

African Water Facility: Developing rainwater to reduce poverty and tackle drought in Cameroon

Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 21 July 2016 – The African Water Facility (AWF) grants 1.3 million Euros to Cameroon to finance a study on the mobilization and use of rainwater in the northern part of the country. The project will address the concerns of two million inhabitants of the region: food security, employment, increased revenue, effects of climate change...

A vulnerable area. The northern region of Cameroon records an average annual rainfall ranging between 500 and 1,200 millimeters per year. This water scarcity is a limiting factor in the development of crop, animal and fish production. The area is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The decline in rainfall mainly affects agro-forestry-pastoral activities, farmers' and people's food security. Accessing multipurpose water facilities is a pressing challenge. Sometimes, one needs to travel many kilometers to find a water supply source. Farming practices, especially for the irrigation of crops and water for livestock, encounter serious difficulties to which producers have not hitherto found satisfactory solutions.

A national priority. The study will develop hillside reservoir facilities and associated hydro-agricultural developments to better meet the water requirement of people, agriculture and livestock. The infrastructure will help tackle floods and preserve ecosystems in a sustainable way. For Cameroon, the project is a national priority, with great expectations for the rural populations of the northern region.

A participatory approach. "We are going to assess the mobilization and development of rainwater by conducting preliminary technical studies for hillside reservoirs in a maximum of 15 sites. We will also conduct preliminary and detailed project design feasibility studies on a number of sites. These studies will be accompanied by the relevant set of bidding documents as well as the environmental and social impact assessment. The stakeholders involved will be consulted throughout the process", says Jean-Michel Ossete, AWF Acting Coordinator.

Partners. The total cost of the project is Euro 1,413,143 out of which EUR 1,299,848 is funded by the AWF (92%) and EUR 113,295 contributed by the Government of Cameroon (8%). The process is expected to last for 19 months and will lead to a resource mobilisation round table meeting for the physical infrastructure, under the auspices of the Ministry of Water and Energy.

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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 98 national and regional projects in 52 countries, including in Africa's most vulnerable states. It has mobilized more than €1.4 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 €35 in additional follow-up investments**. The AWF is entirely funded by Algeria, Australia, Austria, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Burkina Faso, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, France, the Nordic Development Fund, Norway, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the African Development Bank. The AWF is governed by a Governing Council representing its 16 donors, UN-Water Africa, the AU via NEPAD, AMCOW and the AfDB.