



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

MALAWI

Macroeconomic framework:

In the past few years Malawi's economy has been affected by natural catastrophes such as the cyclone Freddy. The African Economic Outlook from 2024 remarked that the country saw a growth of 0.9% in 2022, an ill-fated year because of this natural phenomenon that reduced the agricultural output and affected negatively to the production of electrical power. In 2023, this growth increased until reaching the 1.5%. The economy of the country is based essentially on the service sector (55% of the GDP, that has progressively captured the labourers coming from the agricultural sector (31% of the GDP). The African Economic Outlook points out two main challenges for Malawi's economy. The first one, diversifying its agriculture. The second one, fundraising in order to help the country adapt and mitigate the risks tied to climate change. Malawi's GDP in 2023 totalled 12 710 million dollars.

Debt and currency:

Malawi has a debt of 3604 million dollars. The payments of the debt service have increased in the country since year 2012. This cost item was, then, of scarcely 28 million dollars; in 2024 it amounted to 178 million dollars. The payments will ascend progressively this year and the upcoming until reaching a peak of 250 million dollars in 2028. The bulk of the debt (88%) is in hands of the multilateral creditors, with a heavy weight on two of them: the World Bank (47%) and the African Development Bank (14%). The rest of the debt (12%) is in hands of other countries, with a notable role of China (6%), followed by India (3%) an Kuwait (1%), among others.

The kwacha, Malawi's currency, has suffered various devaluations since 2022. Then, 802 kwachas made one single dollar. At the beginning of 2025, 1735 kwachas made one dollar.

Import and exports:

In Malawi, in 2023, exports totalled 922 million dollars, with a decisive weight on agricultural products. Tobacco without processing represented a 47% of the exports; tea (8%) soy and sugar complemented the framework of exportations related to the fields. Gold and wood had a less significant role. Its exports are directed towards trade associates spread over the south of the continent, like Zimbabwe (5.7%) and South Africa (5.2%). In America, the main destination for Malawi's exports was the USA (5.1%).

Imports surpassed the exports considerably and reached the 3190 million dollars in 2023. Gasoline represented more than a 18% of the total expenses, followed by chemical products, retail, cars or agricultural products (wheat and corn). The majority of these imports come from the rest of Africa and Asia. The main country of origin of these imports for Malawi was China (16.7%), followed by South Africa (16%), the United Arab Emirates (12%), India (6.9%) and Tanzania (6.74%).

Electrical power:

The production of electrical power in Malawi totalled 1.92 TWh in 2010. The main source of production as hydroelectricity, which provided more than a 91% of the total mix. In 2022, hydroelectricity still provided more than a 90% to the national electrical mix; however, the amount of power generated was slightly inferior: 1.83 TWh.

Defence:

The annual expense in defence material in Malawi added up to 122 million dollars in 2023, according to the SIPRI, a Sweden institute specialised in the trade of this kind of products. In total, this item of expenditure represents a 4% of the government expenses. South Africa has been the main provider for Malawi since year 2000.

Demography:

Malawi's population has duplicated itself between 1990 and 2023: it has gone from 9.5 millions of people to 21.1 millions in three decades. Unlike other African countries, this evolution has not been accompanied by a process of massive urbanisation: despite the increase in the amount of people living in cities, the percentage of urban population has gone from a 12% to a 18% between 1990 and 2023. Life expectancy has gone from 43 years old in 1990 to 63 years old in 2022. Half of the population has less than 20 years old.

Technological innovation:

In Malawi, almost a half of the population (46%) owns a mobile phone, according to the ICT development Index from 2023. This does not mean, however, that the Internet access is a solved problem. Despite a notable increase between 2010 and 2022, when the percentage of population using it went from a 2% to a 27%, this percentage has dropped in 2023. This drop from a 27% to a 18% is due, partly, to the struggle of the population to meet data connection payments -about 0.38 euro cents per 1GB- and to some deficiencies in digital infrastructure. In 2023, the government announced that they would attempt to make Internet connection free in public buildings to mitigate this problem, at least partially.