

Context

In 2024, 2.1 billion people – one in four people on the planet – still did not have access to safe drinking water. At the same time, 1.5 billion people are at risk of extreme flooding. Water quality is deteriorating everywhere under pressure from population growth, urbanisation, and the demands of agriculture, energy production and industry.

Climate change is exacerbating these imbalances, leading to more frequent droughts, more severe floods, soil salinisation and the overexploitation of underground water tables. In Africa, agriculture alone accounts for over 80 per cent of water use, exacerbating tensions between economic uses, domestic needs and the preservation of ecosystems.

Therefore, ensuring equitable access to water is a major strategic issue, at the intersection of food security, public health, climate adaptation, economic stability and conflict prevention.



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Our priorities

For Enabel, water lies at the heart of its climate and territorial action. Our approach is based on science, data, and political dialogue. It is developed around five priorities:

Equitable access to water and sanitation services

Enabel supports access to safe drinking water and sanitation through technically appropriate, financially viable and inclusive solutions, focusing on service continuity, maintenance, water quality and strong local governance.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

We support collaborative water management, including in cross-border contexts. This approach aims to allocate the resource between human, economic and environmental uses, both now and for future generations.

Water and adaptation to climate change

Water is at the heart of climate impacts. Enabel systematically incorporates risk analysis relating to droughts, floods, salinisation and the overexploitation of resources. The organisation promotes nature-based solutions and climate-resilient infrastructure, including in urban areas.

Governance, public policies and water data

We are building the capacity of national and local institutions to improve the regulation, planning and accountability of the water sector. Our approach focuses on the collection, analysis and sharing of hydrological and climatic data, including the digital transformation of services.

Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus

Enabel integrates water management with food systems, renewable energy, health, urbanisation and ecosystem conservation in order to maximise the climate, social and economic benefits. This approach encompasses the blue economy, which drives growth, climate resilience and green jobs.

Our services

Studies, applied research and technical support

Hydrogeological and hydrological studies; assessments of catchment areas and aquifers; design and supervision of drinking water, sanitation and water supply infrastructure.

Sustainable Water Resources Management

Support for the implementation of IWRM; groundwater management; piezometric monitoring; development of regional and cross-border water management plans.

Water and climate adaptation

Integration of climate risks into projects; nature-based solutions (infiltration, retention, erosion control, wetlands); water resilience in rural and urban areas.

Governance and social engineering

Institutional capacity building; support for public water policies; local governance facilities; mainstreaming of gender and vulnerable groups.

Innovation, data and scientific partnerships

Development of water information systems; telemetering and environmental monitoring; action-research and partnerships with Belgian, African and international universities and research centres, as well as with the private sector and civil society.

Capacity development

Enabel works with both communities and technical staff to improve the overall understanding of water-related challenges, particularly sanitation and water supply for productive purposes, though not limited to these.

Our experience

Lake Tanganyika sustainable water management

Spreading over Burundi, the DRC, Tanzania, Zambia and Rwanda, Lake Tanganyika is home to over 4,500 species of animals and plants, and supports the livelihoods of 8 million people.

Since 2019, the LATAWAMA project and its successor, TAKIWAMA, have been supporting the management of the lake. Funded by the European Union, they have established a harmonised, cross-border water quality monitoring system featuring modernised laboratories and common protocols. This system combines scientific data with basin-wide coordination to provide an early warning system. The project has also been testing integrated urban water management solutions to reduce pollution at source.

Water security in Mozambique

In Mozambique, Enabel is improving access to drinking water for rural communities in a country where groundwater is often too salty to drink. Funded by Belgium, the project relies, in particular, on solar-powered desalination units to convert brackish water into drinking water using renewable energy. It combines infrastructure, community-led management, and local and institutional capacity building to ensure the effective management of water services in drought-prone areas.

Balanced Management of Groundwater in Tunisia (GEEST)

The GEEST project strengthens the management of underground water tables to address their overexploitation and the impact of climate change. Funded by Wallonia, among others, and implemented by Enabel in partnership with the Tunisian authorities and Société wallonne des eaux, the project improves the monitoring and governance of water resources by using innovative tools such as telemetering and piezometric monitoring, as well as by collecting reliable data and taking a participatory approach involving the relevant authorities, experts, and users.

Action-research activities and studies by research centres are being carried out to optimise water use in agriculture.

Access to water and resilience in West Africa

In Burkina Faso, the European LASSO WASH programme is improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. Enabel supports the construction and rehabilitation of water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure in villages, schools and health centres. Beyond infrastructure, we collaborate with local authorities, technical departments and sector operators to enhance the governance of water and sanitation. Linked to the LASSO Santé project, it forms part of Belgium's 'One Health' approach, which considers human, animal and environmental health as interconnected.

Enabel's expertise

The QR code gives you access to the full range of our expertise: Global health - Social protection - Education & skilling - Economic & business development - Food systems - Natural resources management, biodiversity - Climate governance - Energy transition - Water - Green building - Urban development - Human mobility - Security - Justice - Financial and administrative governance.

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