchange rates (MER) and growth rate in the Current Path, from 1990 to 2043.

Despite an abundance of natural resources, including iron ore and petroleum, Mauritania remains poor. Progress in structural transformation has been slow, attributable to a growth model based on extractive resources and agriculture. In 2023, its GDP measured at market exchange rates (MER) has more than quadrupled, rising from US\$2.9 billion in 1990 to US\$8.1 billion in 2023. This GDP is driven by almost 22% of the primary sector (mainly agriculture (9.3% real growth in 2023)), 33% of the secondary sector (dominated by the extractive industry, particularly iron ore extraction, which accounts for almost 50% of exports) and 45% of the tertiary sector. In 2023, Mauritania's economic growth rate was 3.4%, falling from 6.4% in 2022. This growth rate was slightly lower than the average for LMICs in Africa.

With a model of growth based on the exploitation of extractive resources, Mauritania's economy remains highly vulnerable to fluctuations in the prices of the raw materials it exports, mainly iron, which leads to volatility in growth. In addition, this fall in its growth rate is due to a decline in both its supply and demand indicators. In terms of supply, the country has seen a fall in industrial production, particularly of gold and iron ore, and a modest performance in agriculture and fishing. On the demand side, the fall in public investment has affected economic growth.

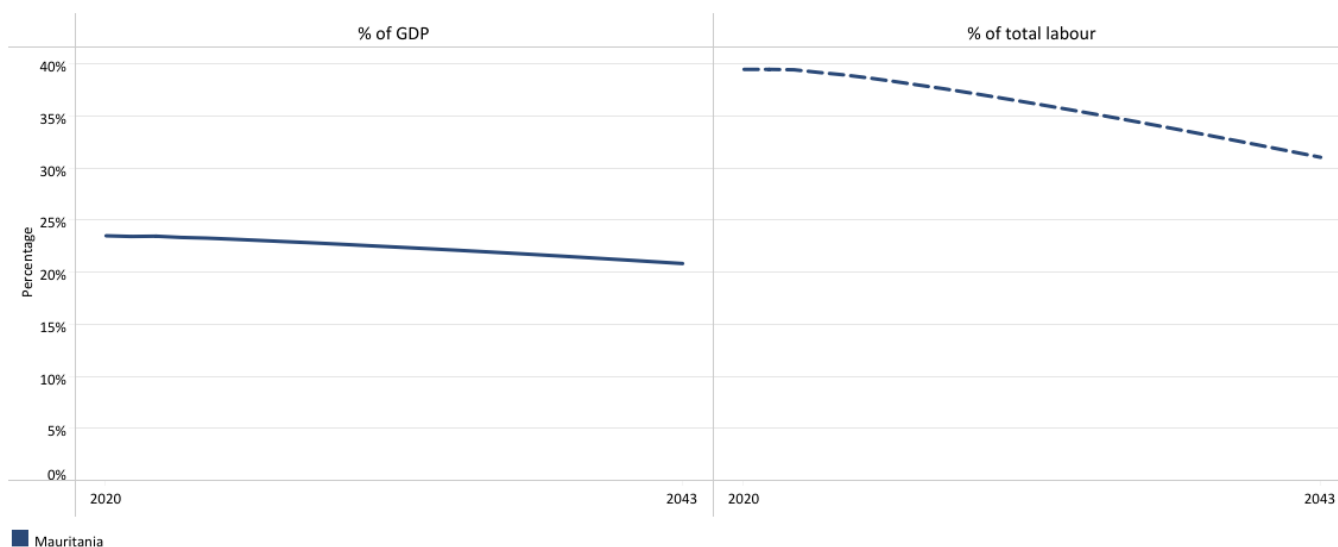
In light of its macroeconomic specificities and development constraints, Mauritania, in partnership with the African Development Bank, has established the 2023-2028 Country Strategy Paper (CSP), which aims to structurally transform the country's economy, focusing on fundamental changes to support economic diversification and transformation. This strategy focuses on the needs of the poorest and most marginalised groups, based on strong, sustainable and inclusive growth, the development of human capital and access to basic social services, and the strengthening of governance.

According to the World Bank, inflation has recently fallen to 1.5% (year-on-year) in 2024 from 1.6% in 2023, driven by lower food and oil prices and supported by the Central Bank's tight monetary policy. The budget deficit will fall to 0.1% of GDP in 2024, from 2.4% in 2023, due to higher revenues from telecommunications taxes and withholding taxes on extractive industries, as well as tight control of spending. Tax revenues increased slightly from 13.1% of GDP in 2022 to 14% in 2023. Public debt has fallen from 52.4% of GDP in 2021 to an estimated 48% in 2023 following the debt restructuring agreement with Saudi Arabia.

In the Current Path, Mauritania's GDP will reach US\$16.8 billion in 2043. Average growth rates over this period will stabilise

at around 4.0%. However, the lack of infrastructure, improving the business climate, strengthening human capital, digitising the economy and improving access to international financial markets remain the main challenges facing Mauritania if it is to achieve stronger growth.

Chart 6: Size of the informal economy in the Current Path, 2020-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from Elgin and Oztunali (2008), and Schneider and Enste (2012) data

Chart 6 presents the size of the informal economy as per cent of GDP and per cent of total labour (non-agriculture), from 2020 to 2043. The data in our modelling are largely estimates and therefore may differ from other sources.

The informal economy comprises activities that have market value and would add to tax revenue and GDP if they were recorded. According to the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), informal employment is often associated with income insecurity, unsafe work conditions, and limited access to the rights and benefits accorded to the formal sector. Countries with high informality have a host of development challenges such as higher poverty, lower per capita incomes, greater inequality and weaker productivity investment, among others.

Like in most African economies, the informal sector is a significant part of the Mauritania economy; it plays a key economic role, particularly in terms of employment. In 2023, the informal sector in Mauritania represented 23.3% of GDP, far below the average of 30.7% of GDP for LMICs in Africa. The main sectors of activity in the informal sector (excluding agriculture) are trade (44%), services (21.9%) and manufacturing (26.3%). Around 63.3% of heads of informal production units (UPI) have no formal education or have attended a Koranic school. Faced with this, [Mauritania's informal sector reduction policy](#) therefore focuses on integrating informal businesses into the formal sector by modernising tax administration and improving access to financial services. In addition, the government also aims to create a more favourable economic environment for business growth, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the Current Path, the size of the informal sector will decline to 20.8% of GDP in 2043 and remain below the average of 27.0% for LMICs in Africa.

In terms of the labour force, about 39.2% was informal in 2023. This figure was far lower than the average of 57.6% for LMICs in Africa. Men occupied 25.2% of informal labour and women 66.8%. In the Current Path, the size of informal labour will decline to reach 31.0% of total labour in 2043, forecast to remain below the average of 54.2% for LMICs in Africa in that same year. However, the informal sector is faced with financing constraints, low production capacity and the use of obsolete technologies that limit productivity.

Chart 7: GDP per capita in Current Path, 1990-2043

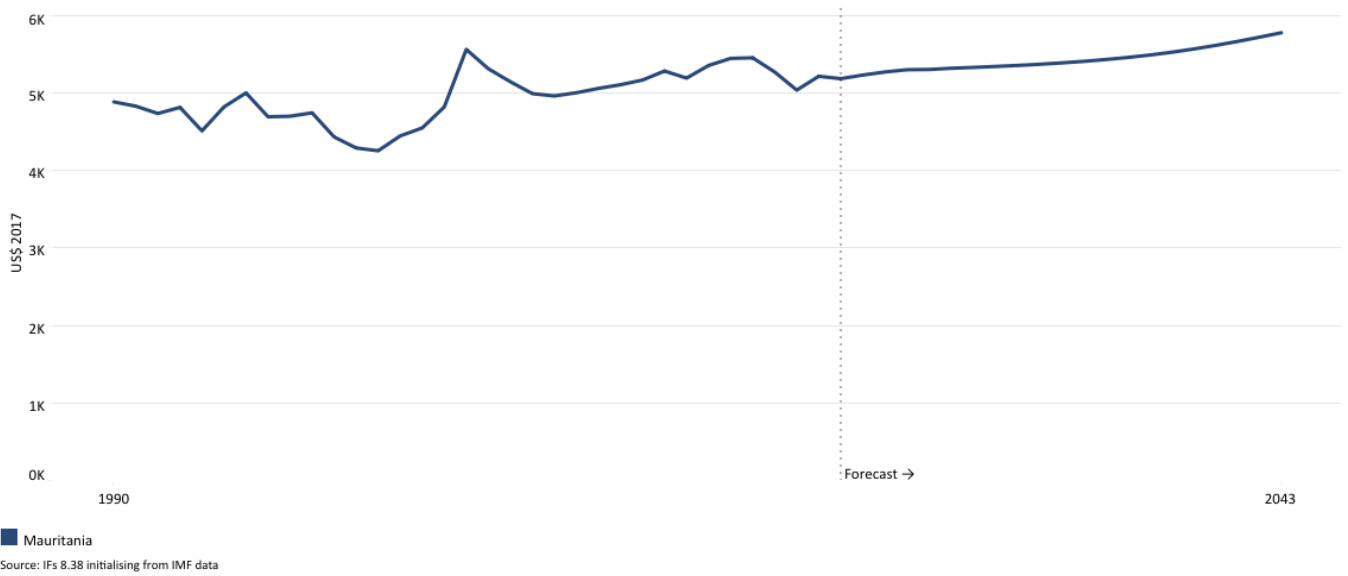


Chart 7 presents GDP per capita in the Current Path, from 1990 to 2043, compared with the average for the Africa income group.

Despite its limitations, GDP per capita is generally used to measure the standard of living and is the most widely used and accepted indicator to compare welfare among countries. Using the purchasing power parity (PPP) measure for this analysis, Mauritania's GDP per capita has improved modestly over the last thirty years. GDP per capita of US\$5 183 in 2023 was below the average of US\$5 843 for LMICs in Africa. This figure represents an improvement of 9.1% from the US\$4 751 it recorded in 1990.

In the Current Path, Mauritania's GDP per capita will reach US\$5 773 in 2043. It will remain far below the average of US\$7 803 for LMICs in Africa in the same year. Mauritania's GDP per capita figure nonetheless conceals a number of challenges in terms of improving human capital, inequality, climate challenges, the business climate, mobilising tax revenues, improving social policy and reducing informality.

Chart 8: Extreme poverty in Current Path, 2020-2043

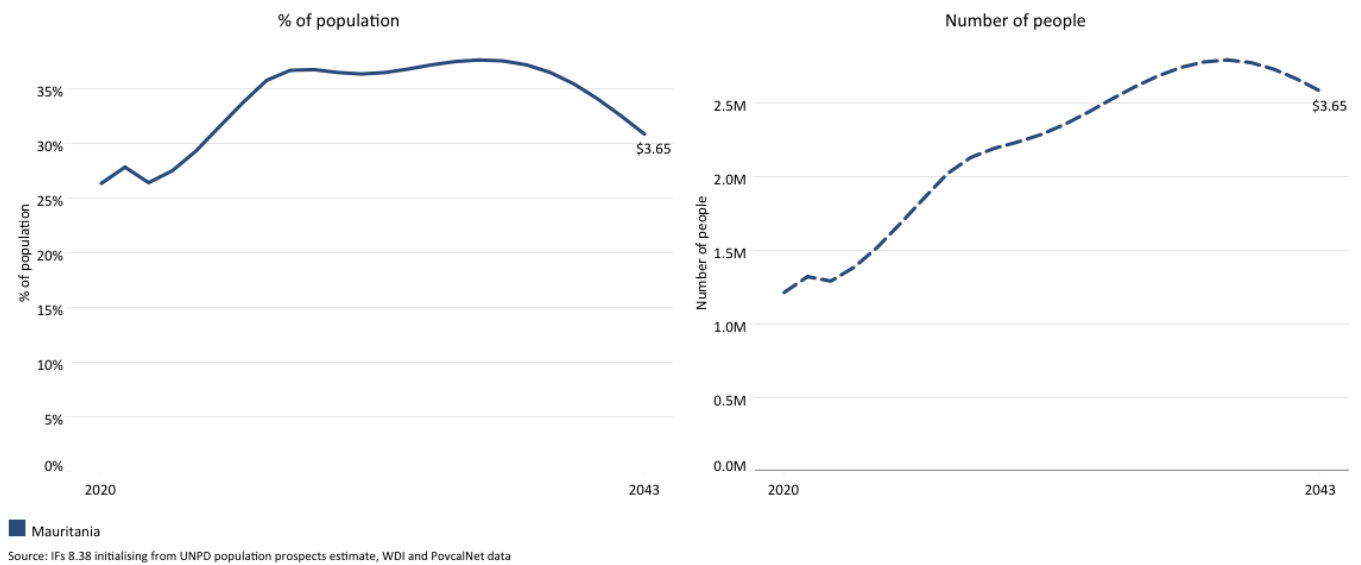


Chart 8 presents the rate and number of extremely poor people in the Current Path from 2020 to 2043.

In 2022, the World Bank updated the poverty lines to 2017 constant dollar values as follows:

- The previous US\$1.90 extreme poverty line is now set at US\$2.15, also for use with low-income countries.
- US\$3.20 for lower-middle-income countries, now US\$3.65 in 2017 values.
- US\$5.50 for upper-middle-income countries, now US\$6.85 in 2017 values.
- US\$22.70 for high-income countries. The Bank has not yet announced the new poverty line in 2017 US\$ prices for high-income countries.

Monetary poverty only tells part of the story, however. In addition, the [global Multidimensional Poverty Index \(MPI\)](#) measures acute multidimensional poverty by measuring each person's overlapping deprivations across 10 indicators in three equally weighted dimensions: health, education and standard of living. The MPI complements the international US\$2.15 a day poverty rate by identifying who is multidimensionally poor and also shows the composition of multidimensional poverty. The headcount or incidence of multidimensional poverty is often several percentage points higher than that of monetary poverty. This implies that individuals living above the monetary poverty line may still suffer deprivations in health, education and/or standard of living.<sup>[x]</sup>

Theoretically, poverty exists when part of the population is unable, by society's standards, to attain a level of well-being considered to be a minimum requirement. The minimum level of well-being can be defined by estimating one or more poverty lines. The definition of this poverty line is generally a function of consumption patterns and the cost of living in the country's main regions or cities. Mauritania's poverty is a serious problem, with high levels of multidimensional and income poverty, where approximately 77% of the rural population experiences multidimensional poverty.

By utilising the lower-middle-income poverty line of US\$3.65 a day (in 2017 PPP), in 2023, 1.4 million people (representing 27.5% of the population) lived in poverty, far below the average of 48.5% for other lower-middle-income countries in

Africa. In the Current Path, the poverty rate line of US\$3.65 a day in Mauritania is expected to reach 30.9%, and remain below the average of 34.4% for lower-middle-income African countries. However, using the \$2.15 poverty line, 294 190 people (representing 5.8% of the population) lived in poverty, far below the average of 23.4% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, the poverty rate using the \$2.15 poverty line in Mauritania is expected to increase to 6.4%.

Over the last several decades, the Mauritanian government has undertaken major reforms to reduce poverty. In addition to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted in 1994, Mauritania recently approved the [Projet d'Appui au Système de Filets Sociaux](#) en Mauritanie phase II (PASyFIS II) and the Elmaouna programme in 2020. These projects aim to strengthen the social protection system for the most vulnerable households. These projects include cash transfers and other assistance measures, such as the Tekavoul programme, which provides cash transfers to households in extreme poverty and improves the effectiveness of the social protection system, as well as supports refugee communities.

In 2023, Mauritania's [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) was 0.58, compared with 0.54 in 2022, placing it in the medium human development category and 150th in the world. The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) captures acute multidimensional poverty by measuring each person's overlapping deprivations across 10 indicators in three equally weighted dimensions: health, education and standard of living. In 2023, the MPI shows that [58.4%](#) of the Mauritanian population, around 2.6 million people, are in a situation of multidimensional poverty. Children aged 0-17, who represent over half (50.7%) of the Mauritanian population, are the poorest age group: [61.9%](#) of them live in multidimensional poverty, and their MPI is 0.35, the highest of all age groups. In addition, [12.3%](#) of the population, around 567 000 people, are classified as vulnerable to experiencing multidimensional poverty.

## Chart 9: National Development Plan of Mauritania



REPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE DE MAURITANIE  
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances



STRATEGIE NATIONALE DE  
CROISSANCE ACCELEREE ET DE PROSPERITE PARTAGEE  
SCAPP 2016-2030

Volume I  
Diagnostic social, économique,  
institutionnel et environnemental

1

Chart 9 depicts the National Development Plan.

To promote its medium- and long-term development, Mauritania has drawn up a [National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity](#) (SCAPP-2016-2030), in line with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015-2030). This strategy aligns with the vision for the future, entitled 'The Mauritania we want in 2030', based on the values of Sunni and tolerant Islam, social cohesion and peace, equity and solidarity, national unity, justice and democracy, transparency and human rights within a framework of good governance. It aims to achieve strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with a view to satisfying the essential needs of all citizens and ensuring their well-being.

Three convergent drivers [constitute](#) the strategic objectives selected to ensure this growth, in order to achieve prosperity that benefits everyone:

- **Strategic lever 1** aims to promote strong, sustainable and inclusive growth through the creation of the right conditions for a structural transformation of the economy and society. This transformation should promote: i) the emergence and strengthening of wealth and job-creating sectors capable of ensuring social inclusion and satisfying domestic demand, in particular through private initiative and innovation, ii) sustainable development and environmental protection, and iii) the establishment of the infrastructure necessary for growth.
- **Strategic lever 2** aims to promote the development of human capital capable of facilitating economic growth and deriving maximum benefit from it through i) improving access to and the quality of education and vocational training, ii)

improving conditions of access to health services, and iii) promoting employment, youth, culture and the resilience of the most vulnerable sections of society.

- **Strategic lever 3** aims to strengthen governance in all its dimensions, notably through i) consolidation of the rule of law and democracy, ii) social cohesion and equity, security and respect for human rights, as well as iii) efficient economic and financial management and capturing the demographic dividend.

