



## AFD Group and **the Gambia**



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**9 projects**  
financed since 2018

**€51.9 million**  
committed since 2018

**540,000**  
million people will benefit from  
improved access to drinking  
water

The Republic of the Gambia is the smallest country of continental Africa and one of the priority countries for French development assistance. The country carries a heavy public debt as well as many challenges in infrastructure and services. AFD is helping guide the Gambian Government in its goals of economic stabilization, food security, local sustainable development, and preservation of biodiversity.

# OUR ACTION IN the Gambia

AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT | THE GAMBIA

1

## *Contributing to economic stabilization*

The Gambian authorities have adopted a reform agenda in conjunction with the IMF. Its aim is to stabilize the country's economy, restore public confidence in the Government, and bolster democratic institutions.

AFD has supported the reform process with budget support, which was initially €5 million in 2018 and then €2 million in 2019. This assistance serves to ensure a transition towards a new IMF program, by helping launch audits of public enterprises and by proposing technical guidance in future negotiations with the Gambia's main external creditors. It is also intended to help cover healthcare spending.

In addition, AFD provided a grant of €2 million in 2022 to help guide the Government in the use of its domestic resources. This project, implemented by the Gambia Revenue Authority, provides support for the Government's tax reform plan, which seeks to increase the percentage of domestic resources from 12.8% (2019) to 15.7% of GDP by 2025. This funding is in line with the Government's stated goal of financing its national development plan.

3

## *Improving access to drinking water*

The Gambia's sharp demographic growth and rapid urbanization have led to severe hydraulic stress in the capital, Banjul, which regularly suffers serious water shortages. Access to drinking water faces a number of challenges: increasing demand, poor infrastructure, low level of revenue generated by the sector, and lack of structure in the urban waterworks subsector. As a result, access to drinking water is a major social, economic, and political issue in Banjul and in the Gambia as a whole.

Given this context and its experience in the urban waterworks sector in West Africa, AFD is focusing its assistance on the drinking-water sector in the greater Banjul area. Its objectives are to improve access to drinking water and the quality of service at NAWEC (the Gambia's National Water and Electricity Company), restore financial equilibrium to the sector, and help guide NAWEC in development planning for water and sanitation in the greater Banjul area. This €29-million project is part of the Gambia's climate strategy, which focuses on the sustainable management of water resources.

2

## *Increasing food self-sufficiency*

A major challenge for nutrition and food security in the Gambia is the agricultural sector: its production covers less than half of the country's consumption needs, and 73.9% of the rural population lives below the poverty line. Annual consumption of white rice, the basic foodstuff, is 117 kg per year per capita.

However, only 17% of annual consumption is produced locally. To improve food security and increase rice production, AFD is supporting a project to build and restore hydro-agricultural infrastructure in the eastern part of the country (Upper River Region), via co-financing of €7 million. This project, called "ROOTS" (Resilience of Organisations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture) is being implemented with support from four financial institutions, including IFAD as leader. ROOTS aims to reach 40,000 farming households. It's also promoting the gradual development of a more entrepreneurial agriculture that's inclusive for young people and women. For example, the project provides capacity building for farmer collectives, both male and female.

4

## *Protecting biodiversity and combating climate change*

The Gambia is home to significant coastal and fluvial biodiversity, especially in its mangrove ecosystems on the Atlantic coast and in the Gambia River estuary. These ecosystems play a major role not only ecologically but also economically and socially for the 1 million residents there who depend on them. However, these areas are subject to increasing pressure, mainly from human activity and climate change, which are producing adverse environmental, economic, and social consequences.

To preserve the country's natural capital, AFD is supporting the Gambia through a grant of €7 million to support it in the preservation and restoration of mangrove ecosystems in its marine protected areas. This project is promoting the development of income-generating activities in the 100,000-hectare area it covers, and it's bolstering the legal framework and the capacities of the Gambian authorities so that they can better deal with climate change. Ultimately, the project will lead to a clear strategic and technical approach to strengthening the resilience of coastal communities and natural ecosystems.

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