

Strengthening healthcare systems

Investing in healthcare facilities and diagnostic infrastructure improves quality of life. The Bank's support for DataPathology in Morrocco, a start-up specializing in pathology diagnostics is enhancing access to high-quality care.

Chapter 5

Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa

Persistent economic, security, health, and social challenges and the growing threat of climate change have slowed progress in improving the quality of life for Africans. This highlights the urgent need to build more resilient and healthy communities through efforts to create jobs, develop skills, and improve access to healthcare, water, and sanitation. In 2023, the Bank made significant strides in advancing human development across Africa, achieving notable milestones through projects to improve access to healthcare, clean water, sanitation, education, and skills training while fostering innovation and the creation of quality jobs.

Africa faces growing threats to quality of life

African people increasingly struggle to find quality employment in the face of growing uncertainty

Despite a 3% increase in the employment rate between 2019 and 2023, progress remains slow and insufficient. The quality of employment has deteriorated, characterised by shorter working hours and a growing informal sector, which now accounts for 83% of employment in Africa, predominantly appealing to female and youth job seekers.

> *By 2035, more young Africans will enter the workforce annually than the rest of the world*

Youth unemployment is a major challenge in Africa, where over 60% of the population is under the age of 25. With Africa's population projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, more young Africans are expected to enter the workforce each year by 2035 than the rest of the world combined. Africa's youthful population holds great economic promise. However, employment opportunities are not keeping pace with population growth. **Youth employment to population stands at 53.2%, while overall employment is 58.6%.** Lack of skills development and employment opportunities, combined with a range of economic, political, and environmental factors, contribute to an estimated three-quarters of African youth living below the poverty line.

Currently, 26% of young people are not engaged in employment, education, or training, meaning that millions are struggling to contribute to their communities and become self-sufficient. Recent economic crises triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and uncertain global economic conditions have significantly impacted educational opportunities. Meanwhile, ongoing challenges in the education sector, including teacher shortages, inadequate infrastructure and high absenteeism, exacerbate disparities in access to education. Throughout Africa, there are notable gender disparities in education, with only 88 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education, as per the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates. Young women in the region continue to face significant barriers in terms of access to education. Closing this gap is crucial to promoting gender equality and driving economic and social progress across Africa.

Investment in healthcare needed to fight disease and prepare for future shocks

Africa, representing 15% of the world's population, accounts for half of all deaths from communicable diseases, underscoring the continent's healthcare challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of national healthcare systems, which has long-term health, social, and economic implications. Despite these pressing needs, current healthcare investment rates remain inadequate. In 2022, African governments allocated a total capital expenditure of $4.5 billion to healthcare, significantly below the $26 billion needed annually to address evolving healthcare needs. The coverage of the essential health services index for Africa has shown minimal improvement, rising from 46 to 47 over the past five years, highlighting persistent gaps in healthcare accessibility and delivery. Poor health outcomes affect well-being and undermine economic productivity, costing Africa $2.4 trillion in economic losses each year.

Investing in resilient and adaptable healthcare systems across the continent is vital to addressing these challenges. This investment is essential to tackle existing diseases, emerging health challenges,

Table 9 **Improve the Quality of Life (progress in Africa)**

INDICATOR	ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES		ADF COUNTRIES		TRANSITION STATES	
	Baseline 2019	Latest 2023	Baseline 2019	Latest 2023	Baseline 2019	Latest 2023
● Population living below the poverty line (%)	38 (2018)	38 (2022)	41 (2018)	42 (2022)	53 (2018)	54 (2022)
● Enrolment in technical/vocational training (%)	11 (2015)	10 (2019)	8 (2015)	7 (2019)	10 (2015)	10 (2019)
● Enrolment in education (%)	61 (2018)	62 (2022)	58 (2018)	58 (2022)	57 (2018)	57 (2022)
● Employment to population (%)	58.2	58.6	66.1	65.8	61.5	61.1
● Employment to population, female (%)	49.1	49.4	59.9	59.7	54.5	54.2
● Employment to population, youth [15-34] (%)	49.8	53.2	58.4	54.9	51.0	51.3
● Access to at least basic drinking water services (% population)	67 (2018)	70 (2022)	56 (2018)	60 (2022)	52 (2018)	54 (2022)
● Access to at least basic sanitation facilities (% population)	42 (2022)	43 (2022)	26 (2018)	28 (2022)	25 (2018)	26 (2022)