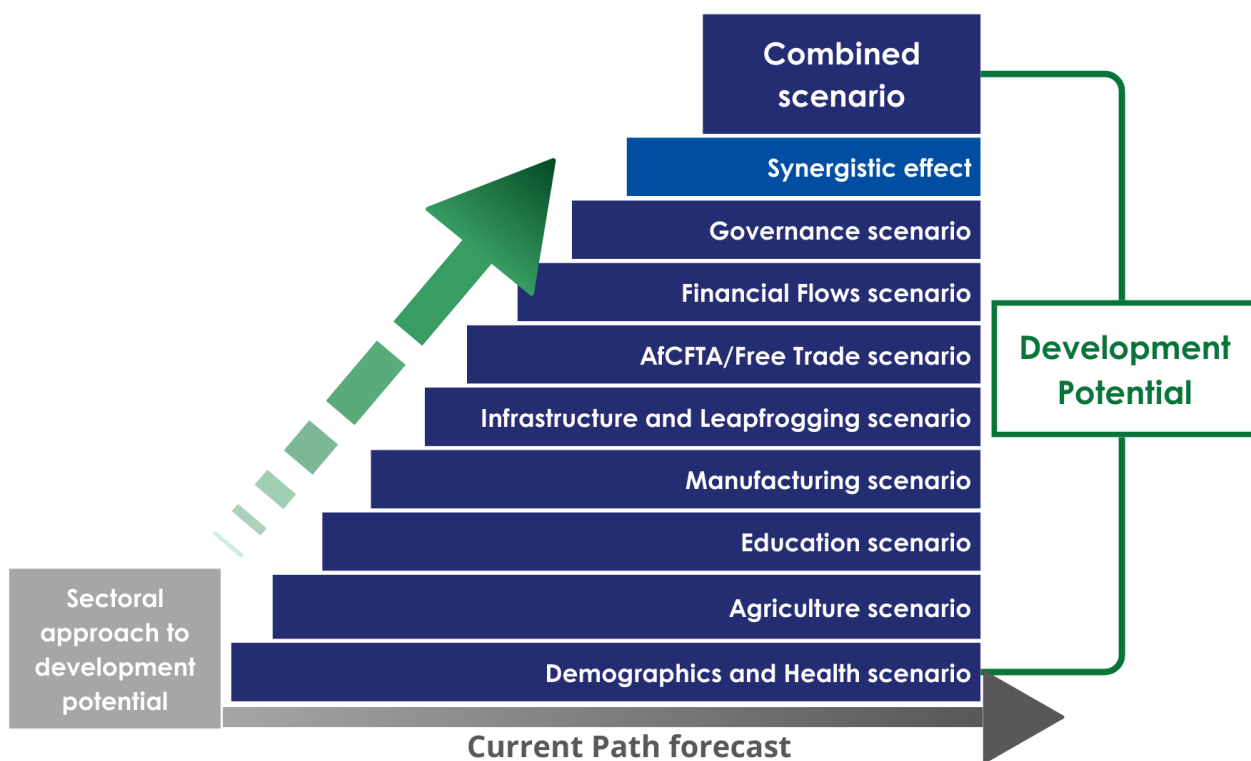
In addition, the strategy **takes into account** Mauritania's international commitments (2030 Sustainable Development Goals, African Union Agenda 2063, Nairobi Commitments on Integrated Community Development, N4G 2021 Commitments, specific agreements signed, etc.) and the sectoral and regional strategies currently being implemented, as well as the President's Expanded Priority Programme (ProPEP) launched in January 2020.

## Mauritania: Scenarios

- Briefly
- Demographics and Health scenario
- Agriculture scenario
- Education scenario
- Manufacturing scenario
- AfCFTA scenario
- Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario
- Financial Flows scenario
- Governance scenario

### Briefly

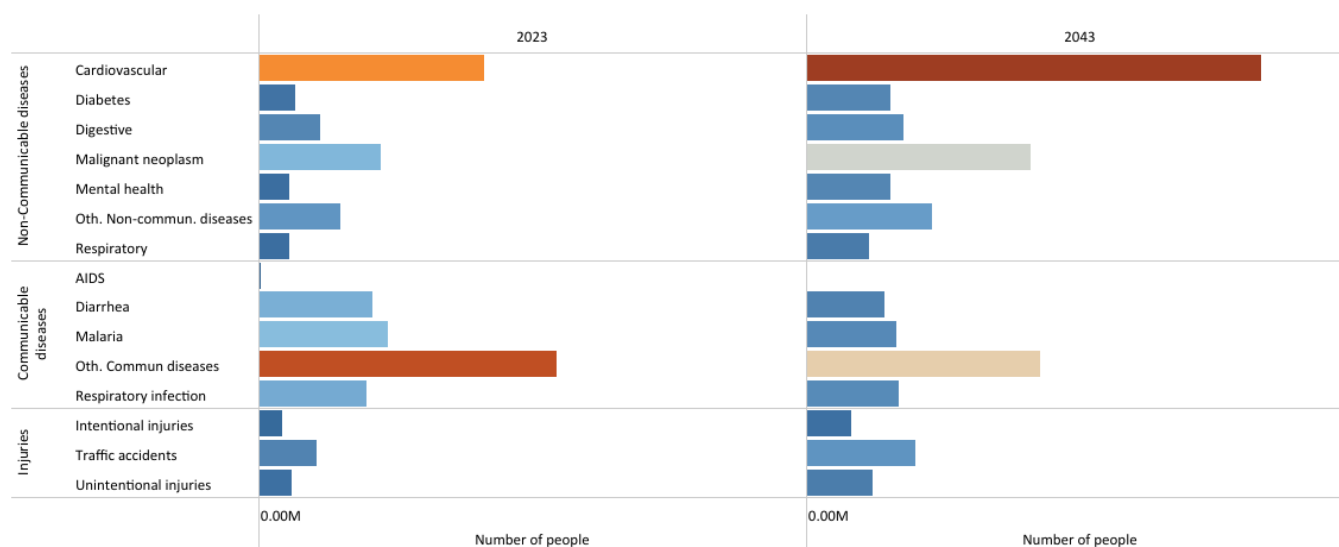
Chart 10: Relationship between Current Path and scenarios



The eight sectoral scenarios as well as their relationship to the Current Path and the Combined scenario are explained in the [Technical](#) page Chart 10 summarises the approach.

## Demographics and Health scenario

Chart 11: Mortality distribution in the Current Path, 2023-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from IHME data

Chart 11 presents the mortality distribution in the Current Path for 2023 and 2043.

The Demographics and Health scenario envisions ambitious improvements in child and maternal mortality rates, enhanced access to modern contraception, and decreased mortality from communicable diseases (e.g., AIDS, diarrhoea, malaria, respiratory infections) and non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes), alongside advancements in safe water access and sanitation. This scenario assumes a swift demographic transition supported by heightened investments in health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) infrastructure.

Visit the themes on [Demographics](#) and [Health/WaSH](#) for more detail on the scenario structure and interventions.

Mauritania's healthcare system is organised on a pyramid structure with three levels: central, regional and intermediate, with public and private health structures. The central level consists of the minister's office, central departments and national hospitals, which are responsible for the strategic direction and coordination of central services and national programs. At the regional level, the system includes all outpatient care provided in regional hospitals, most of which are autonomous establishments. Finally, at the intermediate level, the Regional Health Action Directorates (DRAS), run by regional directors under the authority of the Wilaya's social and health development council and the technical supervision of the health directorate, are responsible for implementing the department's health policy at the regional level. The system is mainly state-funded, but patients often have to pay for their own medicines and supplies.

The epidemiological profile of the country is dominated by lower respiratory infections, stroke and complications from preterm birth. Additionally, communicable diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, as well as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), are significant health concerns. Maternal and infant mortality rates are also relatively high.

In Mauritania, NCDs represent a major public health challenge. For instance, 4 060 people in Mauritania died from cardiovascular disease in 2023. In addition, almost 2 000 people died of chronic respiratory disease in Mauritania.

In Mauritania, further deaths are due to post-partum haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, infections and lack of access to quality health care during pregnancy, childbirth and afterwards. In addition, these deaths are often the result of delays in dealing with obstetric emergencies, as well as a lack of health infrastructure and qualified medical staff. However, in line with [Mauritania's National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity 2016-2030](#), the country launched a new healthcare initiative aimed at supporting adolescents and mothers to gain better health coverage; though the success of this program is yet to be seen.

In the Current Path, cardiovascular deaths in Mauritania will double to reach 8 200 by 2043. Deaths due to respiratory infections should decline to reach 1 700 people by 2043.

In 2023, 24.5% of children aged 0-5 suffered from stunted growth - a rate 1.9 percentage points higher than that of LMICs in Africa, at 26.4%. For malaria, in 2023, the death rate from malaria was 0.35 per 1000, slightly lower than the average of 0.39 per 1000 in LMICs in Africa. In 2023, maternal mortality in Mauritania was 429.5 deaths per 100 00 live births. This figure should fall to 229.1 deaths per 100 00 live births in the Current Path, however, is well above the target of 70 deaths per 100 00 live births as set out in the SDGs.

In Mauritania, many communicable diseases represent health risks, including malaria, yellow fever and other insect-borne diseases, as well as water-borne and food-borne diseases ths in lower-middle-income African countries. In 2023, HIV prevalence was 0.29% in the general population, but reached 9% among sex workers (10.3% in Nouakchott, 2.9% in Nouadhibou) and 23.4% among men who have sex with men (MSM) (24.9% in Nouakchott, 4.7% in Nouadhibou). However, these rates are lower than in previous years.

Reducing the disparity in healthcare provision between people living in large urban areas such as Nouakchott and those living in small towns and rural areas remains a major challenge for the country. Also, human capital in health care, insufficient infrastructure and financial resources for some groups of Mauritians remain a major concern.

Chart 12: Infant mortality rate in Current Path and Demographics and Health scenario, 2020-2043

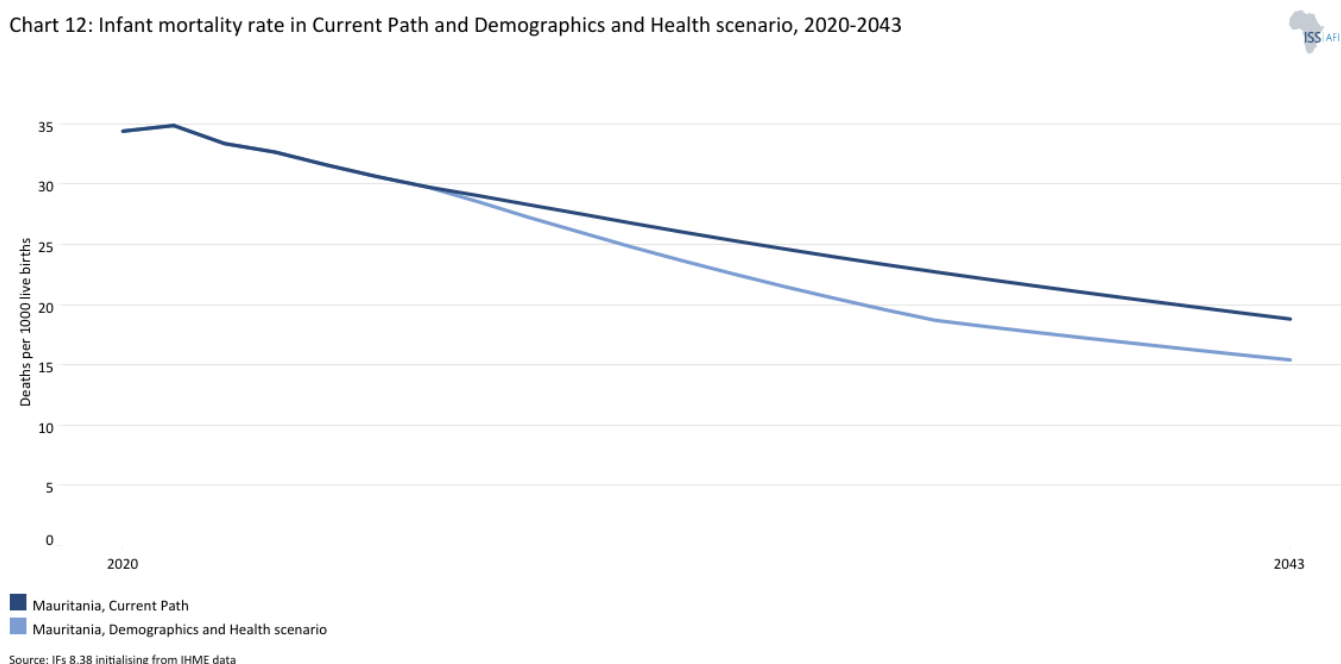


Chart 12 presents the infant mortality rate in the Current Path and in the Demographics and Health scenario, from 2020 to

2043.

The infant mortality rate is the probability of a child born in a specific year dying before reaching the age of one. It measures the child-born survival rate and reflects the social, economic and environmental conditions in which children live, including their health care. It is measured as the number of infant deaths per 1 000 live births and is an important marker of the overall quality of the health system in a country.

The Mauritanian government has made considerable efforts over the last three decades to improve its health system, as can be seen from the infant mortality rate. In 1990, the number of deaths per 1 000 live births was 70.9 and this figure had fallen to 32.7 by 2023, a reduction of 38.1 percentage points. In the Current Path, infant mortality will continue to fall, reaching 18.8 deaths per 1 000 live births by 2043.

The Demographics and Health scenario will further reduce Mauritania's infant mortality rate to 15.4 deaths per 1 000 births by 2043. This will be 3.4 fewer deaths than the Current Path. Although this does not fully meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target, it pushes Mauritania close to the target, emphasising the need for the country to continue investing in access to improved healthcare service. The life expectancy will improve to 78.4 years compared with 76.9 in the Current Path.

Chart 13: Demographic dividend in the Current Path and the Demographics and Health scenario, 2020-2043

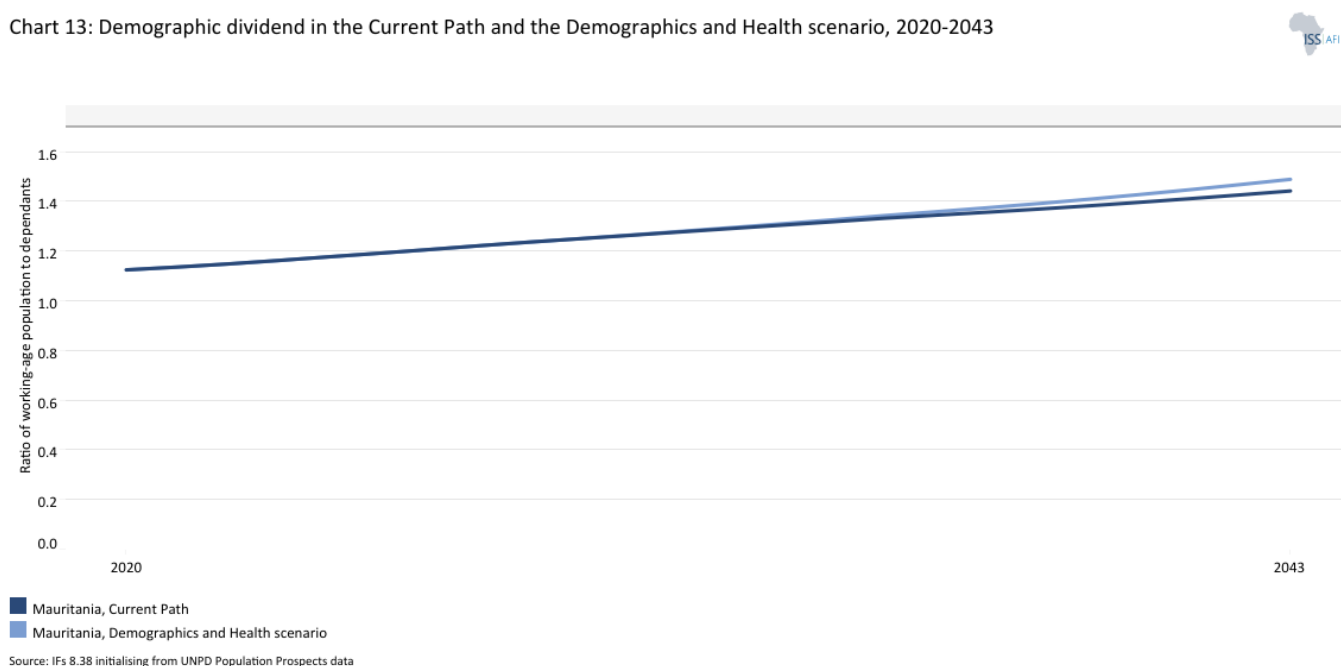


Chart 13 presents the demographic dividend in the Current Path and in the Demographics and Health scenario, from 2020 to 2043.

The dividend is the window of economic growth opportunity that opens when the ratio of working-age persons to dependants increases to 1.7 to 1 and higher.

The demographic dividend is the economic growth generated by changes in the population structure. It generally materialises when the ratio of the working-age population to dependants is at least 1.7 to one, meaning that for every dependant, there are 1.7 persons of working age. When there are fewer dependants to take care of, it frees up resources for investment in both physical and human capital formation.

In 2023, the ratio of the working-age population to dependants in Mauritania was 1.2 - below the value of 1.7 needed to expect the materialisation of the demographic dividend. This figure is slightly lower than 1.4 for the average LMICs in Africa. In the Current Path, the ratio of the working-age population to dependants will increase steadily, reaching about 1.4 by 2043.

In the Demographics and Health scenario, Mauritanian's demographic dividend ratio will slightly increase, reaching 1.5, which is 0.1 above the Current Path. Although slight, this improvement should enable Mauritania to take better advantage of its economic situation and improve the economy, as the ratio moves closer to 1.7.

## Agriculture scenario

Chart 14: Crop production and demand in the Current Path, 1990-2043  
Area chart show demand less production

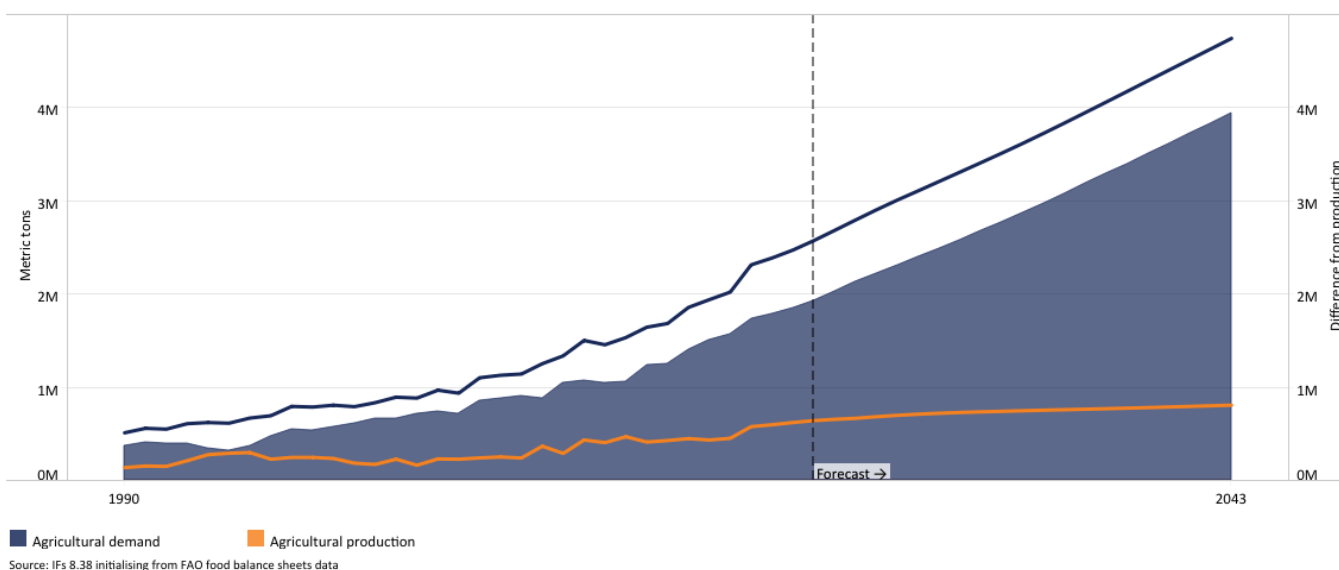


Chart 14 presents crop production and demand in the Current Path from 1990 to 2043.

