



Center for Budget and  
Macroeconomic  
Transparency

**THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND WATER  
RESOURCES' DEVELOPMENT BUDGET (2020-2023):  
A QUESTION OF INEFFECTIVE BUDGETING or  
INACCURATE REPORTING IN THE GAMBIA**

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## Introduction

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This article examines the development budget of The Gambia's Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources (MoFWR). It presents a thorough budgetary funding analysis of the major development project(s), worth at least D400 million, carried out by the ministry from 2020 to 2023. The report aims to answer crucial questions such as: How much funding was approved for the project, what type(s) of funding were approved, who was or were expected to provide the funding, and what spending was the funding intended for? How much funding was actually received for the project, who provided the funding and in what form(s), and how was it expended?

## Overview

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### *What are Government Development Projects?*

These are projects designed or intended for infrastructure development in a country – including but not limited to, the construction or rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, laboratories, roads and bridges, office/public buildings and structures, plants or factories, boreholes, markets, irrigation infrastructures, information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures, etc.; purchase of laboratory and hospital equipment, agricultural machinery and equipment, vehicles, energy generating equipment, etc.; livestock development, research, etc.

From 2020 to 2023, The Gambia's Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources implemented numerous development projects to enhance the country's fisheries and water infrastructures. The most expensive among them and the only MoFWR project worth at least D400 million, based on Legislative approvals for the 2020–2023 fiscal years, was the **Climate Smart Rural Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Development Project** with an approved total funding of over one billion Dalasis.

### *How does The Gambia Government fund its Development Projects?*

The funding sources for The Gambia Government's development projects are broadly categorized into three main components or types – Government Local Fund (GLF), Project Grants, and External/Foreign Loans. **Government Local Fund (GLF)** is the sum of domestic revenues (tax and non-tax revenues), program grants (budget support), and domestic loans. **Project Grants** are money acquired – for development projects – from external donors who do not require repayment of the money. **External/Foreign Loans** are money borrowed – for development projects – from foreign lenders who require repayment of the money with interest.

Regarding MoFWR's Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project, the government exclusively relied on Project Grants for funding, making the initiative one hundred percent donor-reliant.

## Detailed Analysis of the Major Development Project under The Gambia's Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources (MoFWR): 2020–2023

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### *1. Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project [CRSWASHDEP] (Project code in the National Budget – 0717)*

A project meant for increasing sustainable access to safe water and safely managed sanitation, for improving livelihoods by nurturing safe water and sanitation services-related opportunities for women and youth employment, for enhancing service delivery capacity in the water sector, and for contributing to climate adaptation financing in The Gambia (see [African Development Bank Group](#), [AfDBGroup](#)).

*Table 1: Funding for the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project: 2020–2023*

FUNDING (in Dalasi)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020–2023
<b>Total Funding Approved (GMD/D)</b>	-	<b>108,000,000</b>	<b>765,000,000</b>	<b>273,000,000</b>	<b>1,146,000,000</b>
Government Local Fund (GLF) approved	-	-	-	-	-
Project Grants approved	-	108,000,000	765,000,000	273,000,000	<b>1,146,000,000</b>
External Loans approved	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Funding Received (GMD/D)</b>	-	<b>8,832,517</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,832,517</b>
GLF received	-	-	-	-	-
Project Grants received	-	8,832,517	0	0	<b>8,832,517</b>
External Loans received	-	-	-	-	-
<b>% of Approved Funding Secured</b>	-	<b>8.18%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0.77%</b>

Source: Data extracted from approved Central Government/National Budgets for 2020–2025, published by The Gambia’s Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA).<sup>1</sup>

Based on approved funding for the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project for the period 2020–2023 (as reported in the approved National Budgets and summarized in Table 1):

- The project’s approved overall funding for the period (2020–2023) was **1.146 billion Dalasis**, all Project Grants expected from the *African Development Bank (ADB)*.
- The approved funds were intended for the following expenditures:
  - *wells, boreholes, water points & reticulation systems* = D505,000,000 for 2022;
  - *project operating costs* = D381 million (D108,000,000 for 2021, & D273,000,000 for 2023);
  - *construction of irrigation infrastructure & land development* = D260,000,000 for 2022.