● Improvement compared to the baseline ● Stability compared to the baseline ● Regression compared to the baseline

and future health crises. Furthermore, investing in resilient healthcare systems aligns with improving water and sanitation infrastructure, contributing to overall public health and well-being across Africa.

Increasing access to water and sanitation in the face of climate change

Over 1 billion people in Africa are water insecure, lacking access to water of sufficient quality and reliability for their health, livelihoods, and well-being. **In 2022, 70% of the African population had access to basic drinking water services, while only 43% had access to basic sanitation facilities.** This leaves more than 430 million people without access to basic drinking water and over 780 million lacking access to basic sanitation, negatively impacting health, education, and human capital development across the continent.

The increasing frequency and severity of climate disasters, including floods, droughts, rising temperatures, and storm surges, increase the risk of infrastructure damage and exacerbate existing challenges of access to water and sanitation services. Despite efforts to improve access, progress has been slow and insufficient, requiring urgent and sustained investments to meet the growing water and sanitation needs of Africa's population.

The Bank's contribution to improving Africans' quality of life

The Bank bolstered human development by supporting the construction of sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure, promoting innovative solutions in health and education, and implementing training programmes across the continent. Emphasising resilience against climate change and other disasters, the Bank supported the promotion of community-based initiatives to address social challenges. These efforts have had a significant impact, improving access to essential services for millions of people. In 2023, approximately 2.8 million people gained better access to healthcare, surpassing the planned targets. This success is attributed to the Support of the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis Response in the SADC Region and Sao Tome and Principe Project, where Covid testing exceeded targets.[12] Additionally, **over 1 million gained new or improved access to clean water**, and an additional **8 million gained new or improved access to sanitation services**. Despite missed targets due to COVID-19 disruptions,[13] the Bank contributed to the **training of over 1 million people** across various sectors, particularly agriculture. Bank's operations also **enhanced educational opportunities for more than 26 000 people**, contributing to long-term development and prosperity.

Developing skills and nurturing innovators

The Bank supported young entrepreneurs in Egypt through the Tanmia Wa Tatweer Entrepreneurship Development (TwT) project, funded with a €4.2 million grant from the Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Countries in Transition (TFT).[14] This initiative aimed to empower young entrepreneurs, particularly women, to start, manage, and operate successful businesses in key sectors: agribusiness, clean and green solutions, and the creative industries. It supported 529 start-ups, 66% of which were women-owned, providing seed financing and support for formalisation. This created 2 146 direct and 6 438 indirect jobs, with 54% of opportunities benefiting women. The project prioritised women's inclusion by requiring start-ups to have at least 50% female staff, with an emphasis on female co-founders/managers. Successful start-ups include iSchool, which provides technology education programs (see Box 9); Mozfibre, which uses banana tree leaves for household products; and Fawaterak for E-Payment, an online payment technology that partnered with the National Bank of Egypt.

12 This was due to initial underestimation and multiple rounds of testing of at-risk individuals in all countries.
13 In the TAAT Programme Phase 1, only 497 275 out of the targeted 9 573 665 individuals were trained, mainly due to COVID-19-related interruptions affecting field activities.
14 The TFT is a financial instrument designed to enhance the capacity of the AfDB to respond to the challenges of the transition process and assist countries in the design, implementation and overall consolidation of economic and political reforms.