The Agriculture scenario envisions an agricultural revolution that ensures food security through ambitious yet feasible increases in yields per hectare, thanks to improved management, seed, fertiliser technology and expanded irrigation. Efforts to reduce food loss and waste are emphasised, with increased calorie consumption as an indicator of self-sufficiency and prioritising it over food exports. Additionally, enhanced forest protection signifies a commitment to sustainable land use practices.

Visit the theme on [Agriculture](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

Mauritania's agricultural sector is essential to the economy, contributing 17% of GDP and employing around 21% of the working population. It is the main source of subsistence for the majority of the rural population, where more than 62% of the population lives mainly from these activities. Local production helps to cover needs in cereals (30%), red meat (100%) and milk (30%). In 2023, Mauritania's agricultural sector grew, boosting GDP in the primary sector to 6.3%. Most of the cultivated land is used for rain-fed production, but irrigated farming, mainly concentrated in the south of the country along the Senegal River, is also important.

In 2023, Mauritanian total agricultural production was 2.1 million metric tons and the crop production was 641 840 metric tons. The total demand for agricultural products has always been more than the total production, and stood at about 3.6 million metric tons in 2023, of which 2.6 metric tons, equivalent to 72.2% of total demand, were for crops. Fish accounts for a small share of Mauritania's agricultural demand. Indeed, fishing plays a large role in the Mauritanian agriculture and economy as a whole. Both industrial and small-scale fishing are prevalent, with 31% of the population finding employment fishing in some capacity. Industrial fishing is responsible for the lionshare of catches, up to 90% of fish are caught by industrial outfits. However, this industry only employs 12% of Mauritanians and much of the production does not rebound in the Mauritanian economy, as fish are shipped abroad to be processed without being offloaded in Mauritania.

The economy shows a crop demand deficit of 1.9 million metric tons per hectare in 2023. This leads to inefficiency in crop

production and exposes farmers and the country's food supply to a level of risk from a changing climate. However, this situation of inefficiency in crop production exposes farmers and the country to a high level of risk to food security. This deficit is linked to the challenges of agricultural development and improved farming techniques, water resource management (low level of irrigation - only 28% of arable land currently utilising irrigation), the lack of infrastructure, the weakness of producer organisation and climate change. In addition, crop yields in Mauritania remain low. In 2023, crop yields in Mauritania stood at 1.3 metric tons per hectare, far below the average of 5.3 metric tons per hectare for lower-middle-income countries in Africa.

Faced with these challenges, the Mauritanian government, with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and African Development Fund (ADF), has set up a number of projects, including the Mauritanian Agricultural Transformation Support Project (PATAM), which aims to support the inclusive development of agricultural sectors and improve food security and the living conditions of the target populations.

In the Current Path, Mauritania's total agricultural production will rise to 2.9 million metric tons by 2043. Total agricultural demand will rise to 6.6 million metric tons by 2043, and crop production is expected to reach 807 130 metric tons, i.e. an increase of 161 840 metric tons compared to the Current Path. Crop yields will increase slightly to 1.5 metric tons per hectare by 2043, remaining far below to the average of 6.4 metric tons per hectare for lower-middle-income countries in Africa.

Chart 15: Import dependence in the Current Path and Agriculture scenario, 2020-2043

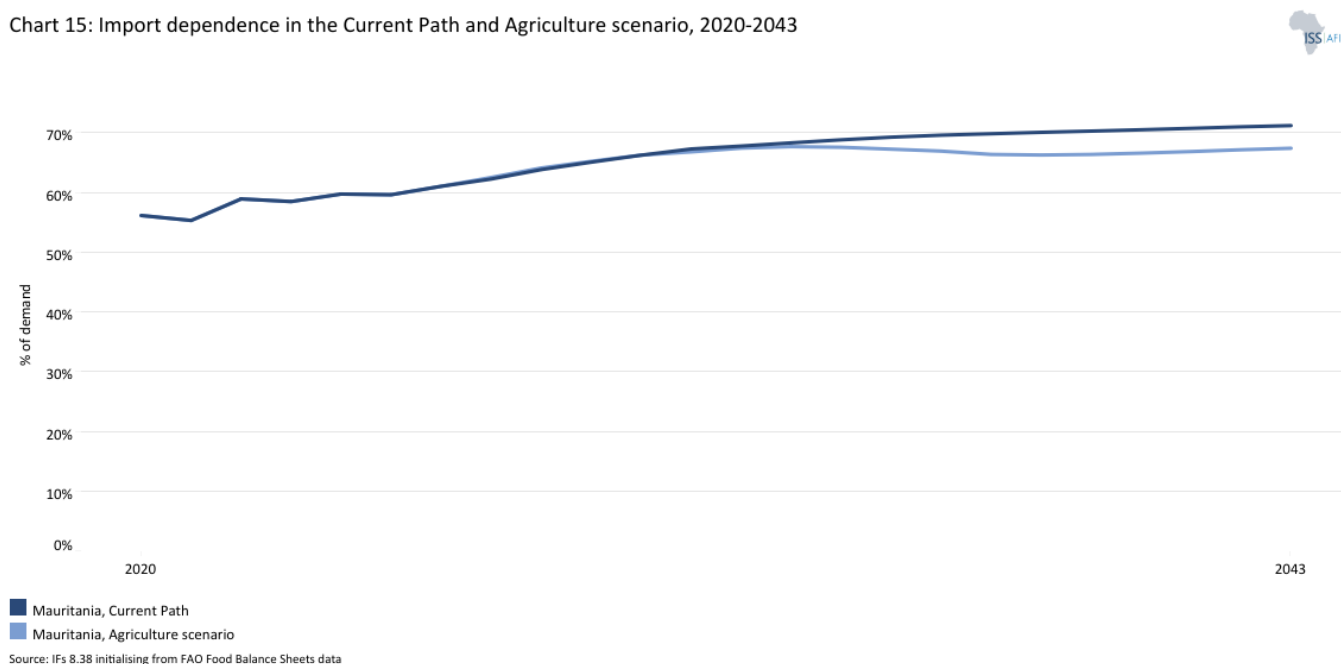


Chart 15 presents the import dependence in the Current Path and the Agriculture scenario, from 2020 to 2043.

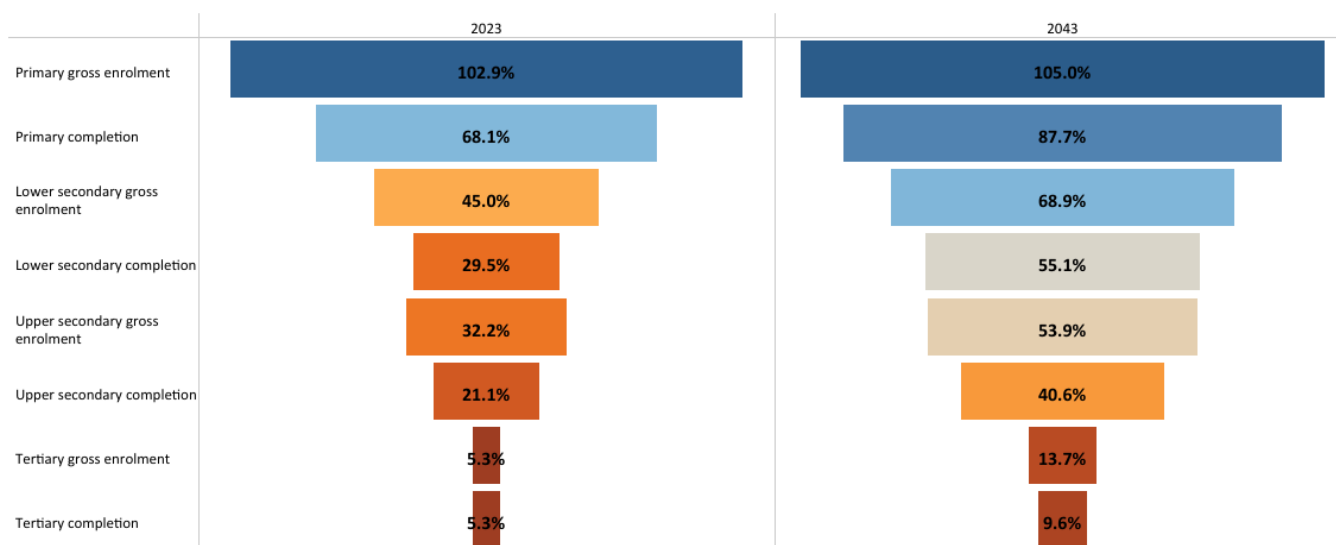
Mauritania is highly dependent on food imports, with agricultural production limited by the arid climate and droughts. Over 70% of the country's food comes from Morocco and Senegal. In 2023, import dependency for crops in Mauritania stood at 76.3% of demand, far above the average of 10.2% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, crop import dependency is expected to increase further, reaching 84.6% of total demand in 2043, making Mauritania vulnerable to food price fluctuations and food crises.

In the Agriculture scenario, yields per hectare will increase to 1.9 metric tons by 2043, a 26.7% improvement compared to the projections of the Current Path. The improvement in yields will lead to an improvement in total agricultural production.

In the Agriculture scenario, total agriculture production will increase to 3.1 million tons, almost 0.2 million metric tons, or 6.9%, more than the Current Path by 2043. Crop production in Mauritania will rise by 25.0% above the Current Path to 1.0 million tons in the Agriculture scenario by 2043. The projected increases in crop production in the Agriculture scenario reduce the import dependency of crops in the country compared to the Current Path. By 2043, the net import of crops will decline to 79.8 as per cent of demand in the Agriculture scenario, instead of 84.6 per cent in the Current Path. The Agricultural scenario shows that if the Mauritanian government adopts a rigorous and effective agricultural policy, the country should be able to reduce its crop imports and increase its chances of self-sufficiency if meaningful measures are taken to reorganise the agricultural sector.

## Education scenario

Chart 16: Progress through education funnel in the Current Path, 2023-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from Barro-Lee data

Chart 16 depicts the progress through the educational system in the Current Path, for 2023 and 2043.

The Education scenario represents reasonable but ambitious improvements in intake, transition, and graduation rates from primary to tertiary levels and better quality of education at primary and secondary levels. It also models substantive progress towards gender parity at all levels, additional vocational training at the secondary school level, and increases in the share of science and engineering graduates.

Visit the theme on [Education](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

Investing in education is pivotal for tackling poverty, addressing gender and social inequalities and creating prosperous nations. The [African Union](#), in its economic blueprint Agenda 2063, is betting on young people to drive its vision through modern skills that can only be gained through education. Mauritania's education system [comprises](#) several levels, from primary to higher education. It is organised into two main sub-systems, primary and secondary education on the one hand, and higher education on the other. Mauritania's school system is predominantly public; however, due to the prevalence of Islam in education, it is not secular. The two main languages of instruction are French and Arabic. French is used mainly in higher education and scientific subjects.

Since 1999, Mauritania has embarked on ambitious reforms to unify its education system. The '[National Education Sector Development Programme](#)' (PNDSE), in its various versions, is a comprehensive, multi-year plan designed to improve the country's education system. It focuses on expanding access, improving quality and promoting equity, especially for marginalised groups. The current program, PNDSE III, covers the period from 2023 to 2030 and builds upon previous iterations. In addition, with the adoption of a [new law](#) in 2022, Mauritania has embarked on a major reform of its education system, introducing compulsory and free schooling for children aged 6 to 15.

In 2023, the gross enrolment rate for primary school students in Mauritania was 102.9%, a strong increase from 46.1% in 1991 and just above the average of 101.1 % for LMICs in Africa. Net enrolment rate in the same period stood at 82.5%. The relatively high enrolment rate at the primary level is partly due to the strategy of not excluding students up to the age of

15. In the Current Path, Mauritania's gross enrolment rate will reach 105.0% in 2043, and the net enrolment rate will be 92.0%. The country's figure will remain above that of LMICs in Africa. The gross primary completion rate stood at almost 68.1% in 2023, indicating that not all children who enrolled completed the last grade of primary school in Mauritania. The country's figure was far below the average of 85.2% for LMICs in Africa. In the Current Path, the number of children completing primary school will increase to 87.7% in 2043. This is still slightly below the average of 92.3% for LMICs in Africa.

Among those who complete primary education, some are expected to move directly into lower-secondary schooling, others may enter after a period out of school, and some may never make the transition. This pattern of progression influences the potential for advancement through lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and eventually tertiary education levels

In 2023, gross enrolment for lower- and upper-secondary levels in the country stood at 45.0% and 32.2%, respectively. By 2043, gross enrolment for the lower-secondary level will rise to 68.9%, while that of the upper-secondary level will rise to 53.7%. This indicates a significant drop in student retention from lower- to upper-secondary education. These figures are lower than in lower-middle countries in Africa. Completion rates drop from 29.5% in the lower-secondary level to just 21.1% in the upper-secondary level. In the Current Path, lower- and upper-primary completion rates will modestly rise. By 2043, 55.1% of students are expected to complete their lower-secondary education compared to 40.6% in the upper-secondary level.

At the tertiary level, the situation is even worse. In 2023, only 5.3% of people within the age group were enrolled in tertiary institutions in Mauritania, and this will only improve to about 13.7% by 2043 in the Current Path. Worryingly, only 5.3% of the relevant age group in Mauritania graduated from a tertiary institution with at least a first degree in 2023. This will steadily rise to 9.6% by 2043.

Enrolment in vocational training and science and engineering education, which are essential for the future of work, is fairly low. Vocational training is a key element in meeting labour market needs, improving workers' skills and promoting the employability of young people. In 2023, 1.5% of upper-secondary students were enrolled in vocational training programs in Mauritania, and this figure is expected to remain steady until 2043. This is far below the average rate of 13.2% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. At tertiary level, by 2023, 24% of Mauritania's tertiary graduates will be enrolled in science and engineering programs, which is higher than the 15.1% rate for lower-middle-income countries in Africa. In the Current Path, Mauritania's progression rate will reach 22.6% in 2043.

In 2023, 105.4 females were enrolled in primary school for every 100 males in Mauritania compared to the 99.6 females to 100 males average of lower-middle-income countries in Africa. At the secondary level, there were 41.0 females enrolled for every 100 males in Mauritania, as opposed to the average of 57.3 females for every 100 males in African lower-middle-income countries. At the tertiary level, there were 3.8 female students for every 100 male students, compared to the average of 15.4 female students for every 100 male students for Mauritania's income-group peers on the continent.

Using the average test score as a proxy for quality of education, Mauritania's performance varies compared to that of its income peers in Africa. In 2023, the average test score for primary education stood at 15 out of 100, compared to 28.4 out of 100 for the African lower-middle-income countries. At the secondary level, the average test score stood at 30.9 out of 100, above the average of 37.3 recorded for the African lower-middle-income countries. This likely reflects challenges with teacher training deficiencies, high absence rates among students who are enrolled, and schools that are poorly equipped to meet the basic needs of the students

In the Current Path, this trend will continue. Thus, although Mauritania has tried to improve its education system,

significant qualitative challenges still need to be addressed.

Chart 17: Mean years of education in the Current Path and Education scenario, 2020-2043  
15 to 24 year age group

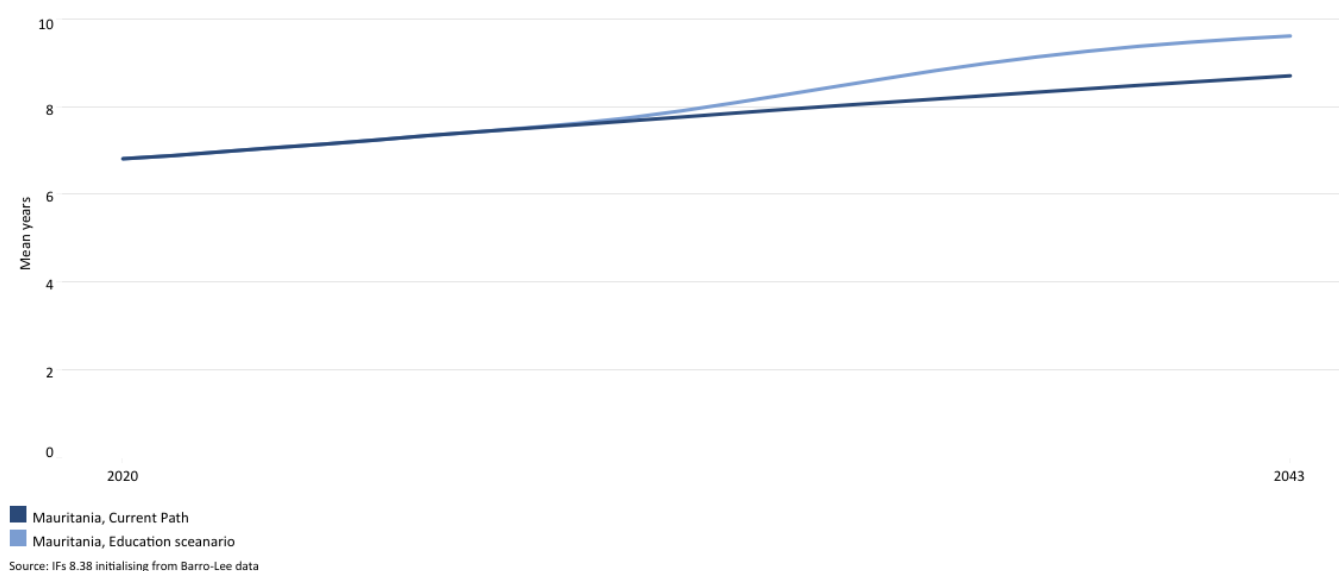


Chart 17 presents the mean years of education in the Current Path and in the Education scenario, from 2020 to 2043, for the 15 to 24 age group.

