

Africa's first music download service launches in Senegal

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Renowned Senegalese musician Baaba Maal is among almost 200 artists who have signed agreements with "MusikBi", Africa's first home-grown platform for legal music downloads

Africa's first home-grown platform for legal music downloads launched in Senegal on Wednesday with a mission to promote African artists, pay them properly, and fight internet piracy.

Internationally famous musicians such as Youssou Ndour and Baaba Maal are among almost 200 who have signed agreements with "MusikBi", along with younger rappers, jazz artists and Christian and Muslim vocalists.

The platform draws its name from the word for [music](#) in Wolof, the language widely spoken in Senegal and neighbouring Gambia, said project developer Moustapha Diop at the launch in Dakar.

Songs cost between 300 and 500 FCFA (50-85 US cents) and users can download them using mobile phone credit in a region where few have [bank cards](#).

"It is the first platform of its kind enabling music downloads by text or PayPal," said a statement released by Diop's company, Solid.

Solid noted that many African music artists "cannot live comfortably by the proceeds of their work", adding the platform offered a chance for "promotion and to allow them to make a living from their art."

Concerts were one of the few ways local artists had to really make money, the firm noted.

Piracy and changing consumer habits have seen record sales drop across the continent, with illegal downloads tempting African consumers looking online for music while copyright enforcement remains relatively weak.

A source within the Solid group told AFP that after mobile operators took their share, [artists](#) kept 60 percent of their income from the service, while MusikBi took the remaining 40 percent.

MusikBi does not offer a streaming service as local internet speeds are

prohibitive for the format, especially in a mobile-driven market.

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