Box 9 **At the vanguard of programming and artificial intelligence in education**

TwT supported the innovators behind iSchool, a pioneering technology education programme tailored to students aged 6 to 18. It is the first and largest platform of its kind in Egypt and the Middle East, teaching young people programming, graphics, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The co-founders, Mohamed E-G and Mostafa A-M, were recognised for their achievements and contributions and were subsequently included in Forbes' prestigious '30 Under 30' list.[a]

a. The list is released annually to include the most important 30 inspiring personalities under the age of 30 from entrepreneurs, innovators, athletes and content makers as young and most influential figures in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Another positive example is the Bank's Coding for Employment Program (CFE), funded by a $2 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. It supported 240 000 ouths, 40% of whom were women, in Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, and Senegal, providing them with ICT training.

Additionally, in collaboration with Microsoft Philanthropies, 1 000 youth (45% women) became digital ambassadors in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Nigeria. The program also established the Rwanda Coding Academy, offering software programming and cyber-security training. In 2022, its inaugural 58 graduates launched innovative community projects addressing malnutrition and disaster management.

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab is another way the Bank has supported and nurtured innovators (see Box 10). These initiatives empower Africans to build successful businesses and contribute to job creation, fostering economic growth and stability across the continent.

Creating employment opportunities across multiple economic sectors

The Bank is developing a 2026–2032 Jobs for Youth in Africa Action Plan aligned with its new Ten-Year Strategy.

The Bank employs the Joint Impact Model to estimate the indirect jobs its investments support. Operations approved between 2016 and 2023 are anticipated to generate 16.7 million direct and indirect jobs, with 42% allocated for women. The total number of jobs expected from the operations approved in 2023 is 2.1 million, compared to 2.2 million in 2022. Most of these employment opportunities will come from operations targeted at job-rich, women and youth-friendly sectors in agricultural, finance, and transport sectors (see Figure 2).

Box 10 **Driving innovation and job growth for African youth**

Established in 2019, the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Lab (the Lab) is a Bank initiative funded by multiple Bank partners.* It operates through five pillars, with a focus on creating quality jobs for Africa's youth:

Pillar 1: Market study and networking	Pillar 2: Capacity building	Pillar 3: Knowledge exchange platform	Pillar 4: Start-up financing	Pillar 5: Innovation and incubation
Live mapping of the entrepreneurship market and its actors	Learning, training and sharing best practices	Sharing and connecting using digital media	Enhancing access to funding including through the use of an alternative and innovative funding mechanism	Strengthening innovation and hardware entrepreneurship

Between 2019 and 2023, the Lab facilitated the creation of 19 080 jobs. A key contribution is Ennova, an AI-powered virtual platform with 715 users by 2023, that connects stakeholders in the African entrepreneurship ecosystem. In addition, it provided 43 capacity-building services for Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs), benefitting 195 ESOs and 104 fund managers. It also facilitated more than 23 Bank Operations worth $350 million and provided training and resources to 19 351 entrepreneurs and startups. Nineteen youth-led startups received grants totalling nearly $1.5 million. The Lab also developed 26 knowledge resources for stakeholders across 50 African countries.

* With a budget of over $10 million, the Lab receives technical and financial support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), European Union, Fund for Africa Private Sector Assistance (FAPA), the Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation Trust Fund (KOAFEC), Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust Fund (YEI MDTF).

The Bank partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to conduct an employment impact assessment of the second phase of the Nacala Road Corridor Project, which was funded by the Bank with ADF resources and completed in 2017. This assessment demonstrated the positive impact that transport corridors can have on economic development and employment in surrounding areas (see Box 11).