The average years of education in the adult population aged 15 to 24 is a good first indicator of how the stock of knowledge in society is changing.

The average number of years of education of the adult population aged 15 to 24 is a good first indicator of the evolution of the stock of knowledge in society. In 2023, the average number of years of schooling achieved by adults aged 15 to 24 in Mauritania was 7.1 years, below the average of 7.8 years for African lower-middle-income countries. Women's years of schooling (6.9) are slightly lower than those of males (7.2). In the Current Path, the average Mauritanian aged 15 to 24 will have received 8.7 years of schooling by 2043.

In the Education scenario, the average number of years of adult education will rise to 9.6 by 2043, 0.9 years more than in the Current Path in the same year. The Education scenario increases average primary school results to 22.6% in 2043, compared to 20.9% in the Current Path in the same period. At the secondary level, the average results of Mauritania students will reach 36.7% in 2043, slightly above the 34.4% of the Current Path. This means that the Education scenario has the potential to improve the quality of education (reflected in test results).

## Manufacturing scenario

Chart 18: Value-add by sector as % of GDP in the Current Path, 2020-2043

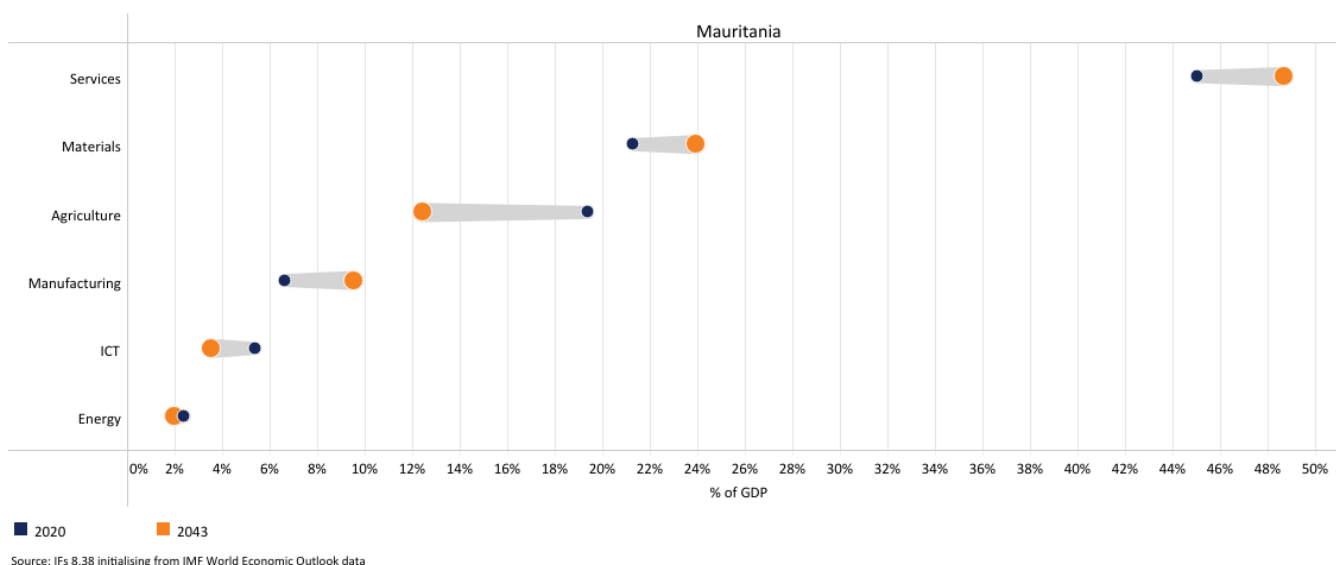


Chart 18 presents the value-add by sector as share of GDP in the Current Path, for 2023 and 2043.

In the Manufacturing scenario, reasonable but ambitious growth in manufacturing is envisaged through increased investment in the sector, research and development (R&D) and improved government regulation of businesses. This aims to enhance total labour

Visit the theme on [Manufacturing](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

The manufacturing sector is crucial for the productive transformation of a country's economy towards sustained high growth, employment creation and improved prosperity. It has backward and forward linkages with other sectors, such as the agriculture and service sectors. In Mauritania, this sector, although full of potential, remains marked by persistent challenges and dependence on extractive industries. The manufacturing sector in Mauritania, while significant in the economy, is relatively **small** and contributes around 8% to the country's GDP. Mauritania's manufacturing sector **consists** mainly of the processing of local products, particularly agri-foodstuffs, and the manufacture of import-substitute goods and dominated by the extractive industries (iron, gold, hydrocarbons). It is made up of formal small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), often located in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, as well as a large number of informal micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

In 2023, the services sector in Mauritania contributed US\$3.6 billion to the economy, equivalent to 44.9% of GDP. This is followed by the contribution of the materials sector (which includes mining) with US\$1.8 billion, equivalent to 21.0% of GDP. The agriculture sector contributed US\$1.7 billion, representing 19.6% of GDP in 2023. The manufacturing sector was valued at US\$572.5 million, equivalent to about 6.8% of GDP. The contributions of the information and communications (ICT) and energy sectors were valued at US\$424.0 million (5.0% of GDP) and US\$203.3 million (2.4% of GDP), respectively.

The low level of diversification in manufacturing is limiting the creation of added value, with a marked shortage of skilled jobs: only 12% of SMEs have access to credit, and the literacy rate (30-50%) is holding back innovation. To improve the current trend, Mauritania has introduced a number of strategic reforms. These include the SCAPP Strategy (2016-2030),

which aims to diversify the economy through public-private partnerships and improving the business climate. The **Investment Promotion Agency (APIM)**, created in 2021, has considerably reduced the time required to set up a business to 48 hours, attracting a large number of investments in the mining and energy sectors. In addition, the **Green Hydrogen Law**, adopted under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Energy, is in line with the country's energy transition ambitions. The law provides tax incentives and an attractive regulatory framework for partners such as the European Union and the Agence Française de Développement, positioning Mauritania as a potential leader in clean energy in Africa.

In the Current Path, the services sector will extend its dominance in the economy and, by 2043, reach US\$8.2 billion (48.7% of GDP). The material sector will remain the second-largest contributor over the forecast period. Its contribution will grow to US\$4.0 billion (equivalent to 23.9% of GDP) by 2043. The contribution of agriculture to GDP in Mauritania will decrease to constitute 12.4% (valued at US\$2.1 billion) of GDP by 2043. The energy sector will contribute 2.0% by 2043. The contribution of ICT will reach 3.5% by 2043. There are still many obstacles to overcome high-energy costs (despite untapped solar potential), poor infrastructure and a low-skilled workforce. Mauritania suffers from a historically extractive economy and limited innovation.

Chart 19: Value-add by the manufacturing sector in the Current Path and Manufacturing scenario, 2020-2043

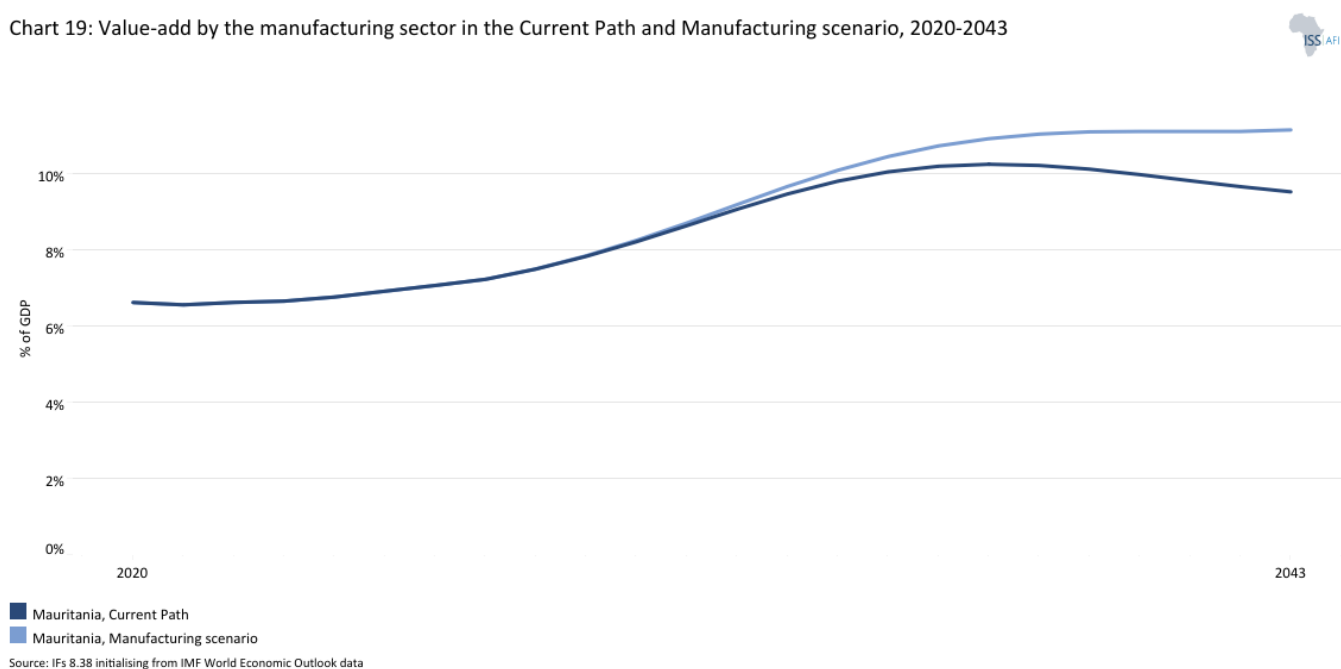


Chart 19 presents the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP in the Current Path and in the Manufacturing scenario, from 2020 to 2043. The data is in US\$ and % of GDP.

In the Manufacturing scenario, Mauritania makes progress in industrialisation compared to the Current Path. By 2043, the share of the manufactures sector in GDP will be 11.2% (US\$2.0 billion), about 1.5 percentage points of GDP above the Current Path. It means that an aggressive manufacturing transition can add an extra US\$400 million above the Current Path to the economy of Mauritania.

## AfCFTA scenario

Chart 20: Export and imports as % of GDP in the Current Path, 2000-2043

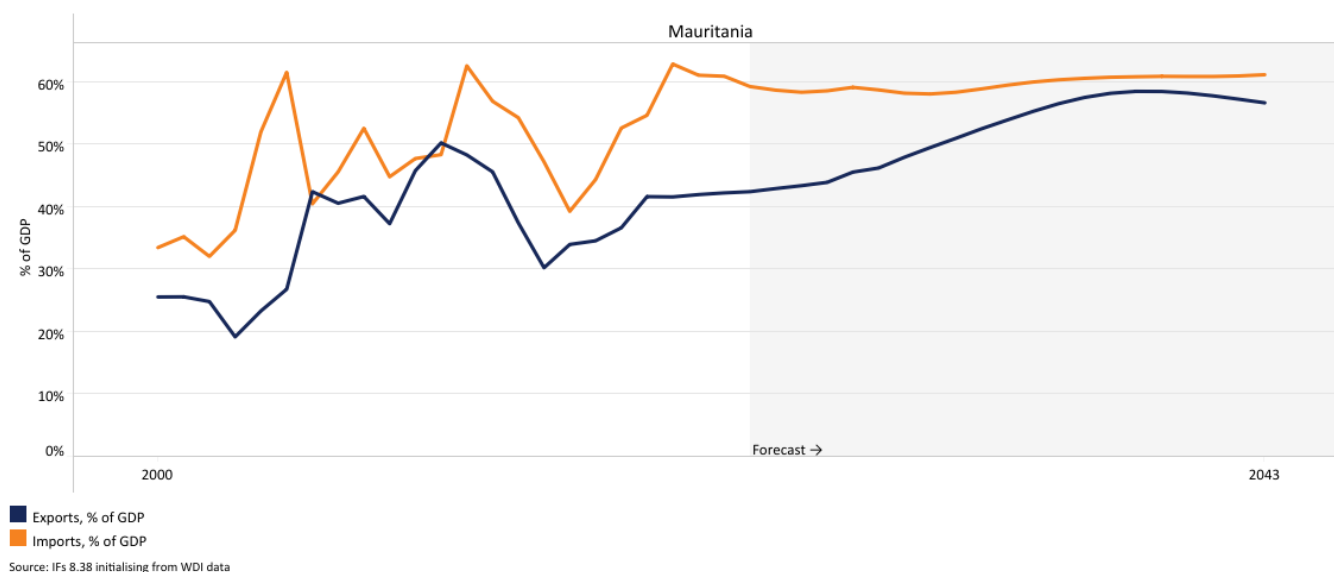


Chart 20 depicts exports and imports as a percentage of GDP, from 2000 to 2043, in the Current Path and in the AfCFTA scenario.

The AfCFTA scenario represents the impact of fully implementing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement by 2034. The scenario increases exports in manufacturing, agriculture, services, ICT, materials and energy exports. It also includes improved multifactor productivity growth from trade and reduced tariffs for all sectors.

Visit the theme on [AfCFTA](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

Historically, Mauritania's economy has been more open to international trade than that of many countries in the region. In 1990, the sum of Mauritania's exports and imports stood at 78.1% of GDP, which was far above the average of 48.2% for African lower-middle-income countries. By 2023, trade openness in Mauritania had jumped to 101.6% of GDP, still far above the 46.7% average for African lower-middle-income countries. In the Current Path, this trend will increase to reach 117.7% of GDP by 2043, far above the average 56.0% of GDP of its income peers.

This performance in international trade is partly attributable to Mauritania's commitment to a trade policy that promotes a diversified and resilient economy. The country actively participates in organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and has signed several regional agreements to promote intra-African trade. Mauritania has been a member of the WTO since 31 May 1995 and signed the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) in March 2018, which was ratified in January 2021, enabling it to trade goods and services throughout the region on preferential terms.

Mauritania has experienced significant growth in exports. In 1990, the total volume of exports amounted to US\$1.0 billion, or 36.1% of GDP, dominated mostly by iron ore (65%) and fish (25%). By 2023, exports had reached US\$3.4 billion, representing 42.3% of GDP, double the average of 20.8% of GDP for African lower-middle-income countries. This trend is largely driven by gold (36.2%), iron (35.3%) and fishery products (19.9%), copper (3.4%) and others (5.2%). Europe is the leading trading partner, absorbing 33.3% of foreign trade. Spain (29.4%), Belgium (17.5%), France (13.3%), Switzerland (10.5%), Italy (6.1%) and the Netherlands (5.2%) are Mauritania's main European partners. These countries account for

82.1% of European trade with Mauritania. Asia, with 25.6% of trade in 2023, remains the second partner. Trade goes mainly to China (58.7%), Japan (10.8%), Indonesia (7.4%) and Malaysia (6.9%). The American continent accounts for 16.4% of the total value of trade. Trade is with Canada (67.9%), Brazil (15.4%) and the United States (13.0%). Africa's internal share of trade in 2023 was estimated at 12.2%. The main trading partners are Algeria (40.0%), Morocco (21.3%) and Côte d'Ivoire (6.9%). The Middle East accounted for 12.6% of trade in 2023.

Mauritania's total imports grew from US\$1.2 billion, equivalent to 41.9% of GDP in 1990 to US\$4.8 billion, representing 59.2% of GDP, in 2023. This was higher than the estimated average of 25.9% for African lower-middle-income countries in the same year. In the Current Path, total imports to Mauritania will reach US\$10.2 billion (61.1% of GDP) by 2043. The main import partners are Canada (US\$747 million), China (US\$437 million), Switzerland (US\$230 million), Algeria (US\$187 million), Italy (US\$100 million), Australia (US\$80 million) and Côte d'Ivoire (US\$52 million).

The prevalence of mining in the Mauritanian economy presents opportunity for growth, especially given that much of the materials exported are unprocessed ore. The country likely has a high comparative advantage in iron extraction that could be used to foster industries such as ore refinement, steel production and steel fabrication to grow and diversify the economy. This shift to value-add industries and exports would also fortify the Mauritanian economy against the volatile world of global commodity prices. In the process, the country still faces a number of challenges in strengthening its competitiveness on the international market. These include the need to improve trade and logistics infrastructure, as well as encouraging more foreign investment in key sectors such as agriculture and technology. In addition, it is essential to improve the business climate in order to attract potential investors.

Chart 21: Trade balance in the Current Path and AfCFTA scenario, 2020-2043

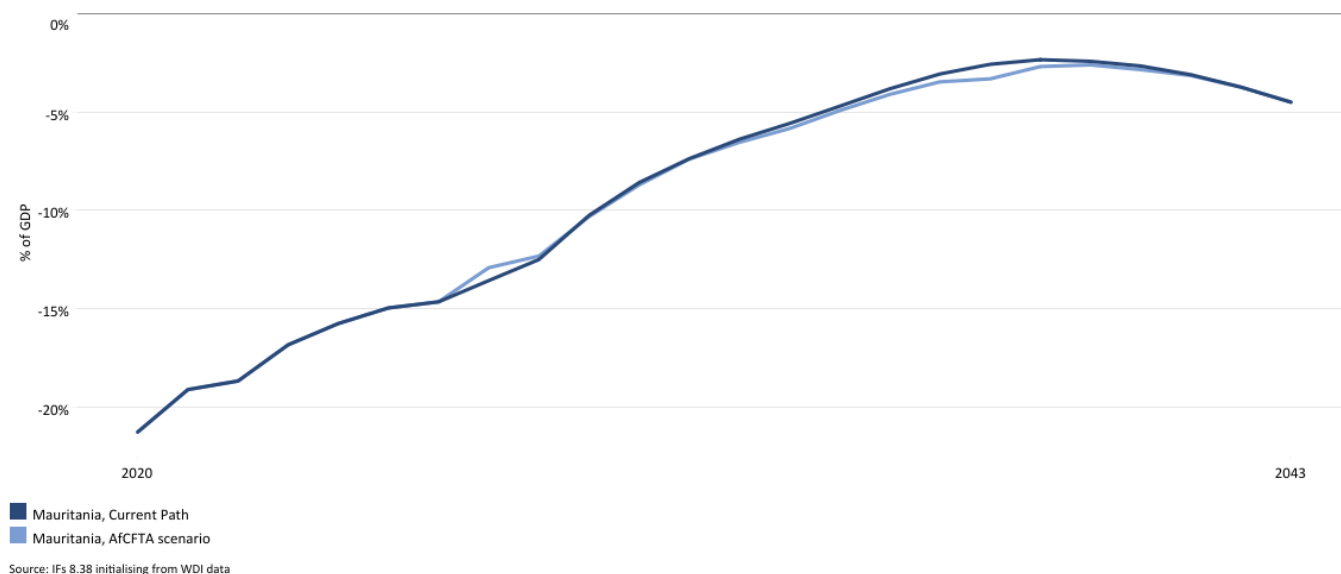


Chart 21 presents the trade balance in the Current Path and in the AfCFTA scenario, from 2020 to 2043 as a percentage of GDP.

