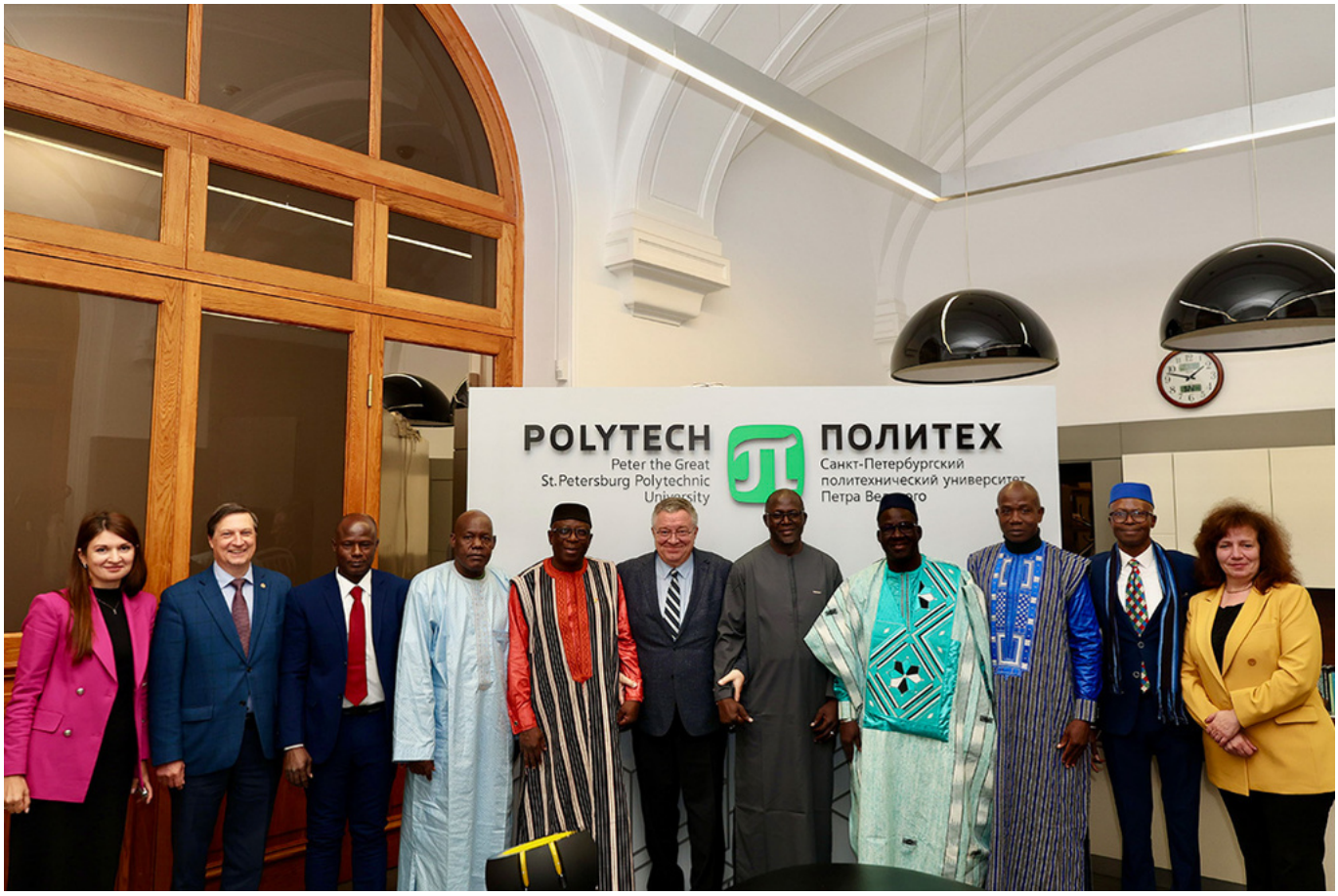
Polytech and RAFU: a new stage in the development of the concept for reforming higher education in Mali

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In 2025, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, as coordinator of the Russian-African Network University consortium, led a project to reform higher education in the Republic of Mali and develop a concept for the creation of the Bandiagara Polytechnic University.



