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SOUTHERN AFRICA : A three-year training programme for water utilities

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Vocational training and engineering -

Date de mise en ligne : Wednesday 30 July 2008

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It was within the framework of a financial Agreement between the French and Botswanese Governments that the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) of BOTSWANA signed a contract with the International Office for Water (IOWater) and LYSA (Lyonnaise-des-Eaux Associated Services) to the amount of 5.500 MFF for the implementation of a programme for technical assistance and for developing the training capacities of the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Water (MMRWA).

This programme, completed in 1999, included:

- **the training of 18 Botswanese trainers** , organised in Botswana by IOWater and LYSA, to enable them to acquire basic educational techniques so that they are then capable of teaching them to the different categories of personnel in the water utilities of their country.
- **specialised technical training courses** , aimed at improving the Botswanese technicians' skills in the following areas: operation of systems (drinking water supply, sanitation), operation of treatment plants, electromechanics and telemanagement, water utility management (quality approach, safety, analyses...).

These training courses were carried out both in France , in the regional offices of the Lyonnaise-des-Eaux and in the National Training Centre for Water Professions (CNFME) in Limoges-La Souterraine and in South Africa through a subsidiary company of the Lyonnaise-des-Eaux, in JOHANNESBURG , KWAZULU (Natal) and QUEENSTOWN (Eastern Cape).

In total, 30 Botswanese managers attended these training courses.

- **the creation of a documentation centre and computer centre** , with modern documentary material, software adapted to requirements and on-line access to the EAUDOC+ system.
- **a feasibility study for a water-related regional training system in all the SADC countries** (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe) in order to develop permanent and sustainable capacities for training in the water professions, making it possible to meet, on site, very important needs in this sector.

This feasibility study was carried out within this programme with a view to creating a training centre for water professions. It led to a proposal for networking the training centres existing in the SADC member countries (Southern African Development Community). The WUC would be the cornerstone of this arrangement which would allow these countries to have a complete set of training courses available to improve the skills of technicians from water utilities.

South Africa is interested in this project as its first priority is its populations' water supply. The project for developing NCWSTI is in line with this scheme and would enable the launching of this ambitious programme.

In 1999, French Co-operation financed technical assistance to the National Community of Water and Sanitation Training Institute (NCWSTI) of PIETERSBURG (Northern Province) to which IOWater twice seconded a trainer to assist with training courses.

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This technical assistance allowed the strengthening of relations with this institute which might become the favoured partner in a later and more significant co-operation programme financed by the French Priority Solidarity Fund. It would aim at enhancing the NCWSTI's technical skills and training capabilities by setting up training facilities and training trainers. This project would be the baseline of a network of training centres planned at the level of the Southern African countries.