Mauritania has a deficit in its trade balance. Like most African countries, it imports large volumes of mostly finished or processed goods. Its export quantities are small, and mostly comprise raw materials, with little or no value addition occurring within the country. This results in low export revenues and higher import expenditures. Mauritania's trade deficit in 2023 constituted 16.8% of GDP, which was far above the average of 5.1% for LMICs in Africa.

In the AfCFTA scenario, the sum of Mauritania's exports and imports as a percentage of GDP will reach 115.5% by 2043,

slightly below its Current Path. This is due to a slight drop in imports compared with the Current Path. In addition, the AfCFTA scenario will reduce the trade deficit to 4.4% of GDP in 2043 compared to 4.5% of GDP in the Current Path. This means that Mauritania could improve its deficit by almost 0.1 percentage points of GDP in the Current Path.

## Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario

Chart 22: Electricity access: urban, rural and total in the Current Path, 2000-2043

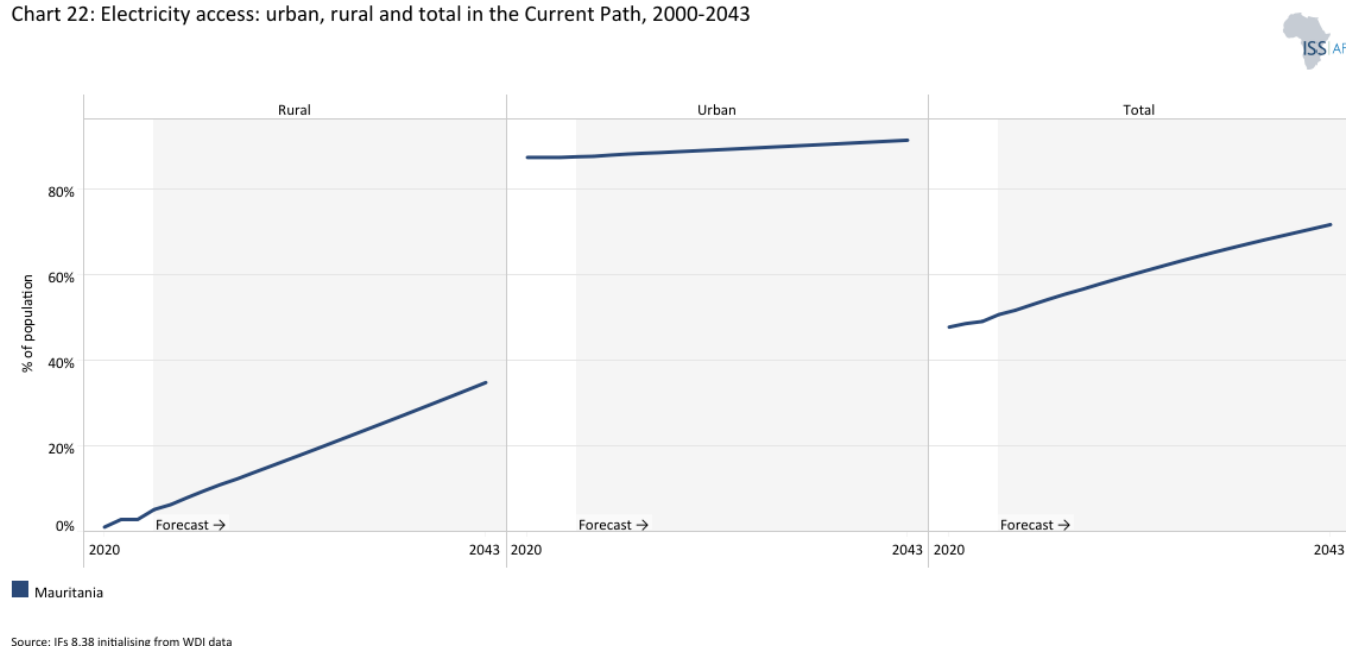


Chart 22 presents the Current Path of access to electricity for urban, rural and the total population from 2000 to 2043.

The Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario involves ambitious investments in road and renewable energy infrastructure, improved electricity access and accelerated broadband connectivity. It emphasises adopting modern technologies to enhance government efficiency and incorporates significant investments in major infrastructure projects like rail, ports and airports (other infra) while highlighting the positive impacts of renewables and ICT.

Visit the themes on [Large Infrastructure](#) and [Leapfrogging](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

Infrastructure development is crucial for economic growth and diversification. **Modern infrastructure** can improve productivity, augment healthy lifestyles, boost educational outcomes and facilitate government effectiveness. In this study, we focus on both physical and digital infrastructure, including roads, electricity access and ICT.

Mauritania's significant investments in public infrastructure in the 1990s contributed to the development of the economy and improved the stock of public capital. The Africa Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI) consists of four composite indicators: transport, electricity, ICT, and water supply and sanitation needs. Mauritania does not consistently appear in the top AIDI positions, and better developed countries like Seychelles, Egypt and Libya have high rankings. In 2023, Mauritania was ranked 127th in the Global Innovation Index (GII) and its infrastructure ranking was 124th out of 132 countries.

Physical infrastructure, such as roads and railways, is a critical driver of economic growth and an important component of development. It facilitates the movement of people, goods and services, promotes intra-country trade and serves as an enabler of social service provision such as education and health. In 2023, the total length of roads in Mauritania was estimated at 13 207 km of which 34.0% was paved. This figure is below the average of 37.8% for LMICs in Africa. In the Current Path, the total road network in Mauritania will rise to 24 297 km by 2043, with paved roads as a percentage of total roads constituting 37.5%, still far below the average 61.5% for LMICs in Africa.

Mauritania draws its energy from a variety of sources, but oil remains the dominant source, covering over 70% of the country's energy needs. However, the country has significant potential in renewable energies, notably solar and wind power, which account for a growing share of the energy mix. Hydroelectricity and biomass are also used, albeit to a lesser extent.

As part of its national strategy to ensure universal access to electricity by 2030, the country has launched several programs in collaboration with international partners, including the production of electricity from renewable energies, the development of green and blue hydrogen and the establishment of a national high-voltage distribution network. In addition, the restructuring of the national electricity company is underway, with public-private partnerships to improve the sector's efficiency.

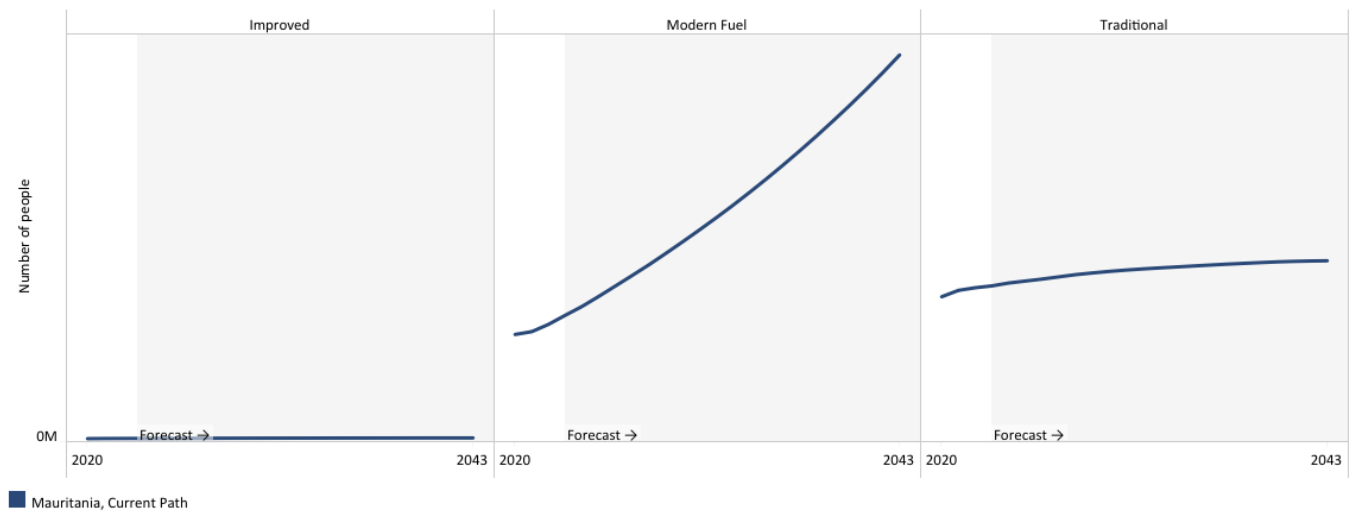
In 2023, an average of 50.7% of Mauritians had access to electricity, far below the average of 68.9% for LMICs in Africa. Faced with such an electricity deficit, the country has announced the development of two rural electrification projects: one aimed at developing solar power plants and electrical connectivity with neighboring Mali, to provide 600 megawatts of electricity between the two nations; the other to provide electricity to 40 towns and villages in south-eastern Mauritania, in order to stimulate economic activity and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants. In the Current Path, access to electricity in Mauritania will increase to 71.7%, remaining below the average of 82.4% for LMICs in 2043.

The Digital Economy covers the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services related to telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies. A National Agenda for Digital Transformation 2022-2025 has been launched to guide these efforts. It focuses on modernising the administration, developing the ICT infrastructure, promoting the digital economy, digital inclusion and developing an appropriate legal framework. The aim is to simplify and digitalise government services and business support services.

In 2024, on the International Telecommunication Union's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Development Index, Mauritania ranked 139th globally and 21st in Africa for ICT development, with a score of 55.5 points. In 2023, Mauritania had a mobile broadband subscription rate of 70.9 per 100 people, above the average of 62.6 for African lower-middle-income countries. In the Current Path, mobile broadband subscriptions will rise to 150.5 per 100 people in 2043, remaining above the average of 148.9 for its income-group peers. In 2023, the total number of fixed broadband subscriptions in the country was about 2.8 per 100 people, below the average of 3.7 per 100 people for its income-group peers. In 2023, Mauritania had an internet penetration rate of 58.8% of the total population, with 2.82 million internet users.

In the Current Path, fixed broadband subscriptions will rise to 20.7 per 100 people by 2043, below the average of 21.1 subscriptions per 100 people for its income-group peers. Although the country has embarked on a digital transformation, the lack of digital infrastructure, the low level of ICT adoption, the lack of digital skills and the risks associated with digital security and governance remain the main challenges it faces.

Chart 23: Cookstoves usage in the Current Path and Large Infra/Leapfrogging scenario, 2020-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from WDI data

Chart 23 presents the number of people using cookstoves in the Current Path and in the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, from 2020 to 2043.

Our analysis distinguishes between three types of cookstove: traditional, improved and modern. In 2023, 54.6% of households in Mauritania used traditional stoves with firewood or charcoal for cooking, while 1.1% used improved cookstoves and 44.3% used modern stoves. Although the majority of the Mauritania population still uses traditional stoves for cooking, there is a significant proportion of Mauritians who are already using modern stove, which helps to reduce pollution and carbon emissions, and has lowered negative impacts on the health of these households.

In the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, 73.3% of Mauritanian households will be using modern fuels for cooking in 2043, above the average of 70% for LMICs and above 67% in the Current Path by 2043. Increasing the use of modern furnaces should enable Mauritania to reduce environmental stress and biodiversity loss. They can also be better ventilated, which, combined with cleaner fuels, will lead to fewer respiratory illnesses in women and children, who are most seriously affected by the harmful effects of prolonged smoke inhalation at home.

Chart 24: Access to mobile and fixed broadband in the Current Path and Large Infra/Leapfrogging scenario, 2020-2043

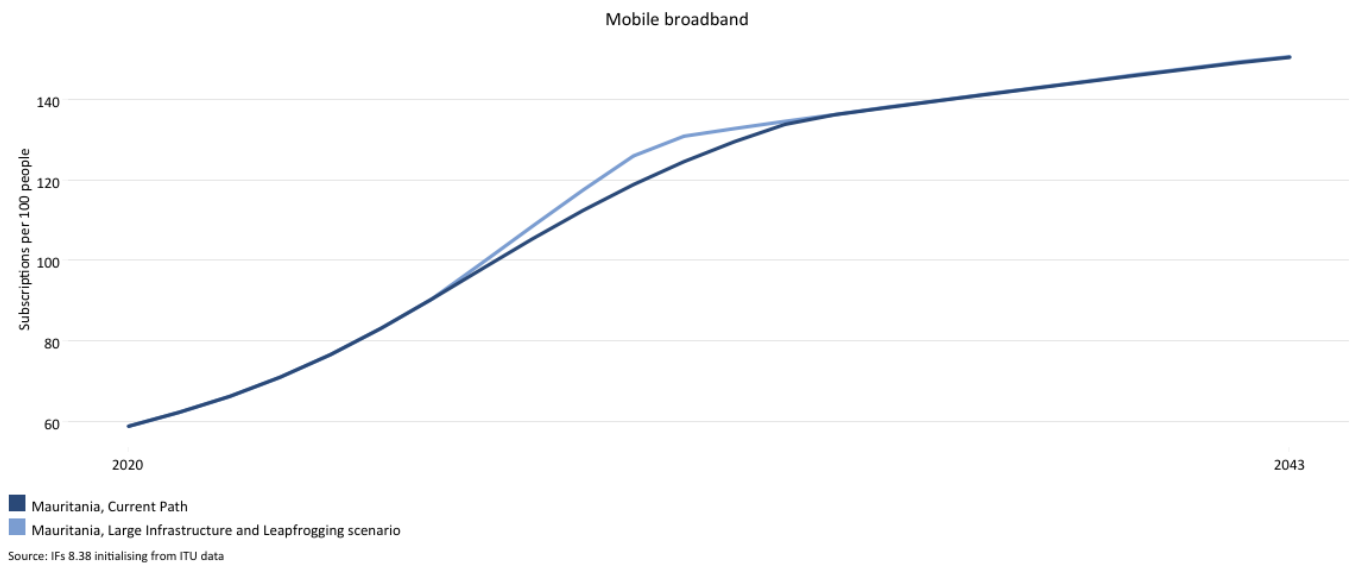


Chart 24 presents the percentage of the population and number of people with access to mobile and fixed broadband in the Current Path and in the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, from 2020 to 2043. The user can toggle between mobile and fixed broadband.

In the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, access to fixed broadband will rise to 23.9 per 100 people subscriptions by 2043, compared to 20.7 in the Current Path. The number of subscriptions to mobile broadband will reach 150.7 per 100 people by 2043 in the Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging scenario, compared to 150.3 per 100 people subscriptions on the Current Path.

## Financial Flows scenario

Chart 25: FDI, foreign aid and remittances as % of GDP in the Current Path, 1990-2043

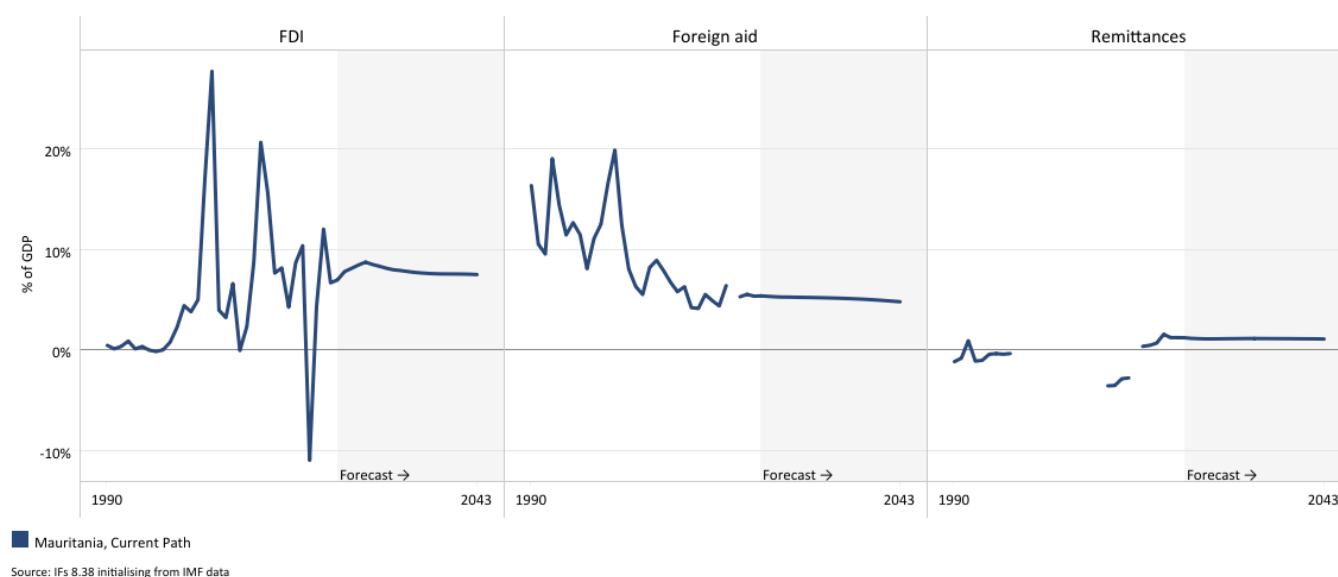


Chart 25 presents the trends in FDI, aid and remittances in the Current Path and in the Financial Flows scenario as a percentage of GDP, from 1990 to 2043.

The Financial Flows scenario represents a reasonable but ambitious increase in inward flows of worker remittances, aid to poor countries and an increase in the stock of foreign direct investment (FDI) and additional portfolio investment inflows. We reduce outward financial flows to emulate a reduction in illicit financial outflows.

Visit the theme on [Financial Flows](#) for our conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

Historically, Mauritania [has oriented](#) its economy around natural resources, the 2000s being a critical period when the state endeavoured to attract foreign investment. Today, mining activities (iron ore, gold) and energy (gas, renewables) drive financial flows. In 1990, the total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow to Mauritania was equivalent to 0.4% of GDP, below the average of 0.7% of GDP for LMICs in Africa. By 2023, FDI inflows to Mauritania reached 6.9% of GDP. The primary FDI partners of Mauritania [are](#) France, China, the United Arab Emirates and Canada. France historically has had strong economic and political ties with Mauritania and is a major investor, with a significant number of French companies operating in the country. China, the UAE and Canada also contribute significantly to Mauritania's FDI inflows, with China [showing](#) increasing interest in recent years.

This increase is [due](#) to the government's determination to facilitate foreign investment by guaranteeing the free repatriation of capital and salaries of foreign employees, and by offering tax benefits. Indeed, the investment climate, governed by the 2021 [Investment Code](#), offers tax exemptions (5 years in remote areas), guarantees of capital transfer and a single window through the Investment Promotion Agency (APIM), reducing business registration to 48 hours. Mauritania has also joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which has raised investor confidence. In the Current Path, FDI inflows are expected to marginally rise to 7.5% of GDP by 2043. This figure will be above the average of 3.5% for lower-middle-income countries in Africa.

