



# AFRICAN WATER FACILITY: AGENTS OF CHANGE

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AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP  
GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE  
DE DEVELOPPEMENT

## MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR



What is the connection between water and sanitation? Both are essential to survival and are fundamental rights of all people. In Africa, these precious resources remain crucial to sustenance and to improving social and human development, and we are proud to work with African countries to ensure their availability, accessibility, and sustainability.

Two weeks ago, we met in Paris for our second funding dialogue since the Facility's inception. Together with stakeholders, comprising donors, partners, and representatives of multilateral and international institutions, we explored innovative approaches to financing access to water and sanitation in Africa. From the meeting, it was clear that there is an appreciation for the increasing demand for these resources on the continent, and the need for a joint commitment to deploy more investments and technical expertise as a response.

It was also apparent that we cannot continue to do business as usual, and that, to accelerate the universal change that we seek, we must function as a community of likeminded people, driven by the same mission and with a unified approach to tackling the water and sanitation crisis on the continent.

At the African Water Facility, the vision is clear, and our goal is simple: improved quality of life for urban and rural communities in Africa. We do this through the deployment of financial resources, provision of technical expertise, and water governance.

An Africa where there is equitable management and development of water resources for poverty alleviation, socioeconomic development, regional cooperation, climate resilience and environmental protection, and where there is universal access to safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene services is possible. With the strong support of our donors and partners, and the cooperation of regional economic communities, we will continue to serve as a unified agent of change in Africa's water and sanitation sector.

**Mchera Johannes Chirwa**  
Coordinator, African Water Facility

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR 2023 FUNDING DIALOGUE



Donors, partners, and representatives of multilateral and international organisations joined the African Water Facility on 12 and 13 October 2023 at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) building in Paris to discuss innovative approaches to financing water and sanitation in Africa.

Dr Beth Dunford, African Development Bank Vice President and head of delegation, emphasised water's immense importance in enabling social and human development in Africa. She implored participants to continue their financial and technical support for the African Water Facility, which is uniquely positioned to prepare water and sanitation projects in Africa, where the water sector is threatened by elevated levels of inflation, political instability, and climate change variability. She called for a concerted effort to explore alternative options to leverage financing to support the water sector.

H.E Carl-Hermann Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform in Namibia, and Chair of the African Water Facility's Governing Council, said that the situation in Africa, where almost four hundred million people are without access to clean water and sanitation, is a challenge that requires a unified response. African countries are suffering the effects of global climate change and need more innovative solutions to create an enabling environment for water and sanitation development.

Participants further reinforced the importance of special funds like the African Water Facility, noting the Facility's uniqueness in particular, and recommitted their support to it as the agent of change for water and sanitation in Africa.

Donors such as USAID, the Nordic Development Fund, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation made commitments and pledges to the Facility in core funding, technical expertise, development of the Facility's upcoming strategy (2025–2030), support towards resource mobilization activities, and initial funding for the Africa Urban Sanitation Investment Initiative.

Their backing and commitments will enable the African Water Facility to continue to support African countries in meeting the water and sanitation needs on the continent well into the future.

## WORLD FOOD DAY 2023: FOOD SECURITY CANNOT HAPPEN WITHOUT WATER SECURITY

**Diane Arjoon, Principal Rural Water Security Officer, African Water Facility**



Without water security, the attainment of food security is nearly impossible.

In Africa, food security requires a large quantity of good quality water for growing crops, raising livestock, and for post-harvest production. Currently, although about 59% of total water withdrawals in Africa are from the agricultural sector, there is still an overall dependence on rain-fed crop production that partly accounts for the limited agricultural productivity across the continent, particularly in the rural arid and semiarid areas. Yet, there is enormous potential to scale up irrigation in sub-Saharan Africa for increased crop yields and to strengthen resilience to climate shocks.

While irrigation can potentially boost agricultural productivity by at least 50%, only about 8% of the cultivated area in Africa is equipped for irrigation. With Africa's total population projected to reach nearly 2.5 billion by 2050 (up from 1.34 billion in 2020), in coming years, the significant population growth will have knock-on effects such as increasing the need for a secure food supply.

At the same time, heavy dependence on water in other sectors, particularly in the WASH sector and for the health of ecosystems, will increase competition for this resource and intensify its physical scarcity and quality.

The main threats to the agricultural sector in Africa are from the effects of a changing climate, including more and longer droughts, a higher frequency of climate-induced disasters and extreme weather events, and accelerating desertification. Africa's dependence on rain-fed agriculture leaves it extremely vulnerable to droughts. The continent is the second-driest with about 45% of its land already impacted by desertification, and 55% at very high risk of further desertification. Storms and floods are damaging agriculture-dependent ecosystems. Climate change also has an impact on the temporal and spatial availability of water over the continent, resulting in growing conditions that vary from year to year.

