

Press Release | For immediate release

AWF sanitation project in South Africa to raise school girl attendance

Pretoria, South Africa, February 19, 2014 -The African Water Facility announced on Monday, February 16, 2015, that it is providing a €1.2-million grant to help improve school sanitation facilities in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Over 100,000 students will directly benefit from this project, which will also create business opportunities for entrepreneurs as well as employment for local youth.

The project will support local social franchise businesses to provide affordable and sustainable on-site sanitation services to about 300 schools in the Amathole and Buffalo City Municipalities in East London District.

This innovative business model will help build sanitation sector capacities through close partnership arrangements with both the municipal level partners and the local community. The social franchise model has gained the interest and endorsement from local government partners as a viable model for sanitation services.

In addition to improved sanitation facilities in schools, the project will help raise awareness of sanitation practices amongst the students, paying particular attention to the needs of girls. A menstrual hygiene management plan will be piloted in 10 of the targeted schools, where sanitary disposal bins will also be provided.

The project is poised to improve school attendance and the health of school boys and girls by setting up sanitation services and facilities tailored to their specific needs. The hygiene education and promotion for pupils and teachers included in the project has the potential to reduce cases of diarrhea by 45% in areas where there is a lack of sanitation hygiene awareness.

The safe re-use of fecal sludge for urban agriculture will be piloted through a locally developed process to address the complete sanitation service chain and improve the local environment.

Eastern Cape has one of the lowest levels of girls completing school in the country. According to a 2014 UNESCO report, one in 10 school-age African girls stays home for about 4 days every 4 weeks or drops out entirely due to the onset of menstrual cycles.

Despite reaching the Millennium Development Goal for sanitation in 2008, 28% of households in South Africa do not have improved sanitation access due to a lack of maintenance, inadequate water supply or a lack of pit emptying services. In Eastern Cape Province, 50% of the population use ordinary pit latrines.

The Water Research Commission will be the grant recipient and executing agency and will collaborate with the Eastern Cape Department of Education on the project.

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About the African Water Facility (AWF): The AWF is an initiative of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) hosted by the African Development Bank (AFDB), established in 2004 as a Special Water Fund to help African countries achieve the objectives of the Africa Water Vision 2025. The AWF offers grants from €50,000 to €5 million to support projects aligned with its mission and strategy to a wide range of institutions and organizations operating in Africa. Its three strategic priority activities are (1) preparing investment projects to mobilize investment funds for projects supported by AWF; (2) enhancing water governance to create an environment conducive for effective and sustainable investments; (3) promoting water knowledge for the preparation of viable projects and informed governance leading to effective and sustainable investments. Since 2006, AWF has funded 94 national and regional projects in 51 countries, including in Africa's most vulnerable states. It has mobilized more than €1.2 billion as a result of its project preparation activities, which constitute 70 percent of its portfolio. On average, each €1 contributed by the AWF has attracted €40 in additional follow-up investments.

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