[Net official development assistance](#) (ODA) consists of disbursements of loans made on concessional terms (net of

repayments of principal) and grants by official agencies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by multilateral institutions, and by non-DAC countries to promote economic development and welfare in countries and territories in the DAC list of ODA recipients. In 1990, the total ODA received by Mauritania constituted 16.3% of GDP, compared to the average of 6.5% for LMICs in Africa. By 2023, total ODA as a percentage of GDP stood at 5.3%, equivalent to US\$435.1 million. This was far above the average of 1.5% for LMICs in Africa. In the Current Path, ODA will decline to 4.8% of GDP in 2043, although the absolute amount will increase to US\$801.7 million by 2043.

Remittances from migrants to Mauritania are an important aspect of the country's migration and economic development. These transfers are often made through traditional channels, and remain an important source of financing for families. In 1990, the total net remittance balance to Mauritania was negative valued at -US\$33.4 million, equivalent to -1.1% of GDP. By 2023, this had grown rapidly to US\$97.8 million, constituting 1.2% of GDP. Yet, this is below the average of 3.3% for LMICs in Africa. In Mauritania, remittance inflows primarily come from individuals working in China, Switzerland, France, Spain, Japan, Italy and the United Arab Emirates. While Mauritania is a net sender of remittances overall (outflows exceed inflows), the absolute volume of remittances is increasing. In the Current Path, the total net remittances balance will reach US\$181.5 billion (1.1% of GDP), below the average of 2.3% of GDP projected for LMICs in Africa.

Chart 26: Government revenue in the Current Path and Financial Flows scenario, 2020-2043

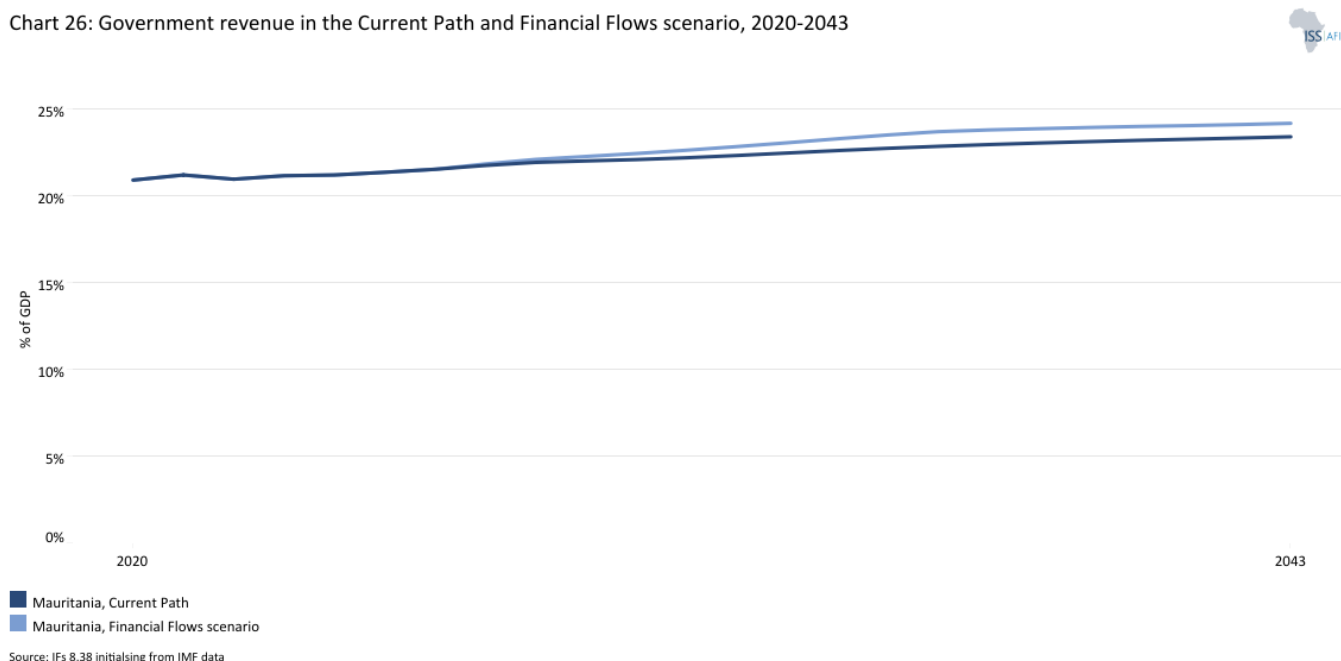


Chart 26 presents government revenue in the Current Path and in the Financial Flows scenario, from 2020 to 2043. The data is in US\$ 2017 and % of GDP.

Wagner's law, or the law of increasing state activity, states that public expenditure increases as national income rises. In the Financial Flows scenario, it is reasonable to expect that government revenues will increase as a percentage of GDP compared to the Current Path.

Structural transformation challenges facing Mauritania's government require increased financial funding. Theoretically, it is commonly accepted, according to [Wagner's Law](#), that public spending increases with national income. Intuitively, we can therefore expect an increase in public revenue as a percentage of GDP in the Financial Flows scenario, compared to the current trajectory.

In 2023, total government revenues in Mauritania stood at US\$1.7 billion, or 21.1% of GDP, which was higher than the average of 18% of GDP for LMICs in Africa. In the Current Path, total government revenues in Mauritania will be US\$3.9

billion, or 23.4% of GDP in 2043.

In the Financial Flows scenario, government revenue will rise to US\$3.9 billion in 2043, representing 23.4% of GDP, above the average of 21.4% for LMICs in Africa in the same year. Compared to the Current Path, the Financial Flows scenario will improve Mauritania's government revenues by an extra US\$20.0 million in 2043. Thus, if the country pursues its policy of efficient management of its public finances, notably by strengthening its institutional capacity to provide quality, up-to-date statistics, manage public expenditure and guarantee greater budget transparency, the Financial Flow scenario will enable it to meet its debt challenges and the dual challenge of investment.

## Governance scenario

Chart 27: Government Effectiveness score in the Current Path, 2002-2043

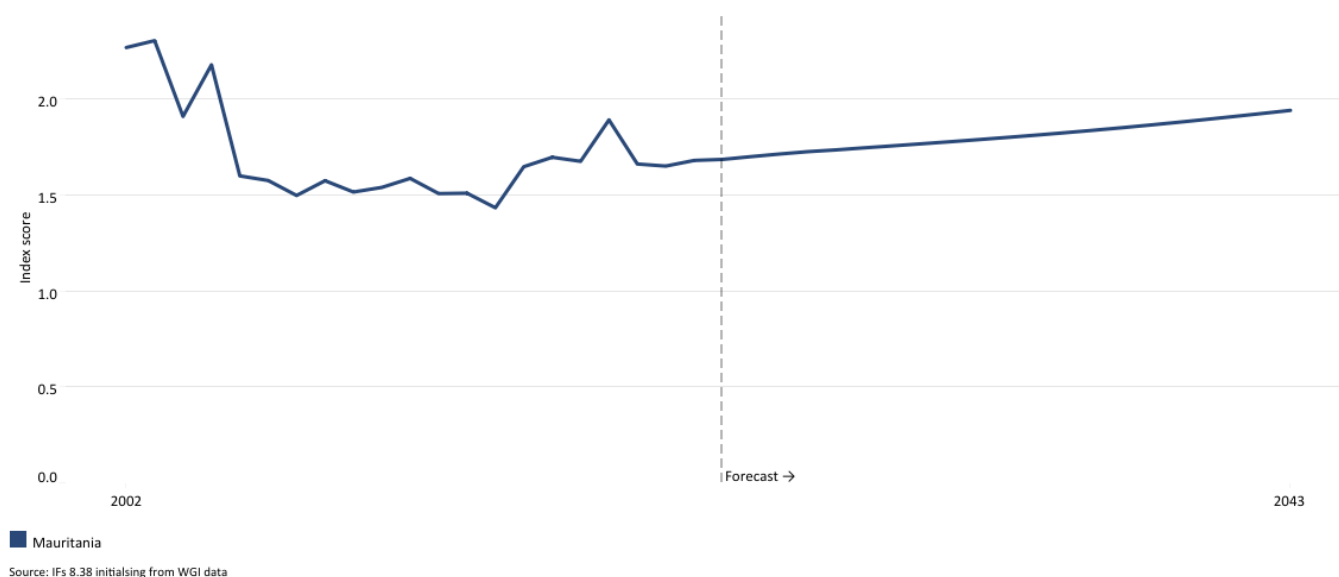


Chart 27 presents the Current Path of government effectiveness comparing the country to the average for the African income group, from 2002 to 2043.

The World Bank’s [index](#) on government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

The World Bank’s index on government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

Good governance is crucial for economic advancement. Enhanced national security and stability foster a favourable environment for both domestic and foreign investment, allowing governments to implement sustainable development strategies more successfully. In the 2023 [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#) (IIAG), Mauritania scored 42.5 out of 100 in overall governance, placing it 41st out of 54 African countries. This score was below Africa’s estimated average of 49.3 and the regional average for Northern Africa of 51.8.

The Corruption Perceptions Index is the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. In 2023, Mauritania had a score of 30, ranked 130th out of 180 countries. Mauritania's economic freedom score was 54.9, ranking it 119th out of 184 countries. This places it in the "mostly unfree" category. The score remained the same as the previous year.

In 2023, Mauritania scored a rank of 1.7 out of 5 for government effectiveness. This score is considered low, indicating a weak level of government effectiveness. In the Current Path, the governance effectiveness score will slightly increase to 1.9 out of 5 by 2043, below the average of 2.3 for LMICs in Africa in the same year.

While Mauritania's path shows a modest improvement in governance by 2043, the country still suffers from systemic

issues (corruption, exclusion, economic dependence). The experience of Seychelles, for example, where institutional integrity has allowed a leap in economic freedom (score of 66.4 in 2025) suggests that the answer is in thoroughgoing institutional reform, supported by international cooperation (IMF, World Bank) and a firm dedication to inclusion.

Chart 28: Composite governance index in the Current Path and Governance scenario, 2023-2043

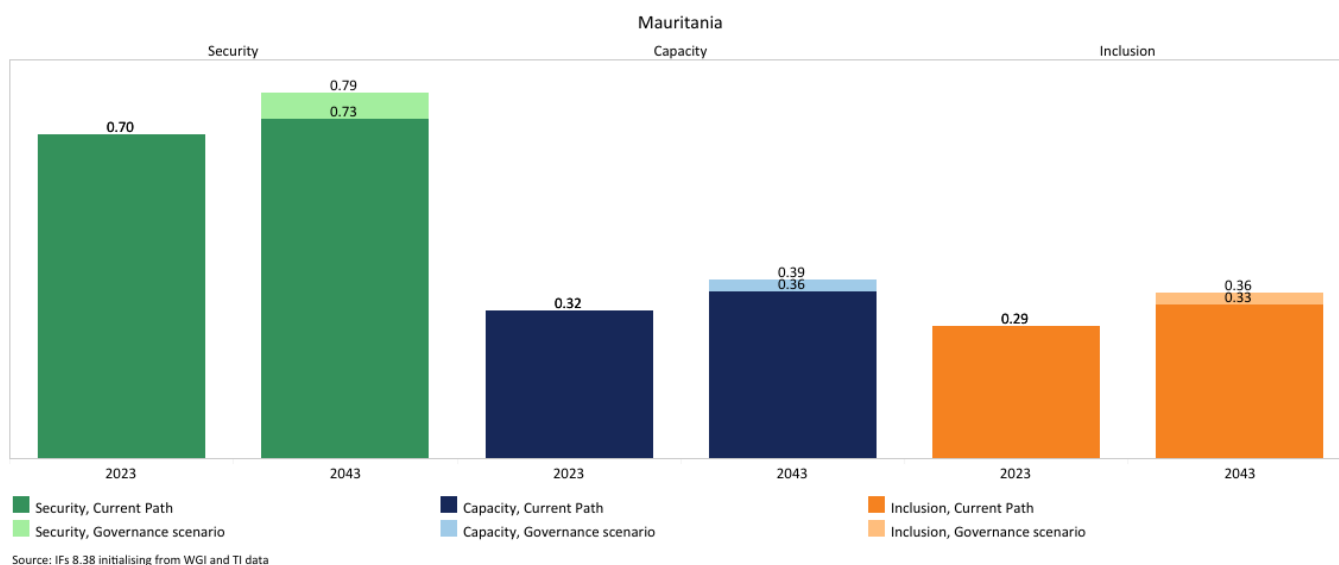


Chart 28 presents the security, capacity and inclusion index for the Current Path versus the Governance scenario, for 2023 and 2043.

This scenario assumes better governance: stability, capacity and inclusion. It measures a state's progress using the average of these three indices. To this end, it includes an index (0 to 1) for each dimension, with higher scores indicating improved outcomes. participation rates, particularly among females where appropriate.

Note that the scenario includes increased welfare transfers to unskilled workers, which are paid for by taxes on skilled workers. Note: the two should roughly balance one another in US\$ terms. In the context of high poverty levels and inequality, social transfers have proven the most effective short/medium-term measures of alleviating both.

Visit the theme on [Governance](#) for a full conceptualisation and details on the scenario structure and interventions.

As in many African countries, the quality of governance remains a real challenge for Mauritania. In 2023, its score on the composite governance index stood at 0.43 out of 1, below the estimated average of 0.49 for LMICs in Africa. However, the decomposition of this indicator into its three dimensions of security, capacity and inclusion shows that the country has managed to improve its governance in terms of security (0.70), despite inclusion (0.28) and capacity (0.32) still remaining a real challenge.

In the Governance scenario, Mauritania's score on the governance security index will improve to 0.79 by 2043, slightly above the average of 0.7 for LMICs in Africa in the same year. Governance capacity will also improve in the Governance scenario, with its score increasing to 0.38 by 2043, constituting a 6.8% improvement above the Current Path in 2043. The governance inclusion index will improve in the Governance scenario by 6.0% compared to the Current Path in 2043. In the Governance scenario, Mauritania aims to improve its governance practices and the governance effectiveness is projected to rise to 2.18 by 2043, compared to the 1.94 to the Current Path.

## Mauritania: Scenario Comparisons

Chart 29: GDP per capita in the Current Path and scenarios, 2020-2043

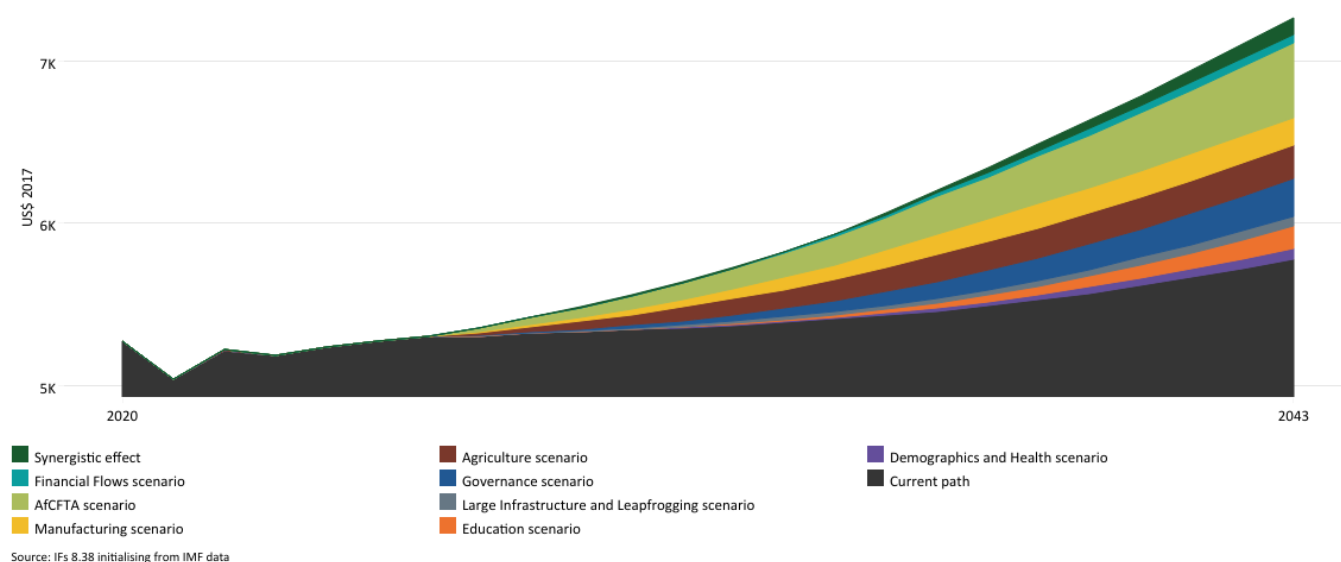


Chart 29 presents GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) in the Current Path and each of the eight sectoral scenarios. The data is from 2020 with a forecast to 2043.

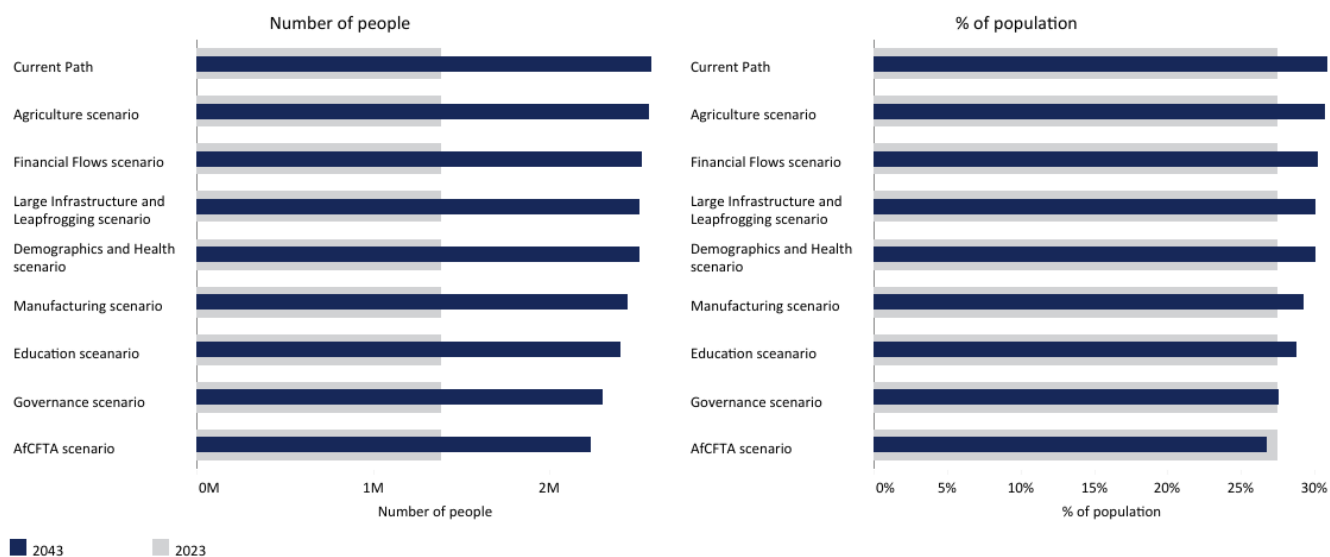
All sectoral scenarios point to an improvement in Mauritania's GDP per capita. The scenarios with the greatest impact by 2043 will be the AfCFTA, followed by the Governance, Agriculture and Manufacturing scenarios. GDP per capita (PPP) in the AfCFTA scenario will rise to US\$6 239, representing a 8.0% increase above the Current Path for that year. Thus, the AfCFTA scenario can raise GDP per capita in Mauritania by an additional US\$464.3. The full implementation of the AfCFTA agreement therefore represents a major economic opportunity for the country, notably in terms of trade liberalisation in response to increased demand, and also in terms of potential diversification of the workforce and technological imports - which, in the long term, would facilitate Mauritania's positioning in the regional value chain for the country's main goods and services. Furthermore, trade integration with other African countries and openness are crucial to Mauritania's economic future to take advantage of its comparative advantages.

