

# Water and Sanitation Programme

## Water, sanitation and hygiene for better health

### Increasing the availability of clean water and improving hygiene practices

Cholera epidemics, which regularly appear in urban centers near Lake Tanganyika, the high number of children diagnosed with diarrhea by health centers and the malnutrition of more than half of Burundian children are emblematic for the state of the water, sanitation and hygiene sector in this small country, which is densely populated and one of the poorest. It is marked by a lack of clean water in sufficient quantity at the household level, the use of precarious sanitation facilities and poor hygiene behavior.

Burundi is rich in water resources and has more than 30,000 sources. However, the infrastructure to exploit and distribute water to the population is inadequate or in poor condition, because the providers of drinking water do not have the funding necessary for its maintenance and enlargement. In addition, the high pressure on land causes that microbes pollute a quarter of the sources. This pollution worsens during transportation and storage of water. Water stored in households for consumption shows contamination with microbes in ¾ cases.

Increasing the availability of clean water and improving hygiene practices are key to reducing water-related diseases as well as malnutrition.

### Following the principles of the Water Law

The principles of the Water Law and the Pro-Poor Strategy, which the water sector in Burundi adopted in 2013 with the support of the project, form the basis of PROSECEAU's approach. Its principles remain in force despite a political crisis followed by the partial suspension of the German Cooperation in 2015.

The principle of subsidiarity is an example. Guided by this principle, PROSECEAU supports local authorities to make

decisions regarding the investments to be made and the way in which hydraulic infrastructures are operated.

In recognition that water is an economic good and aiming at the sustainability of water services, the project strengthens the commercial management of drinking water service providers. The goal is that a provider's revenues cover at least the costs of operating and maintaining the infrastructure.

Project name	Water and Sanitation Programme (PROSECEAU)
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Project region	Urban centers of Burundi and the provinces of Rumonge, Bururi et Mwaro
Implemented by	GIZ
Duration	01/2018 – 12/2020 (phase IV)

Improving drinking water services for low-income families is particularly important. The program focuses on the provision of drinking water through public standpipes, which serve households not connected to the water network.

Establishing catchment protection zones is not the only measure of the program to improve water quality. In order to avoid contamination of drinking water during storage and to improve household hygiene in general, the project develops behavior change communication and promotes the construction of adequate latrines.

### The benefits

The state-owned REGIDESO water and electricity utility has doubled the number of (peri)urban households connected to its drinking water network as well as the number of people served by a public standpipe since the beginning of the program in 2009. This corresponds to 400,000 additional people



L. to r.:  
Public standpipes in rural areas  
A protected spring catchment

served. Better commercial management, which has increased revenues and reduced certain costs, allows for continued growth in the supply of drinking water. Today 82% of households' drinking water bills are paid. In addition, eliminating irrecoverable debts and cleaning the stock of unusable equipment reduced unnecessary tax payments.

The path is even longer to improve the availability of drinking water in rural areas. A first reform resulted in the delegation of drinking water services to user associations in three quarters of the country's municipalities. In the accompanied municipalities, the recovery of drinking water charges has doubled, but remains too low to ensure the maintenance of infrastructure. Realizing the weaknesses, the actors involved have recently agreed to proceed to a more profound reform.

156 000 inhabitants – equivalent to 30% of the users of tapped springs and standpipes in the provinces of Rumonge and Bururi - use one of the 126 protected catchments which previously produced water of a bad quality.

The Ministry of Health has made the latrine model developed by the project a standard for the country. A low-cost, agro-ecological latrine improves the sanitary conditions of the poorest households while providing support for their agricultural production. 1,700 households built such a latrine, and 2,500 households targeted by hygiene measures improved their drinking water storage and hand-washing practices in a pilot phase.

Preparations are underway for scaling up latrine and hygiene promotion through training of masons, a micro-credit system for latrine construction and behavior change communication.

## Success factors

Within the project's system of co-operation, technical services, local authorities and non-governmental organizations join their efforts to achieve common objectives. This participation of Burundian partners from the planning of the interventions, which follows a simple and robust logic, to the monitoring of the results is the base for the strong commitment of all partners and key for the success of the project.

Thanks to the high level of ownership by the public partners, the project was able to create a strategic and legal framework before the partial suspension of the German Cooperation, which continues to align the actors and to guide the development by the shared principles.

## An example from the field

Gervais is one of 250 landowners who have agreed to give up their land to allow for establishing a water protection zone. The protected source serves 85 households. He is proud to give up some of his valuable agricultural land to preserve the quality of drinking water for the benefit of his community.

450 model households were provided with equipment to build a latrine and a hand-washing device with the support of a trained mason. Aminata, a widow and mother of six, says her new latrine with urine-diversion is worth more than her house, because it produces fertilizer that gives her beautiful fruits and vegetables. The possibility of using collected urine as fertilizer and increasing agricultural production while improving hygiene conditions has also convinced her neighbors. These households have built latrines on their own funds using the services of the masons trained by the project.

The sharing of water resources is often a source of conflict between municipalities. In order to resolve these conflicts, the project has developed a model for managing inter-municipal water networks. It also facilitates negotiations between municipalities. The municipalities of Matana and Mugamba put an end to their tensions over water sharing, as they endorsed the proposed model and committed themselves to implement it.

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