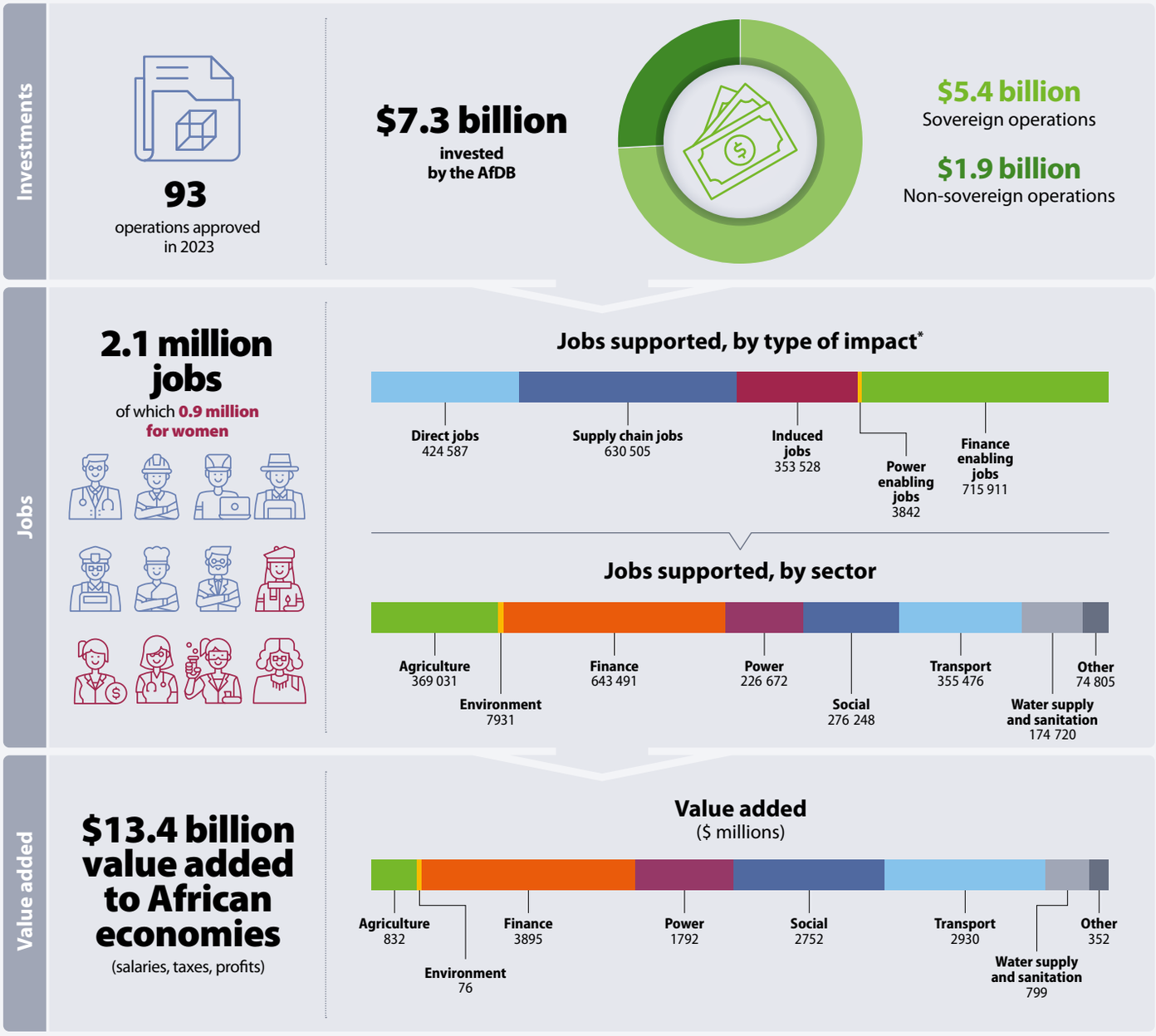
Supporting capacity development in healthcare systems

The Bank assisted 12 countries in East Africa with COVID-19 response through an ADF grant of approximately $9.4 million. The project improved countries' capacity for early detection, recording, reporting, and analysis of diseases and procured essential medical

Figure 2 **Joint Impact Model: 2023 Bank investments are expected to generate 2.1 million jobs**

Based on projections using the JIM, the Bank estimated that, in addition to the 425,000 direct jobs expected, 93 operations approved in 2023 will support 1.7 million indirect jobs.

