

Press Release

For immediate release

African Water Facility Promotes Safe Sanitation, Hygiene Education for Urban Poor in Monrovia, Liberia

Tunis, 12 February 2013– The African Water Facility (AWF) offers a € 1.2 million grant to the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) to support a project aimed at increasing access to sustainable and affordable sanitation and hygiene services to over 800,000 urban slum dwellers in Monrovia, Liberia.

This will be the first initiative by the Government to provide fecal sludge management services to unsewered poor areas of Liberia since the end of the civil war in 2003. The long-standing conflict put infrastructure maintenance and development to a halt, particularly in the area of water and sanitation, which led to a drop in access rates; a situation that continues to deteriorate in the unsewered informal settlements of Monrovia city, where 70 per cent of the city's population live.

Through a community driven approach, the project will seek to enhance capacity for sustainable city-wide fecal sludge management. This will complement efforts by the Government of Liberia and development partners to improve service access rates and reduce the vulnerability of the urban poor to diseases caused by water contamination resulting from open defecation and septic tank overflows. It is also expected to build donor confidence in Liberia.

The AWF grant will cover 86 per cent of the cost involved in the implementation of an effective, efficient and sustainable fecal sludge management system, which will include the construction and rehabilitation of sanitation infrastructure, as well as the production of affordable crop fertilizer from the fecal sludge collected from the tanks.

“We feel privileged to be given the opportunity to revive the water and sanitation sector in parts of Monrovia, and excited to be involved in a project designed to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable citizens” said Akissa Bahri, Coordinator, African Water Facility. *“This is a smart project with a slew of all-round benefits bound to restore people's health and dignity, boost the communities' economic growth and enhance food security.”*

Some distinct features of the project comprise:

- the promotion of community-based enterprises and management teams to build local ownership;
- the involvement of local artisans for building the required septic tanks, as a way to create local employment ;
- the use of a Public-Private-Partnership model for operating and maintaining the vehicles needed for emptying the tanks, to ensure service coverage in areas otherwise disregarded by the private sector; and
- the provision of technical assistance for devising an effective marketing and sales strategy to kick off the sale of fecal sludge fertilizer, to ensure a successful pitch to local farmers and boost sales.

It is hoped that the project will be scaled up to cover the entire unsewered areas of Monrovia, and replicated in other urban areas throughout Liberia.

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 73 national and regional projects in 50 countries, including in Africa's most vulnerable states. It has mobilized more than €532 million as a

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result of its project preparation activities, which constitute 70 percent of its portfolio. On average, **each €1 contributed by the AWF has attracted €20** 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, Norway, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the African Development Bank. The AWF is governed by a Governing Council representing its 15 donors, UN-Water Africa, the AU via NEPAD, AMCOW and the AfDB.

For more information: www.africanwaterfacility.org