

the
Singapore

WAY

USE CASE

From Informal to Investable

From Informal to Investable: Local Economic Development Inspired by Singapore's Industrial Playbook

1. Context Snapshot – A Captivating Story

- City Name: Bamako
- Country: Mali
- Population: 2.8 million
- Year of Launch: 2023

In Bamako's sprawling neighborhoods, the economy thrived—but invisibly. Thousands of tailors, masons, welders, agro-processors, and informal traders powered the city's rhythm. But they had no bank accounts, no credit scores, and no pathways to scale. Their economic value was vast; their investment appeal, near zero.

Economist Dr. Mariam Doumbia, long embedded in Mali's macroeconomic strategy unit, saw the dissonance. Traditional economic policy was blind to the ingenuity humming in markets and workshops. Inspired by The Singapore Way—particularly its bold pivot from kampungs and chaos to industrial parks and global hubs—she envisioned something different: a local industrialization strategy rooted in the informal sector's genius.

She called it Investable Bamako—a plan to convert under-the-radar hustles into bankable growth engines.

2. LOCAL LEADER'S Vision Statement

"If a welder can fulfill a public tender, if a seamstress can export, then informality is not the issue—visibility is. Our economy doesn't need to be remade. It needs to be recognized and scaled."

— Dr. Mariam Doumbia

3. 10 Lessons from The Singapore Way Adapted to the City

Singapore Strategy	Local Adaptation
Industrial Parks	Launched Micro-Cluster Parks tailored for informal-sector scale
Public Investment + Private Agility	Provided shared infrastructure and tech support to cooperative firms
Talent Development	Apprenticeship-to-enterprise pipelines linked youth to local SMEs
Economic Planning with Zoning	Introduced Local Value Zones—tax-light, regulation-smart innovation corridors
State-Led Entrepreneurialism	Created Bamako Local Enterprise Agency with the mandate to de-risk micro-industries
Export Readiness	Incubators offered branding, packaging, and trade route navigation
Integrated Infrastructure	Co-located digital access points, logistics depots, and finance kiosks within parks
Transparency & Formalization	e-ID enabled small businesses to register and access services without paperwork
Balanced Growth	Gender-focused financing tools reserved 40% of micro loans for women-led ventures
Public Data Systems	Informal Economy Map updated quarterly with GPS-tagged economic activity data

4. The Local Plan

- **Name of Initiative:** Investable Bamako: Informal to Industrial
- **Objectives:**
 - Transform 5 key informal sectors into high-potential investment clusters
 - Provide infrastructure, skills, and finance within formal-lite industrial hubs
 - Shift national perception of informal work from survivalist to strategic
- **Key Design & Policy Tools:**
 - Local Enterprise Investment Zones (LEIZ)
 - Informal Sector Credit Score System (ISCSS)
 - “Earn, Learn, Formalize” policy framework

5. Implementation Framework

Phase	Activities	Duration	Stakeholders
Phase 1	Identify and digitize top 10 informal economic zones	5 months	City Planning, fintech startups
Phase 2	Launch 3 pilot Micro-Cluster Parks with 150 SMEs	6 months	Ministries of Industry & Youth, local cooperatives
Phase 3	Scale apprenticeship-financing model across 10 districts	9 months	TVET institutes, local banks
Phase 4	Export-readiness labs for high-potential microenterprises	Ongoing	Chamber of Commerce, trade attachés

6. Outcomes & Impact (18–24 Months)

- **Quantitative:**
 - 7,200 informal businesses registered via e-ID and active on the local enterprise portal
 - \$3.2 million in micro-investment deals facilitated
 - 18% increase in district-level revenue from new business linkages
- **Qualitative:**
 - A mother-daughter soapmaking duo now ships to ECOWAS markets from a solar-powered micro-park
 - Artisanal metalworkers co-designed export-ready product lines with Ghanaian firms
 - Youth apprentices now run accounting kiosks that offer services to 300+ micro-firms monthly

7. Challenges Faced & How They Were Overcome

Challenge	Solution or Mitigation
Fear of registration among informal workers	Used community influencers to build “formal-friendly” narratives
Limited collateral for loans	Introduced trade history and peer-ranking as credit metrics
Poor infrastructure in key zones	Clustered public-private investment into micro-logistics upgrades
Gender inequity in ownership	Trained women as cluster managers and offered blended finance instruments

8. LOCAL LEADER'S Reflections

“Singapore proved that strategy—not size—unlocks prosperity. Bamako’s wealth doesn’t lie ahead; it’s already here, humming in our side streets. Our job is to structure it, support it, and believe in it.”

— Dr. Mariam Doumbia