

Impact of gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects – Evidence from a water project in Madagascar (EIBURS)

Project stakeholders

Consortium lead: United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)

Project partners: ADE S.A.; Center for Research in the Economics of Development (CRED) – University of Namur (UNamur); Institute of Health Economics (IHE) – Leibniz University Hannover (LUH)

Funding agency, duration and funds

Funding agency: European Investment Bank (EIB)

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Project goals

EIB is financing the JIRAMA III drinking water project, which targets to improve the availability, quality, coverage and institutional framework of the current water system in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. The aim of the consortium's study is to provide an impact evaluation design capable of causally assessing the direct and indirect effects of the water drinking project and to conduct the baseline data collection. Moreover, the project team will develop a methodology and indicators to gender tag projects at the appraisal stage of EIB's investment process. The goal is to equip the EIB with a roadmap to ex-ante identify projects that are likely to foster gender equality.

Background and project description

As one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the access to clean water and sanitation is a desirable outcome in itself and an important contributor to the development of a country. Secure access to safe drinking water has direct implications for health outcomes of children and adults, but also indirect benefits in form of educational or productivity gains. It also contributes to the achievement of yet another SDG: gender equality. Particularly in developing country contexts, including Madagascar, women are in charge of fetching water, facing the main time burden of water scarcity, and substantial negative health and quality of life burdens.

In the Antananarivo region, the water system is currently facing challenges of increasing demand for water across the city, shortages in water supply due to insufficient and outdated water infrastructure, and low water quality. The JIRAMA III drinking water project, financed by the EIB and the European Union (EU), aims to address these challenges. The project team, which comprises researchers from UNU-MERIT, University of Namur, Leibniz University Hannover, the Belgian consulting agency ADE and a local consultant, will develop an impact evaluation design to causally assess the above-mentioned direct and indirect effects of the water drinking project. A particular focus will be put on the gender dimension, as EIB's Strategy Group on Women's Economic Empowerment seeks to enhance the impact of its operations on gender equality. To this end, EIB works towards introducing a gender tag at the appraisal stage of its investment process to ex-ante identify projects that are likely to foster gender equality. The project team will identify relevant gender indicators and test them with the collected baseline data to give guidance on how to apply them for predicting gender impacts in future (water) infrastructure projects supported by the EIB.