Based on actual funding for the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project during 2020–2023 (as reported in the approved National Budgets and summarized in Table 1):

- The project registered only **D8.83 million (0.77%** of the approved D1.146 billion) from 2020 to 2023, thus showing a massive shortfall despite the approval of over D1 billion.
- The D8.83 million, a Project Grant from the *African Development Bank (ADB)*, was spent on the *project’s operating costs* in 2021.

## Conclusion, Key Findings, and Recommendations

Reports in The Gambia’s National Budgets indicate that the Executive and Legislature authorized **D1.146 billion** for the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources (MoFWR) to implement a major development project (the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project) from **2020 to 2023**. The same reports reveal that of the grand figure approved, **0.77% (D8.83 million)** was obtained during project execution, presenting an implausible funding shortfall for the project.

- For fiscal year 2021, D108 million got approved toward the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project. However, less than 10% of the approved amount (D8.83 million) was obtained in 2021. For 2022, D765 million got approved, but nothing was secured during the year. A similar situation happened in regard to 2023, with D273 million approved and zero realized throughout the year (based on data presented in the approved National Budgets 2020–2025).
- The **Project Grants** approved for the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project (2020–2023) amounted to **D1.146 billion** (D108 million for 2021, D765 million for 2022, and D273 million for 2023), all expected from the African Development Bank (ADB). Nonetheless, it has been reported that ADB only provided a Project Grant of **D8.83 million**, in the year 2021.

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The term “Central Government Budget” is synonymous with the term “National Budget”. An “approved Central Government Budget” or “approved National Budget” is an annual budget legislated or enacted into law by the National Assembly (NA) and assented to by the President of The Gambia. The word “approved”, herein, means “authorized, legislated or enacted into law by NA and assented to by the President”, and all approved figures are estimates or projections, not actuals.

## Key findings and recommendations:

### ➤ **Extreme reliance on external resources**

The Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources relied solely on external funding to implement its top project for the period (the Climate Smart Rural WASH Development Project), with 100% of the project's approved funding anticipated from an external donor.

**Recommendation:** To reduce extreme dependence on outside assistance, The Gambia Government must strengthen domestic revenue mobilization by substantially investing in and re-structuring government revenue-generating Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs)—including State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)—to improve revenue generation capacity, tracking, and allocation.

### ➤ **Substantial external funding deficit reported**

Merely 0.77% of the approved D1.146 billion external funding was secured (the budgets report), rendering MoFWR's development budget "NOT CREDIBLE" over the years. Either the ministry or the government budgeted poorly, or there has been inaccurate budget reporting.

**Recommendation:** The government, particularly the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the National Assembly's Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC), must improve their analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of donor fund estimates and actuals, as well as their reporting on all project implementations to ensure credible budgeting, transparency, and accountability.

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## Disclaimer

The numerical datasets in this report have been extracted exclusively from The Gambia's 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 National Budgets, produced by the Directorate of Budget at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) and approved or enacted into law by the National Assembly and President of The Gambia. Table 1 above has been constructed using STRICTLY the data from approved 2020–2025 annual National Budgets published by MoFEA. Although the government may have published similar budget data through different public institutions or directorates of the same public institution, CBMT would like to firmly assert that it cannot guarantee absolute CONSISTENCY among all the budget datasets published by the different public institutions or directorates. Also, note that the percentages and some other figures in the texts are rounded off, which may cause slight but acceptable variations.



## BACKGROUND

Center for Budget and Macroeconomic Transparency (CBMT) is a non-profit Civil Society Organization that conducts budget and macroeconomic research and advocacy - aimed at increasing awareness around Public Financial Management and the macroeconomy, fostering public understanding and effective participation in government budgetary affairs and macroeconomic dialogues, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in The Gambia.

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