

 Early Warning System

EBRD-55198

Saiss III water conservation project



Quick Facts

Countries	Morocco
Specific Location	Saiss
Financial Institutions	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
Status	Proposed
Bank Risk Rating	B
Voting Date	2025-11-19
Borrower	Government of Morocco - Ministry of Economy and Finance
Sectors	Infrastructure, Law and Government, Water and Sanitation
Investment Type(s)	Loan
Investment Amount (USD)	\$ 174.21 million
Project Cost (USD)	\$ 292.68 million



Project Description

According to the Bank's website, the project consists of the provision of a sovereign loan of up to EUR 150 million to the Kingdom of Morocco to finance the construction of the continuity of main pipeline as well as the water distribution network aimed at irrigating 20,000 hectares in the Saiss plain.

The Project is the third and final phase of a staged programme to preserve the Saiss aquifer and promote sustainable water management within the Saiss plain which envisages an annual transfer of 90-120 million m³ surface water from the M'Dez dam to the plain for irrigation purposes.

As part of this programme, the Bank previously extended in 2017 a sovereign loan of EUR 120 million to finance a 45 km of the main transfer pipeline (The "Saiss I"), OPID 48414. In 2020, the Bank extended a second sovereign loan of EUR 150 million, to finance the main distribution pipeline and network for irrigation of 10,000ha (The "Saiss II"), OPID 51223.

The key objective of the Project is to enable the partial switch from unsustainable groundwater abstraction from the Saiss aquifer to the use of more sustainable and climate resilient surface water resources from the M'Dez dam, which will mitigate the adverse impacts of the current and future water scarcity, help restore the Saiss aquifer and contribute to the climate resilience of the Saiss plain.

The Project will be supported by a complementary Technical Cooperation ("TC") package to ensure its effective implementation and to promote gender and economic inclusion.

The Borrower is the Kingdom of Morocco represented by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The Project will be implemented by the Irrigation and Management of Agricultural Land Directorate (Direction de l'Irrigation et des Aménagement de l'Espace Agricole) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forest through the Saiss Operational Project Directorate, acting as the Project Implementation Unit.



Early Warning System Project Analysis

The Project is categorised B in accordance with the Bank's 2024 Environmental and Social Policy. It consists to improving water efficiency and resilience in the irrigated Saiss Plain in Morocco. This EBRD investment toward the completion of a large surface water transfer and distribution network will convey around 90 to 120 million m³ of water per year for irrigation purposes from the M'Dez dam to the agricultural plain through a 150 kilometres long underground pipelines (the initial Saiss Water Conservation Project, or Saiss I, connected to a main distribution pipeline and a distribution network or Saiss II, the continuity of the same components of which are to be financed under the Saiss III Project). The volume to be transferred corresponds to the annual average water deficit of the Saiss Plain aquifer, the groundwater of which is mainly used for irrigation.

As the project will encroach sensitive water bodies (Oued Tizguite and Oued Ouislane), specific hazardous material storage and waste management procedures will be developed during construction and operation to prevent any impact. Herbicides will also be banned on site. The project will be implemented in the buffer zone of sensitive areas (Dwiya and Idriss Premier Dam), and construction work during breeding season will be avoided to limit disturbance of avifauna and mammals. A few molluscs, fish and damselfly Priority Biodiversity Features were identified on site, and other management measures such as preconstruction surveys and biodiversity restoration will form a Biodiversity Management and Evaluation Plan to be implemented to phase out any risks of impact of these species during construction. No construction work will be undertaken in the neighbouring Atlas Cedar Biosphere Reserve.

Environmental impacts of Saiss, once operational, will be mainly linked to the reduced flow downstream of the M'Dez dam.



Investment Description

- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

A sovereign loan of up to EUR 150 million.



Contact Information

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You can request information by emailing: accessinfo@ebrd.com or by using this electronic form:

<https://www.ebrd.com/eform/information-request>

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM OF EBRD

The Project Complaint Mechanism (PCM) is the independent complaint mechanism and fact-finding body for people who have been or are likely to be adversely affected by an European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)-financed project. If you submit a complaint to the PCM, it may assess compliance with EBRD's own policies and procedures to prevent harm to the environment or communities or it may assist you in resolving the problem that led to the complaint through a dialogue with those implementing the project. Additionally, the PCM has the authority to recommend a project be suspended in the event that harm is imminent.

You can contact the PCM at: pcm@ebrd.com or you can submit a complaint online using an online form at:

http://www.ebrd.com/eform/pcm/complaint_form?language=en

You can learn more about the PCM and how to file a complaint at: <http://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/project-finance/project-complaint-mechanism.html>



Bank Documents

- [PSD Translation \(Arabic\)](#)
- [PSD Translation \(French\)](#)



Other Related Projects

- EBRD-48414 Saiss water conservation project
- EBRD-51223 Saiss and Garet water conservation project