The total number of jobs expected from the operations approved in 2023 therefore amounts to 2.1 million, of which 0.9 million for women. All of these jobs will add $13.4 billion to African economies.



* For more details on JIM and definition of different types of jobs supported, see the methodological annex under the section: New approaches to measuring development impact

Table 10 **Improving the Quality of Life (the Bank's contribution to development)**

INDICATOR	ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES			ADF COUNTRIES		TRANSITION STATES	
	Planned	Actual	Achievement rate	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
● People with access to water (number)	427 450	1 007 498	236%	416 500	992 498	416 500	992 498
● —*of whom women*	163 705	436 029	266%	158 230	428 529	158 230	428 529
● People with access to sanitation (number)	8 042 450	8 031 498	100%	31 500	16 498	31 500	16 498
● —*of whom women*	4 101 855	4 096 409	100%	16 380	8 909	16 380	8 909
● People trained through Bank operations (number)	10 090 445	1 004 767	10%	10 046 163	939 323	132 495	52 435
● —*of whom women*	3 254 432	461 671	14%	3 229 363	425 415	56 204	37 899
● People with better access to education (number)	15 250	26 506	174%	15 250	26 506	1 100	1 609
● —*of whom women*	2 683	4 230	158%	2 683	4 230	547	1 047
● Direct jobs supported (number)	701 300	543 481	77%	96 600	105 546	32 309	19 613
● —*of whom women*	311 765	218 635	70%	45 658	38 168	10 621	8 503

● Indicator reached 85% or more of the anticipated target ● Indicator achieved between 70% and 85% of the anticipated target
● Indicator achieved below 70% of the anticipated target

equipment to help diagnose and treat infectious diseases. It has also constructed oxygen generation plants in South Sudan and Somalia. Working with the East Africa Community (EAC)[15], the project helped to establish a cross-border command centre and other digital surveillance systems for controlling the spread of diseases across national borders.

As part of the Nelson Mandela African Institutions of Science and Technology Project, the Bank supported the African University of Science and Technology in Nigeria by producing N95 masks and face shields donated to hospitals. They also provided training in 3D printing for face shields. In Burkina Faso, the project supported the International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering (IIWEE) in initiating hand sanitiser production, with plans to distribute it to other institutions.

Improving access to sustainable water sources and sanitation

The Bank's investments facilitate access to clean water and sanitation services, as demonstrated by the Ezulwini Sustainable

Box 11 **Employment impact assessment of the Nacala Road Corridor in Zambia**

The Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO) assessed the employment impact of rehabilitating the 114.7 km Luangwa-Mwami road, a key component of the 1033 km Nacala corridor spanning Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique. Using satellite imagery, the study analysed economic effects, with night-time lights (NTL) serving as a proxy for economic activity. Post-rehabilitation, NTL surged by 25% within a 2.5 km radius, fuelling local GDP growth by 12%, and sparking a 6.7% increase in jobs, approximately 13 657 based on Zambia Labour Force Survey data. These results highlight the broader impact of the Nacala corridor project on employment, beyond the improvement of access to transport for 1.5 million people and 360 direct jobs created in construction.