In the Governance scenario, Mauritania's GDP per capita will increase to US\$6 009 by 2043, which represents an increase of US\$233.9 compared to the Current Path in the same year. Good governance and business facilities can undoubtedly inspire investor confidence in the economy and attract more FDI into Mauritania, which can lead to growth. Likewise, good governance in the form of adherence to the rule of law, reduced corruption, good property right protection, improved transparency, business freedom and accountability can lead to more rapid economic growth. In addition, stronger governance creates a stable environment that enables human capital development and economic diversification.

In the Agriculture scenario, Mauritania's GDP per capita will increase to US\$5 953 by 2043, which represents an increase of US\$178 compared to the Current Path in the same year. The impact of the Agriculture scenario demonstrates the importance of the agricultural sector to economic growth. This indicates that in order to achieve its development potential, Mauritania should invest in increasing efficiency in the agricultural sector to reduce reliance on food imports. This would free up capital that is spent on importing food for investment across the economy and increase overall economic efficiency, as well as buttress the Mauritanian economy and food supply against the volatile global commodities market.

In the Manufacturing scenario, GDP per capita will increase to US\$5 952 by 2043, representing an increase of US\$177 or 3.1% more than in the Current Path. This figure confirms the hypothesis that the manufacturing sector can play a key role in transforming productivity structures across the economy. Therefore, it is no surprise that a strong manufacturing sector leads to significant improvements in GDP per capita.

Chart 30: Poverty in the Current Path and scenarios, 2023-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from UNPD population prospects estimate, WDI and PovcalNet data

Chart 30 presents poverty in the Current Path and for each scenario, from 2020 to 2043. The user can select the number of extremely poor people or the percentage of the population.

Poverty reduction is a key challenge for Mauritania. Apart from the Financial Flows scenario, all other sectoral scenarios lead to a reduction in poverty. The AfCFTA, followed by the Governance and Education scenarios are most effective at a poverty line of US\$3.65 reduction by 2043.

The AfCFTA scenario has the largest potential to reduce extreme poverty in Mauritania. The number of poor living with less than US\$3.65 per day will decline to 2.2 million (equivalent to 26.8% of the population), compared to the Current Path of 30.9% by 2043. The liberalisation of the Mauritanian economy through financial flows, international trade and migration should enable a significant knowledge and technology transfer necessary for a better diversification of the economy and more qualified jobs. In this way, the country will reduce extreme poverty.

The Governance scenario has the second-largest impact on poverty reduction in Mauritania. In this scenario, 2.3 million people will live below the extreme poverty line of US\$3.65 by 2043, constituting 27.6% of the population. This will be 3.3 percentage points lower than the Current Path and equivalent to a reduction of about 138 600 people living in extreme poverty. The reduction here is likely caused by higher government efficiency leading to better service provision and higher economic activity.

Finally, in the Education scenario, 2.4 million people will live below the extreme poverty line of US\$3.65 by 2043, constituting 28.9% of the population. This will be two percentage points lower than in the Current Path and equivalent to a reduction of about 166 000 people living in extreme poverty. Mauritania should improve the quality of its human capital by reforming the quality and quantity of its education system, and in return, it will have a more competitive and productive workforce. As a result, the workforce could enjoy higher wages or incomes as a result of their productive performance, which would enable them to improve their living conditions in terms of poverty reduction.

Chart 31: GDP (MER) in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043

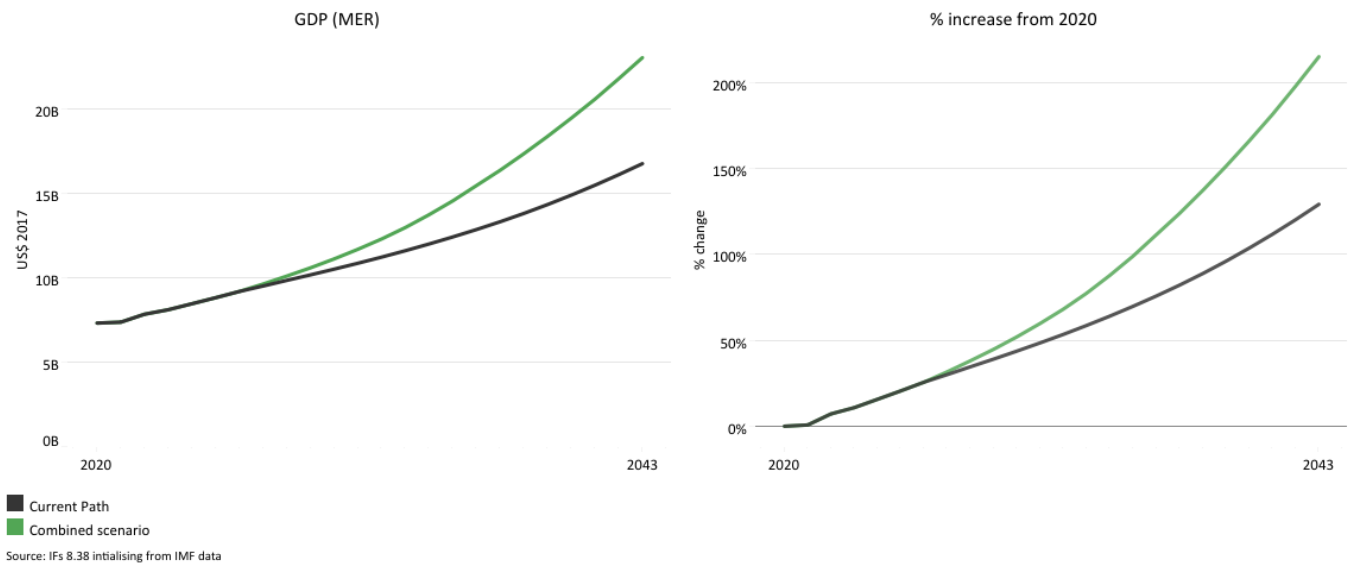


Chart 31 presents GDP in the Current Path and in the Combined scenario from 2020 to 2043. The data is in US\$ 2017 and at market exchange rates (MER).

The Combined scenario combines all eight sectoral scenarios: Governance, Demographics and Health, Education, Large Infrastructure and Leapfrogging, Agriculture, Manufacturing, AfCFTA and Financial Flows.

By 2043, the GDP of Mauritania will reach US\$23.0 billion in the Combined scenario, exceeding the Current Path (US\$16.8 billion), meaning that the Combined scenario will increase the size of the economy by an additional US\$6.2 billion by 2043 (an increase of 37.0% compared to the Current Path). Indeed, in the Combined scenario, the economy is expected to grow at an average of 5.7% compared to the 4.1% in the Current Path. This indicates that an integrated development push across development sectors is the best way to achieve sustained inclusive growth and development in Mauritania.

Chart 32: GDP per capita (PPP) in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2023-2043

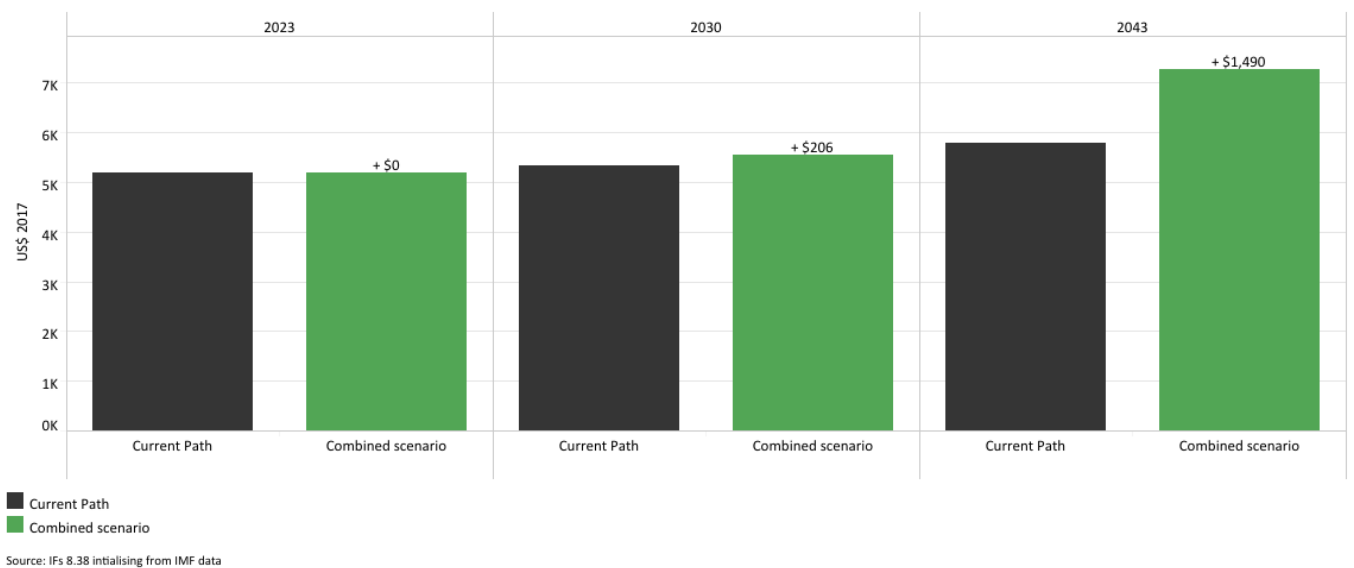


Chart 32 presents GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) in the Current Path and the Combined scenario. The data is from 2023 with a forecast to 2043.

In the Combined scenario, the GDP per capita for Mauritania will increase to US\$7 265 by 2043. This will be US\$1 490 higher than the US\$5 775 in the Current Path, meaning that the materialisation of the Combined scenario could improve the living standard of the Mauritanian population. The results reflect the importance of a multisectoral program of interventions to improve average incomes in the country.

Chart 33: Value added by sector in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2023-2043

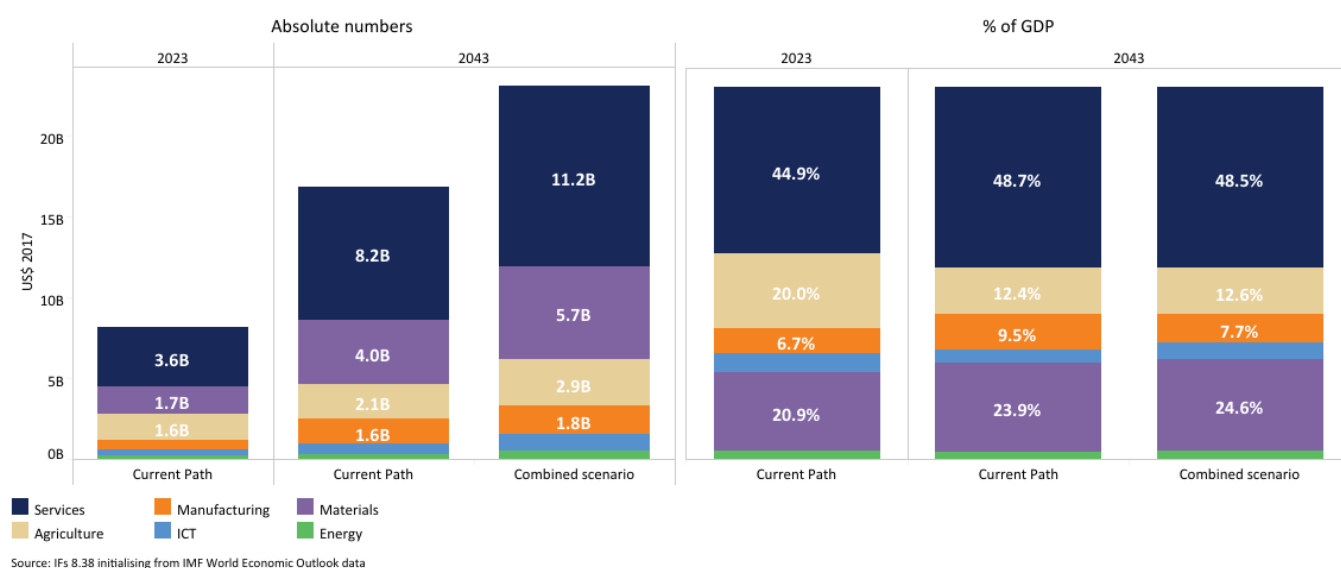


Chart 33 presents the value-add by sector in the Current Path and in the Combined scenario, for 2023 and 2043. The data is in US\$ 2017 and as a percentage of GDP.

Our modelling provides forecasts in six economic sectors namely agriculture, energy, materials (including mining), manufactures, services and ICTech.

By 2043, in the Combined scenario, the services sector will be the largest contributor to GDP at 48.5% (valued at US\$11.2 billion). This will be slightly below the Current Path of 48.7% (valued at US\$8.2 billion). The materials sector will be the second-largest contributor to GDP in the Combined scenario by 2043 with a share of 24.6% (equivalent to US\$5.7 billion).higher than the Current Path of 23.9% (US\$4.0 billion).

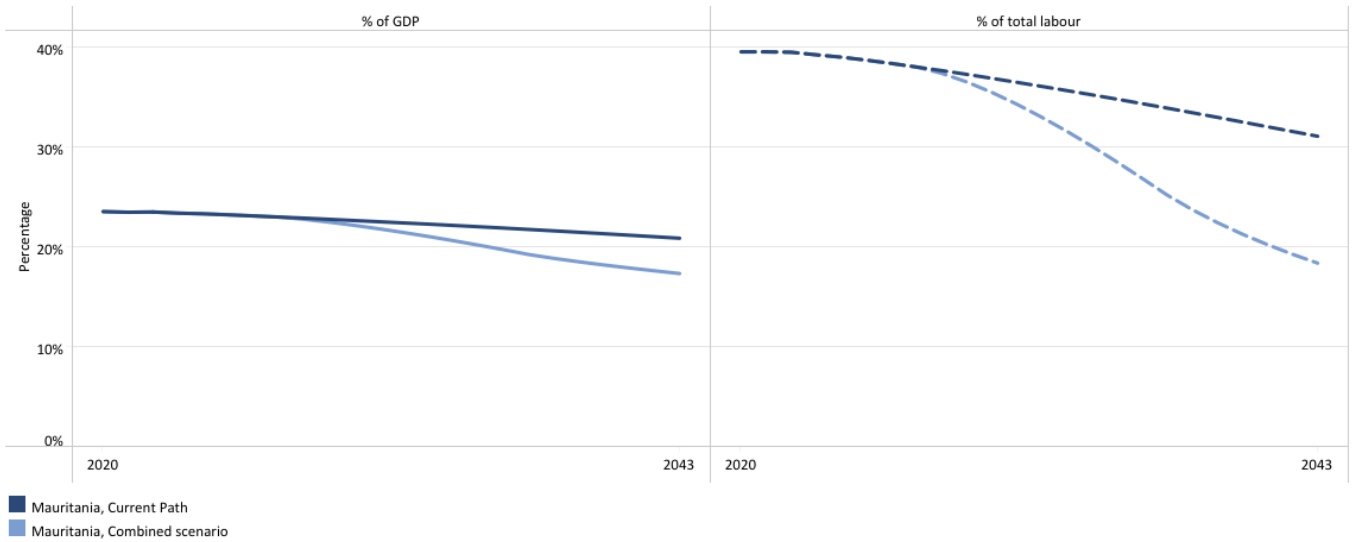
In the Combined scenario, the agriculture sector will stand at 12.6% of GDP (equivalent to US\$2.9 billion) in 2043, below the Current Path of 12.4% (US\$2.1 billion). The share of the ICT sector will increase to 4.2% (valued at US\$975 million) in the Combined scenario compared to 3.5% (valued at US\$594.3 million) in the Current Path by 2043.

In the Combined scenario, the share of energy sector will constitute 2.4% of GDP in 2043, i.e. US\$536.0 million compared to US\$329.3 million in the Current Path. By 2043, the share of the manufacturing sector will decline to 8% of GDP (equivalent to US\$1.8 billion), lower than the Current Path of 9.3% (US\$1.6 billion).

These results demonstrate the importance of the Combined scenario for further diversification of the Mauritania

economy. Even though the services sector remains the country's key sector, with the Combined scenarios, the economic dynamic tends to move forward with the other sectors of the Mauritania economy as well.

