

World Water Day: Commission launches €40 million to improve access to water in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific

To mark World Water Day on 22 March, whose focus is "Water for Cities – Responding to the Urban Challenge", the EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs announces the launch of a pooling mechanism in the framework of the ACP-EU Water Facility. €40 million are available under this mechanism, which has been created to blend grants from the European Development Fund (EDF) with loans from the EU multilateral and bilateral finance institutions to finance projects for access to water and sanitation services in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This financial instrument should increase the leverage effect of the financial aid and will trigger private sector participation. It will also contribute to EU support to Developing countries' efforts to reach the MDG for drinking water and sanitation.

EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs made the following statement:

"For billions of people worldwide, access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation is still a matter of life and death. The "urban theme" of World Water Day 2011 is particularly accurate, because rapid population growth in cities in the developing world is putting additional pressure on infrastructure and services. In the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community pledged to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for billions more. Since then, we have made substantial headway. But there must be absolutely no let-up in our efforts to meet these goals. That is why the EU presented the MDG Initiative last year. It will provide an extra €1 billion for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and has a focus on those MDGs that are most off-track, including water and sanitation.

The management of water resources affects all sectors that are important for inclusive growth and sustainable development, such as energy generation, agriculture, food security, and the environment. We will therefore prioritise sustainable water management in our future development policy".

The EU Water Initiative and "ACP-EU Water Facility"

To respond to the need for increased focus on water in development policies, the EU launched the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) in 2002. It is a political initiative that seeks to assist partner countries in the development and implementation of policies and strategies for the water and sanitation sector. In that framework, the EU and the ACP countries launched the ACP-EU Water Facility in 2004 with €700 million devoted to projects for the period 2005-2013.

European Commission funding and results

Since 2004, more than 32 million people have gained access to improved water supply and 9.5 million to sanitation facilities thanks to support from the European Commission. Since 2002, EU support to water-related issues amounts to €1.2 billion. The Neighbourhood Investment Facility and the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership also contribute to fund water-related programmes.

Background

According to the MDGs, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water should be halved by 2015, starting from a reference point of 23% in 1990. The world is currently on track to achieve and even exceed this, having reached 13% in 2008. But nearly 900 million people still do not have access to safe drinking water. 330 million of these live in sub-Saharan Africa. The MDGs also state that the number of people without access to sanitation should be halved. The world is off track on this.

More info:

Website of Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm

Website of EuropeAid Development and Cooperation DG:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of the EU Water Initiative: <http://www.euwi.net/>

Website of the ACP-EU Water Facility:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/water/index_en.htm

EU-UNICEF website with information on water and sanitation:
<http://www.unicef.org/ec/index.html>

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Annexes:

Examples of EU assistance to urban projects

Maputo Water Supply Project

Maputo is the capital and the largest city of Mozambique, its wider area counts a population of 1.8 million. The project (Commission contribution: €25 million, total of EU contribution in grants and loans: €66.1 million) aims at improving water supply services in the greater Maputo area by supporting the continuing development and rehabilitation of the city's water supply system. This will meet increasing water demand and broaden service coverage, from 670,000 to 1,500,000 people.

The project will expand water production capacity from 4000 to 10.000 m³/hour, increase daily time of supply from 4 to 20 hours, reduce unaccounted-for water from 62% to 40% and increase network coverage towards peri-urban areas: from 1125 km to 1627 km of installed network.

Support of Civil Society Initiatives to Strengthen the Water and Sanitation Sector in Cap-Haitien

This project (Commission contribution: €3 million) aims at increasing the water flow in the town of Cap-Haitien (Haiti), provide drinking water and sewerage services for the inhabitants most in need and improve the institutional capacity of the water sector.

Larger Cap-Haitien has a growing population of currently 500,000 people. Poor drinking water supply and sanitation services have a major impact on public health and the quality of life of residents.

The project will rehabilitate a gravity system that will provide potable water to 3,000 people. A new pumping station with a production capacity of 35l/sec will be installed, together with a new water network to serve more than 100,000 people. 42 communal toilets will be constructed, to serve residents in poor neighbourhoods. Four micro enterprises will be established for waste collection, providing services to 3,500 households. The project further involves the elaboration of a strategic plan for the water and sanitation sector of the city.