This project was initiated in accordance with an agreement between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Mali and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. Ten leading universities participating in the RAFU have joined the project, each coordinating the development of core educational programs in one of ten areas of training that are priorities for Mali. The Polytechnic University has taken on civil engineering and ecology.

A large amount of organizational work has already been completed, expert groups have been formed for each area, and teaching and methodological complexes have been developed for more than 30 educational programs of the future Polytechnic University of Bandiagara.



A key event in this process was the visit of an official delegation from the Republic of Mali to SPbPU, which arrived as part of the Digital Research Leadership program of the RAFU Summer Multidisciplinary University. The delegation included key specialists responsible for the creation of the University of Bandiagara: Advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Mali Ousmane Mariko, Coordinator of Cooperation between Malian Universities and the Russian Federation Professor Yakuba Dao, Rector of the newly established Polytechnic University of Bandiagara Ousmane Guindo, as well as future heads and coordinators of its faculties: Salif Naban Dembele, Aboubacar Bengali, and Ali Kansai.



They held an official meeting with the rector of SPbPU and the chairman of the presidium of RAFU, Andrei Rudsky. The meeting was attended by Dmitry Arsenyev, Vice Rector for International Affairs, Marina Petrochenko, Director of the Engineering and Construction Institute, Issa Togo, Honorary Consul of Mali in St. Petersburg and Associate Professor at the ISI, and Alla Mazina, Secretary of the Presidium of the RAFU. The partners discussed strategic issues related to the reform of Mali's national education system. The Rector of SPbPU introduced his colleagues to Russian approaches to the modernization and transformation of engineering education, as well as the creation of modern university campuses.

"Polytech will provide comprehensive support in reforming higher education in the Republic of Mali. We are ready to organize retraining or advanced training for your teachers. And we will be happy to accept Malian students into our educational programs at all levels," said Andrei Ivanovich.



During their visit, the Malians underwent a short-term internship. Its theme was "Digital Technologies in Civil Engineering." This program is supervised by Polytech. The main working meeting took place at the Engineering and Construction Institute of SPbPU. It was also attended by Maxim Terekh, Deputy Director for Educational and Methodological Work, Ksenia Strelets, Director of the Center for Additional Professional Programs, Yuri Lazarev and Galina Kozinets, Directors of Higher Schools, and Mikhail Romanov, Head of International Activities.



Colleagues from Mali were introduced to the key competencies and infrastructure of the Engineering and Construction Institute. The delegation was given a tour of the advanced laboratories. The guests visited innovative sites, including the MetaCampus Polytech center, the additive technologies and 3D printing laboratory, the Vysota scientific and educational center, as well as modern laboratories for environmental monitoring, hydraulics, and innovative road construction materials. Svetlana Kalmykova, Director of the Open Education Center, familiarized her Malian colleagues with the center's activities in the implementation of e-learning and distance learning technologies and the creation of open educational resources. This allowed her to clearly demonstrate the university's practical capabilities for modernizing higher education in Mali.

The rector of the newly established Polytechnic University of Bandiagara, Ousmane Guindo, emphasized the importance of cooperation: Our university is being built in an area rich in various construction materials. In order to use them wisely and ensure environmental sustainability, we need to train highly qualified specialists. Therefore, the creation of a faculty of civil engineering and industrial engineering is extremely important for us.



As part of the same Summer Multidisciplinary University, Malian representatives visited other RAU participating universities specializing in agricultural technology, veterinary medicine, and animal husbandry—St. Petersburg State Agrarian University and St. Petersburg State University of Veterinary Medicine. Russian colleagues demonstrated their educational and scientific capabilities, which could form the basis for transforming these areas in Mali.