Attaining food security, then, requires thoughtful decision-making in the development and management of water resources. Solutions to increase the amount and availability of good quality water—including the management of rainwater capture and storage, existing water sources, artificial groundwater recharge, and water treatment—need to be developed and implemented.

Over the last 17 years, the African Water Facility has supported 135 bankable water and sanitation projects across Africa, the majority with multipurpose uses that have created an additional 512,345 hectares of irrigated land and 6,402,000 m3 of water storage capacity, benefiting and ensuring food security to over 421,898 farmer households.

The Facility's 2023 call for proposals has also generated a robust and attractive rolling pipeline of 80 projects, with a preparation cost of EUR 213 million, and the potential to impact 625 million people. Some of these projects are multipurpose, and they aim to increase access to food production from irrigated agriculture with integrated water resources management measures.

## OUR 2023 CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION INTO THE PROJECT PIPELINE

As part of our revised strategy—and in support of the Africa Water Vision 2025, the African Union Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement for climate action and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—in April 2023, the African Water Facility invited eligible applicants to submit proposals and concept notes for high-impact, transformative, catalytic, and climate adaptation projects addressing:

1. Water supply and sanitation (urban and rural)
2. Urban master planning (water supply, sanitation and so on)
3. Urban citywide inclusive sanitation
4. Climate change adaptation and ecosystem management
5. Solid waste and faecal sludge management
6. Multipurpose (water, hydropower, irrigation, and ecosystem management)
7. Transboundary/basin-level integrated water investment planning and governance.

**416**  
proposals

**€ 1.14 billion**  
project preparation value

**80**  
projects selected

In response to this call, we received 416 proposals with a total project preparation value of EUR 1.14 billion. Of the proposals submitted, 80 projects were selected into the African Water Facility rolling project pipeline, with a total project preparation cost of EUR 300 million.

In order to ensure equity in regional and country representation, projects in disadvantaged areas, such as Central Africa and Island and Horn of Africa states, were given careful consideration. The selection process sought to ensure that relevant factors and issues (including geographical/regional, sector, strategic pillar, urban and rural, water and sanitation, national and multinational) were fairly addressed, and that the investments were balanced.

The overwhelming response to the call for proposals indicates the significant demand for water and sanitation across the continent and the crucial need for financing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AfricaSan7

The 7th Africa Sanitation Conference (AfricaSan7), organised by the African Ministers' Council on Water, will be held from 6 to 11 November in Swakopmund, Namibia. The conference will feature sector dialogues, plenary sessions, ministerial dialogues, thematic sessions, awards and exhibitions under the theme "Strengthening Systems and Partnerships for Accelerated Action on Safely Managed Sanitation and Hygiene".



The African Development Bank and the African Water Facility will host a booth to showcase sanitation solutions across the continent, lead the conference theme of Innovative Financing and Resource Mobilization, and participate in the conference's sessions.

For more information visit: [7th Africa Sanitation Conference](#)

### 2023 Governing Council

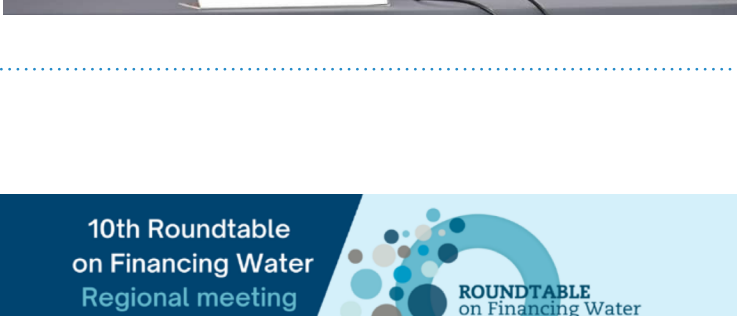
The African Water Facility will hold its annual Governing Council meeting on 8–9 November in Swakopmund, Namibia. At this meeting, the Facility will engage its Governing Councils on its work and strategy in support of water and sanitation in African countries.



The Governing Council decides the general policy direction of the African Water Facility. It is made up of 13 members appointed by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), Donors, the African Development Bank, the African Union, and UN-Water/Africa.

### 10th Roundtable on Financing Water

The Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) and the African Development Bank will co-convene the 10th Roundtable on Financing Water, in partnership with the government of the Netherlands, the World Water Council and the World Bank. The regional meeting, with a focus on Africa, will be held from 22 to 23 November, and is part of the international agenda on water, contributing to the debate on financing global public goods.



Representatives and leaders from the water and finance communities will gather in Abidjan to discuss and promote new approaches and impactful ways of financing water-related investment in Africa.

For more information visit: [OECD Roundtable on Financing Water](#)

## ABOUT US

The African Water Facility is a unique continental accelerator mobilising financial resources and providing technical assistance to enable governments to invest in water and sanitation service delivery. It is the continent's only dedicated project preparation facility for climate-resilient water and sanitation projects, and an initiative of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW). It is hosted by the African Development Bank.

## FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS



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