Chart 34: Informal sector in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043

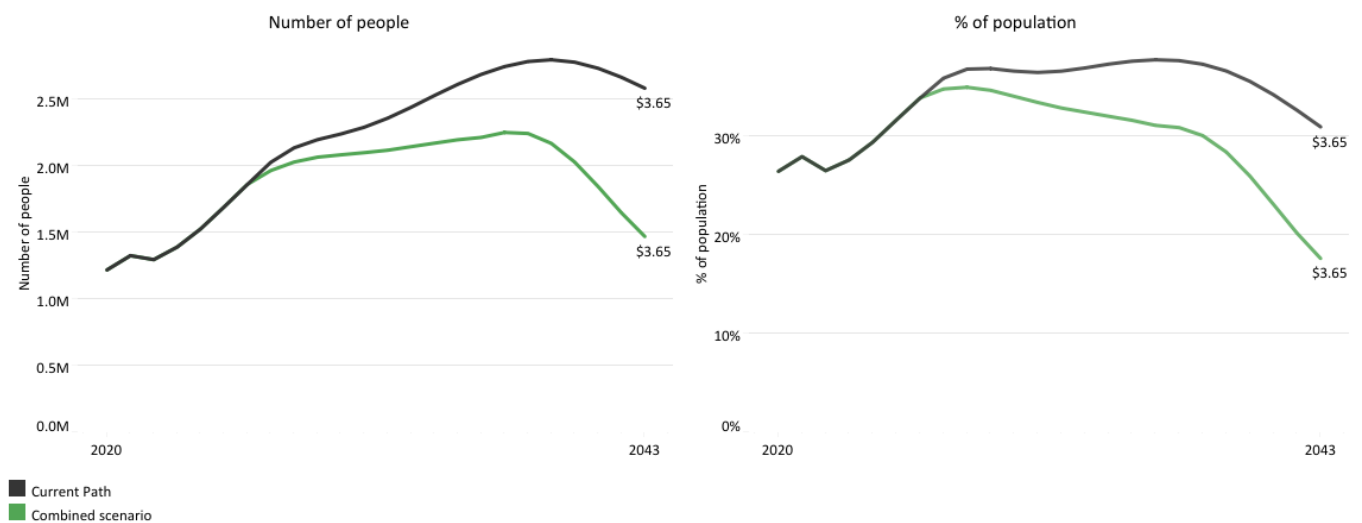


Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from Elgin and Oztunali (2008), and Schneider and Enste (2012) data

Chart 34 presents the size of the informal sector in the Current Path and in the Combined scenario, from 2020 to 2043.

By 2043, the size of the informal sector in Mauritania will decline to 17.3% of GDP in the Combined scenario, lower than the 21.0% in the Current Path. Likewise, by 2043, informal labour will constitute 18.3% of total labour in the Combined scenario instead of 31.0% in the Current Path, which represents a substantial improvement. Increased formal job creation in sectors like manufacturing and services due to governance and economic liberalisation would help draw workers into stable, regulated employment.

Chart 35: Poverty in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from IMF data

Chart 35 presents poverty in the Current Path and the Combined scenario, for 2023 and 2043.

By utilising the lower-middle-income poverty line of US\$3.65 a day (in 2017 PPP), in the Combined scenario, both the number and the proportion of poor people in Mauritania will significantly decline. Extreme poverty will be reduced such that by 2043, only about 680200 people in the country (17.9% of the population) will be living in extreme poverty. Compared to the Current Path, almost 494000 million Mauritanian people could be lifted out of poverty by 2043 in this scenario.

The Gini coefficient is the standard measure of the level of inequality in a country where a higher score depicts greater inequality while a lower score shows a more equal country. High levels of income inequality have many negative effects including a breakdown of social structure and cohesion, which can result in instability. In 2023, Mauritania's Gini coefficient was 0.32 compared to the average of 0.38 of LMICs in Africa. This makes Mauritania have a moderate level of inequality compared to LMICs in Africa.

In the Combined scenario, inequality will further reduce below the Current Path with a Gini coefficient of 0.29 by 2043 compared to 0.30 in the Current Path. This shows that an integrated development push across all the development sectors will lead to inclusive growth and development in Mauritania.

Chart 36: Life expectancy in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043

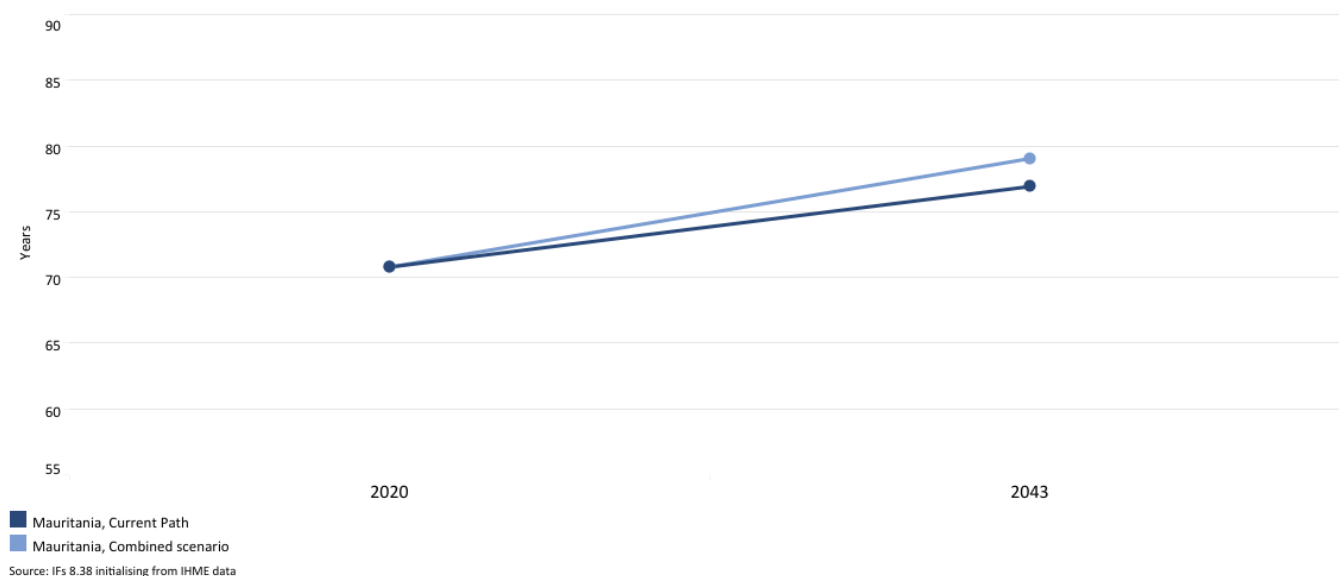
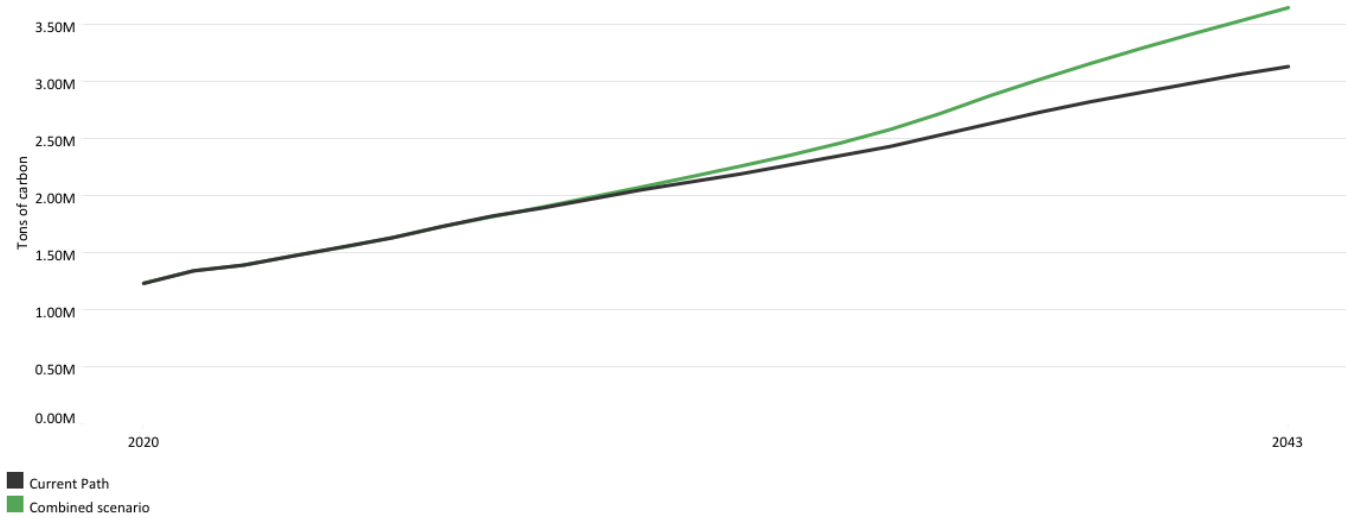


Chart 36 compares life expectancy in the Current Path with the Combined scenario from 2020 to 2043.

In the Combined scenario, life expectancy will rise to 79.1 years by 2043, 2.2 years more than the country's current trajectory for the same year. In both the Combined scenario and the Current Path, women are likely to live around 1.5 years longer than men by 2043. This situation calls for a strong commitment on the part of the Mauritanian government to improve healthcare, infrastructure, access to sanitation and food security.

**Chart 37: Carbon emissions in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043**  
 Million tons of carbon (note, not CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent)



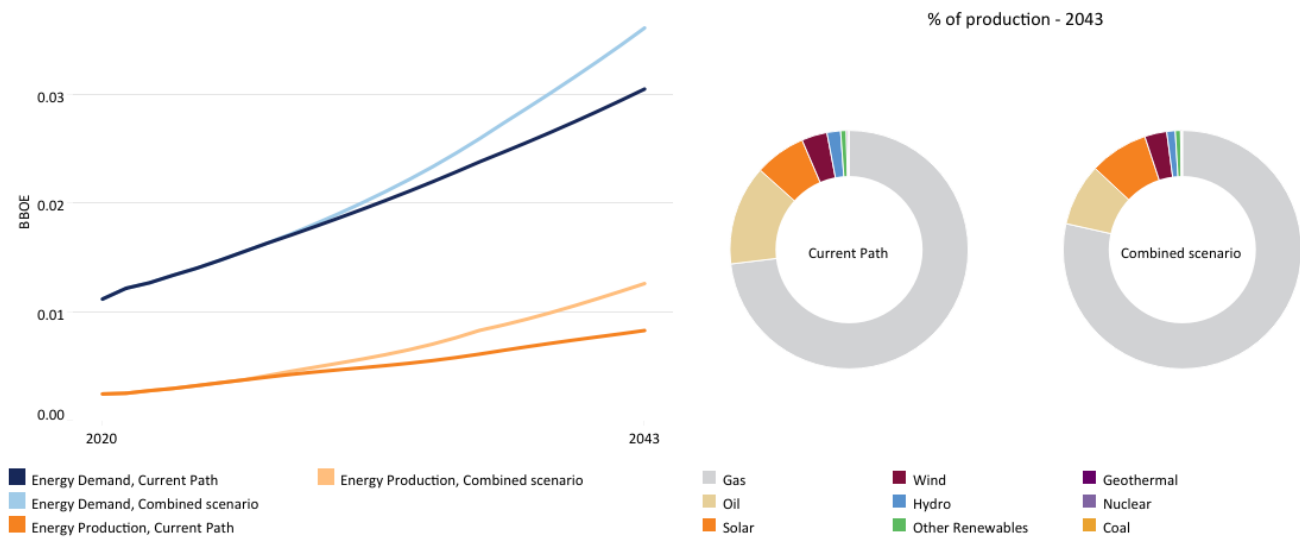
Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center data

Chart 37 compares carbon emissions in the Current Path with the Combined scenario from 2020 to 2043. Note that the data is in million tons of carbon, not CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

Like in most African countries, Mauritania’s emissions of carbon are very low. In 2023, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were 1.5 million tons, placing Mauritania in the group of low-polluting countries globally. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the country are primarily driven by the energy sector, particularly electricity and heat production. The burning of fossil fuels, including coal, oil and natural gas in power plants is a major source. Additionally, emissions from livestock, agriculture and other land use also significantly contribute to the total. In the Current Path, carbon emissions from fossil fuels will increase to 3.1 million tons by 2043.

In the Combined scenario, Mauritania’s total carbon emissions will rise to 3.6 million tons, below the average of 451.4 million tons for LMICs in Africa. This figure shows that the Combined scenario in Mauritania can be achieved. The government should accelerate public initiatives in environmental preservation through the materialisation of the use of renewable energy sources.

Chart 38: Energy demand and production by type in the Current Path and Combined scenario, 2020-2043



Source: IFs 8.38 initialising from World Energy Outlook data

Chart 38 compares energy demand and production in the Current Path with the Combined scenario from 2020 to 2043. Production is done in nine types, namely oil, gas, coal, hydro, nuclear, solar, wind, geothermal and other renewables. The data is converted into billion barrels of oil equivalent (BBOE) to allow for comparisons. Note that energy production could be for domestic use or for export.

In 2023, the total energy produced in Mauritania was equivalent to 2.9 million BOE. In the same period, total energy demand was 13.3 million BOE, leading to a 10.4 million deficit. In the Current Path, total energy demand will further outgrow production so that the demand for energy will be equivalent to 30.5 million BOE, and the total energy production will reach 7.2 million BOE by 2043. The main sources of energy in Mauritania are gas (1.9 million BOE) and oil (0.7 million BOE).

In the Combined scenario, the total energy production in Mauritania will be equivalent to 12.6 million BOE, an increase of more than 4.3 above the Current Path. Over the same period, total energy demand will be 36.4 million BOE. Gas production is expected to increase by 9.9 million BOE in the Combined scenario. Solar energy production should reach 1.0 million BOE, compared to 0.6 million BOE in the Current Path. oil production remains unchanged compared to the Current Path.

## Mauritania: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chart 39: Policy recommendations

### Recommendations

#### Specifically, policymakers in Mauritania should:

- **Strengthen resilience to climate shocks:** Implement measures to respond to climate shocks and develop adaptation strategies. This implies responsible use of natural resources, environmental protection and efficient hydrocarbon management.
- **Enhance governance and efficiency of public finances:** Implement commitments in terms of tax reform, transparent management of public finances, improved governance and political stability.
- **Invest in education and infrastructure:** Improve the education system, offer vocational training and increase research and development. Further, improve transport and communication infrastructures.
- **Diversify the economy:** Develop more sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, renewable energies and services, including livestock, natural resources and the private sector.

Chart 38 summarises the policy recommendations.

This report shows that most macroeconomic indicators for Mauritania are trending upwards over time. Yet, this growth is very much subject to the extractive sector and tends to be accompanied by inequality and poverty. The country benefits from a willingness to improve governance and a strong political commitment to implement public policies aimed at limiting the growth of the informal sector and fostering more inclusive economic growth. However, the low quality of infrastructure, governance, human capital quality, lack of access to financing, high cost of electricity, weak diversification and climate change risks hamper structural transformation.

The eight sectoral scenario interventions modeled in this report offer hope of further improving the country's macroeconomic performance. The eight sectoral scenario interventions modeled in this report offer hope of further improving the country's macroeconomic performance. They point to faster growth, higher living standards, and notable reductions in both poverty and inequality. The informal economy is expected to shrink, creating more opportunities for formal employment. Gains in health outcomes, including longer life expectancy, suggest steady improvements in human development. Meanwhile, the energy sector shows promise, with rising production and diversification that could strengthen Mauritania's future resilience.

Mauritania can seize several specific opportunities to make the most out of its economic potential:

- **Resource endowment:** Mauritania's large amount of iron, gold and gas could provide growth potential if harnessed correctly.
- **Renewables capacity:** Mauritania could be a future hub for solar and hydrogen production in the region.
- **Trade potential:** Mauritania is geographically positioned to be a hub for trade given greater integration with its neighbours.

- **A youthful population:** Mauritania's population is essentially young, with around 40% aged between 15 and 34, and a high dependency rate. This offers significant potential for economic growth and social development. Indeed, the young are a driving force for innovation, creativity and contribution to the labour market, if supported.
- **Agricultural transformation:** If the country improves agricultural efficiency, it can free up capital for domestic investment and supply stability to its economy and population.

However, Mauritanian policymakers should prioritise a holistic development strategy that integrates improvements in all eight sectors, as outlined above. Such an approach not only aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063, but also establishes a strategic framework for sustainable growth and shared prosperity in Mauritania - which also requires commitment from all levels of government and cooperation with international partners to take advantage of national and international economic opportunities for sustainable and inclusive economic development. Indeed, the Mauritanian government must implement decisive, targeted actions based on the following priority policies:

- **Strengthening resilience to climate shocks:**

It is crucial to implement measures to strengthen resilience to climate shocks and develop adaptation strategies. This implies responsible use of natural resources, environmental protection and efficient hydrocarbon management. With regard to the *responsible exploitation of natural resources*, the government should prevent the depletion of natural resources, by implementing sustainable management measures and ensuring that the benefits of exploitation are shared equitably. In terms of *efficient hydrocarbon management*, oil and gas revenues should be managed transparently, and returns invested in economic diversification and social development projects. Finally, *environmental protection* means protecting natural ecosystems and combating climate change, by adopting sustainable practices and investing in renewable energies such as solar and hydrogen, to maximise energy stability, economic growth and potential profits from energy exportation .

- **Enhanced governance and efficiency of public finances:**

Tackling corruption and improving governance and public financial management are essential to creating a more favourable environment for investment and economic development. This involves government commitments in terms of tax reform, transparent management of public finances, improved governance and political stability. The aim is to simplify the tax system and improve the efficiency of tax collection to finance development projects. The government should encourage tax compliance by rationalising the use of collected taxes and above all reinforcing communication around how they are used, by putting in place rigorous control and audit mechanisms to guarantee sound management of public finances. In addition, the government should accentuate the production of public goods via infrastructure to facilitate the operation of the country's markets and income-generating activities. Finally, the government should guarantee effective governance by improving the business climate through the reduction of corruption and a more transparent judicial system: important for reassuring and improving the confidence of both investors and citizens.

- **Investment in education and infrastructure:**

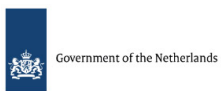
Developing human capital and modernising infrastructure are essential to sustain long-term economic growth. This involves improving the education system, vocational training and increasing research and development. Thus, improving the education system involves implementing reforms aimed at guaranteeing equitable access to quality education, and promoting the skills needed for the professions of the future - the 2020 reform is already a first step, but the government should insist on its effectiveness, especially by encouraging and insisting on its gender component. It should also facilitate and encourage the creation of and access to vocational training. In other words, it should set up training programs tailored to the needs of the job market, targeting emerging sectors - and providing the necessary infrastructure. Finally, incentives

to increase research and development should be put in place to facilitate innovation. The latter can be achieved through award shows for the best innovations and direct integration of the best innovators-necessary to boost the country's competitiveness. Added to this are improved roads, airports and communication infrastructures, particularly the digital ones, to facilitate trade and attract investment.

- **Diversifying the economy:**

It is essential to diversify Mauritania's economy by developing other sectors, such as agriculture, tourism and services. This involves developing key sectors such as livestock, natural resources and the private sector. The aim is to intensify agricultural production, develop local value chains and encourage livestock farming to improve food security and create jobs. For instance, investment in farming technology, irrigation efforts, digitisation of the sector and data driven farming decisions are needed to reduce import reliance. The country needs to exploit hydrocarbons and minerals sustainably and responsibly, ensuring that revenues are invested in development projects. Finally, creating a business-friendly environment, with clear and stable regulations, easy access to financing and access to infrastructure is important. Administrative procedures need to be simplified, facilitating access to markets and reducing red tape.

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