

Press Release | *For immediate release*

€1.2 billion in follow-on projects leveraged by the African Water Facility

Tunis, Tunisia, December 4, 2014 – The African Water Facility (AWF), an initiative of the African Ministers' Council on water, has attracted €1.2 billion of follow-on investments for water management projects pledged by donors. “This is a major achievement for AWF's 10th anniversary,” said Akissa Bahri, the Coordinator of the AWF. The announcement was made during the 14th Governing Council Meeting, held from November 28-29 in Tunis, Tunisia.

The Chair of the AWF Governing Council, Sarah Reng Ochekepe, Minister of Water Resources of Nigeria, commended the AWF for this achievement. “The AWF provides an unparalleled opportunity to address the critical gaps that African countries face in the provision of water and sanitation to many needy people,” she said.

The meeting brought together over 34 stakeholders and observers, including African Development Bank (AfDB) and AMCOW representatives, representatives from all AWF donors, Water Ministers from two countries and the Principle Secretaries of the Water Ministries of two more countries.

Participants discussed AWF enhanced investment leverage performance, various initiatives taken to mainstream climate change resilience in AWF operations, the addition of a greater number of innovative sanitation projects in AWF's portfolio, and the improvement of private sector participation through the inclusion of social business ventures in project design. The AWF also highlighted its strategic focus on gender issues, agricultural water management and its work in fragile states.

Representing the AfDB on the Council, Aly Abou-Sabaa, Operations Vice-President for Agriculture, Water, Human Development, Governance and Natural Resources, noted that the AWF had “developed into an effective vehicle for water security and green development and a successful financial leveraging instrument”. He also added that “its contribution to the development and management of water resources in Africa is well recognized.”

Over the past 10 years, the AWF, which is hosted by the AfDB, achieved a leverage ratio whereby each €1 contributed by the AWF has on average attracted a further €40 in additional investment in the water sector in Africa.

AWF completed projects will benefit an estimated 3.2 million people with access to improved sanitation facilities and over 2.8 million people with access to improved drinking water sources.

Several projects were showcased and presented the role of the AWF in promoting innovations, as well AWF's outcomes, impacts and benefits to target populations:

- A waterway feasibility study in Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia demonstrated the possibilities of a shipping route on the Shire and Zambezi rivers;
- An irrigation project in Swaziland has impacted a community of almost 20,000 people through integrating stakeholders, especially local smallholders into the evolution of the project;

- A stormwater drainage and solid waste management systems feasibility study in Burkina Faso led to 44 kilometres of road being asphalted and equipped with storm drainage structures and also lead to the construction of 20 garbage collection centers;
- An integrated watershed management project in Kenya has helped increase the capacity of farming communities to monitor and manage their watersheds, and;
- A water supply and development plan for the Seychelles will help overcome water shortages on the islands.

On the future outlook of the AWF, the Council noted the positive responses to the recently closed Call for Proposals for climate-smart water projects. The Council looked forward to the AWF contributing to meeting climate needs and building climate change resilience in Africa.

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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.

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.

