
Morocco: Improved Water Resources Management in the Urban and Industrial Sectors

Operating Unit: USAID/Morocco

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Keywords: Morocco; sanitation; wastewater treatment.

Related Strategic Objective:

SO 2: Improved water resources management in the agricultural, urban, and industrial sectors.

The Morocco Urban Infrastructure, Land Development and Financing Program aimed at increasing the capability of the National Shelter Upgrading Agency to improve shelter conditions in Moroccan cities. It also helped the *Fonds d'Equipement Communal* (FEC, a municipal finance institution), and selected municipalities to upgrade substandard neighborhoods, provide off-site infrastructure, carry out technical studies and improve the provision of environmental services.

As a result of this activity:

- Over 150,000 below-median income households now have water and sanitation, in more than 38 municipalities in Morocco over the LOP 1995-1999.
- New environmentally and financially sustainable planning methodologies are now being implemented by both targeted local and central level government agencies. Most notably, these methodologies include participatory planning mechanisms.
- In response to current decentralization initiatives, local municipalities have enhanced capacity for management of their financial accounts, public capital assets, local taxes and other revenue sources. The central level authorities accepted the lessons learned through this process, which have positively influenced the drafting of new legislation for local government. USAID's assistance attracted the interest of target municipalities that participated in training and workshops. Many municipalities that received minimal technical assistance are now continuing such activities using their own resources.
- Target municipalities are implementing waste management projects, often through combined credit aid TA programs, new institutional arrangements and business techniques. Moreover, municipalities without adequate technical capacity were provided assistance ranging from the establishment of design parameters and development of bid documents, to the development of partnership agreements with regional and local government service providers. Other municipalities were provided assistance, when deemed appropriate for the privatization of certain municipal services.
- The integrated and participative approach that was used through demonstration projects in selected municipalities shows the benefits as well as the value of integrating all stakeholders, including neighborhood associations into the decision-making process. Different actors—local government, parastatal agencies, local governments, and local associations—were able to bring some support to the process, leading to improved living

conditions for citizens. The associations were fully integrated into the decision-making process through agreements and implementation of pilot projects.

- One selected municipality is using new urban service technology adapted to Morocco in the liquid waste field (high-algal liquid waste treatment system), and serves as a demonstration activity. USAID is working closely with DGCL/DEA (Directorate of Water and Sanitation) and DEL (Directorate of Local Finance) at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), which participate actively as co-sponsors of several liquid and solid waste activities, municipal financial management workshops, and manuals. Moroccan counterparts have already started to disseminate these technologies beyond USAID's target municipalities. The process of dissemination is now assisted through the introduction of Morocco's first municipal services internet website that USAID supported.
- The first securitization law was drafted and enacted, allowing the first bank in the housing sector to issue mortgage-backed securities in Morocco.

The long-term implications of these major efforts will be to enhance the credibility and the stature of local government elected officials and their permanent technical staff, who will bear the burden over the coming decades of improving the quality of life in Morocco's ever-burgeoning cities. Without a continued effort to increase local technical, financial, and policy implementation capabilities, the Government's sound policy of decentralization runs a high risk of failure. The drive to increase local responsibility and capability has strong support from USAID's counterparts, both at the central and the local levels.