

African Water Facility: Providing drinking water in Morocco's rural areas

Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 24 June 2016 - The African Water Facility (AWF) supports improvements in the provision of drinking water in Morocco with the approval of a EUR 815,100 grant. Close to 390,000 persons spread over 31 municipalities will benefit from this initiative, thanks to the El Borouj, Larache and Safi North West projects in the country's northern region.

Involving small- and medium-sized enterprises. Based on an outsourcing model, small- and medium-sized enterprises will get involved in drinking water supply operation and maintenance works, and the extension of rural distribution networks. *"We expect several outcomes from this project. First, drinking water services will be improved through the mobilization of the private sector which will manage rural drinking water systems in these three areas. Similarly, an operational model contract will be established and replicated in many rural areas in Morocco. This pilot project will also provide an opportunity to learn lessons for many African countries where the maintenance of water supply systems in rural areas is problematic. We are expecting the creation of 230 jobs during the period of the three contracts, with 2,500 following the replication of the model in a dozen other areas,"* Mohamed El Azizi, Head of the African Water Facility, said.

Improving living conditions and hygiene. Women and girls, usually responsible for fetching water, will devote more time to educational or income-generating activities. Households in the municipalities and douars will, in turn, be able to notice better living conditions, health and wellness, with a reduction in infant mortality rates and increased access to education. Later, through the preparation of new projects in a dozen other Moroccan regions, about two million people living in rural areas will also benefit from this new comfort.

Partners. To finance this project, the AWF will award a EUR 815,100 grant. Other partners such as the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI) or the Support Fund for African Private Sector Assistance (FAPA) will respectively provide EUR 530,000 and EUR 355,780. The Morocco National Electricity and Water Utility Company (ONEE), the project executing agency, will make an in-kind contribution of EUR 1,252,900. The project duration is estimated at 50 months.

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About the African Water Facility (AWF) AWF is an initiative of the Council of African Ministers of Water (AMCOW), hosted and managed by the African Development Bank (ADB). Founded in 2004 as a Special Fund, it intends to help African countries achieve the goals set by the African Water Vision 2025. The AWF provides grants ranging from EUR 50,000 to EUR 5 million, to a wide range of organizations and institutions operating in Africa to support projects that fit its mission and strategy. Its three strategic activities are: 1) preparing investment projects to raise funds for AWF-supported projects; 2) strengthening water governance to create an environment for efficient and sustainable investment; 3) promoting knowledge in the water sector for the preparation of viable projects and informed governance, leading to efficient and sustainable investments. Since 2006, the AWF has funded a total of 98 national and regional projects in 52 countries, including most vulnerable states in Africa. Since then, the AWF has mobilized more than € 1.4 billion as a result of its project preparation activities, which constitute 70% of its portfolio. On average, each euro invested by the AWF has attracted 35 euros of additional investment. The AWF is fully funded by Algeria, Australia, Austria, Burkina Faso, Canada, the European Commission, Denmark, Spain, France, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Nordic Fund development, Norway, the United Kingdom, Senegal, Sweden, and the African development Bank. The AWF is governed by a board of external management representing 16 donors, UN-Water Africa, the African Union through NEPAD, AMCOW and AfDB