25%

Increase in night-time light brightness

2 years following completion, 2.5 km around the road



12%

Increase in local GDP

Estimated 2 years following completion



6.7%

Increase in local employment

Estimated 2 years following completion

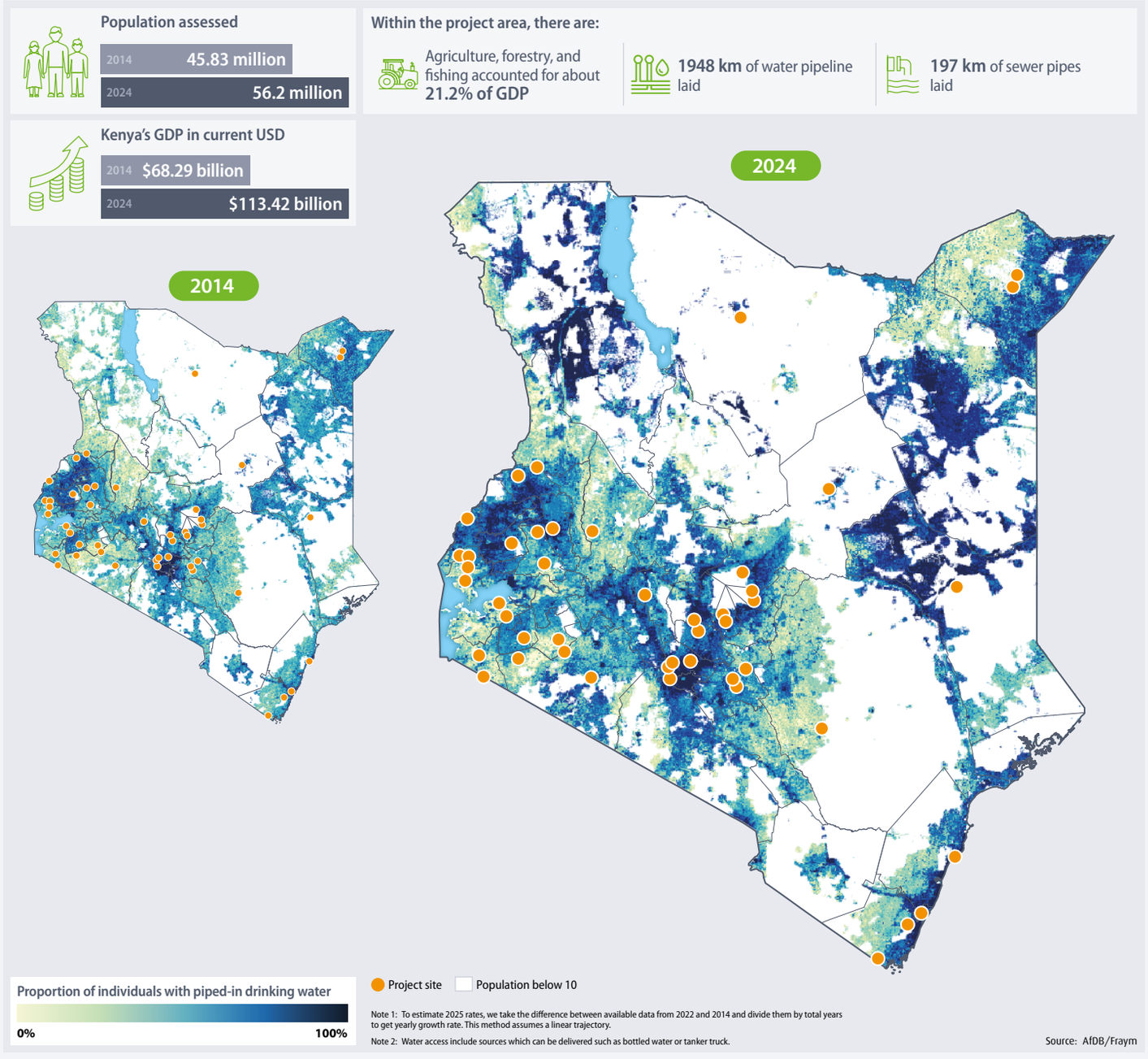
15 The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organisation of eight Partner States, comprising the Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

Figure 3 **High-resolution impact mapping: Assessing the impact of water and sanitation services on living conditions**

Kenya Towns Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Program, launched in November 2016 and due to be completed by December 2025, targets 42 urban areas, of which 28 have already been completed. Its goal is to improve water and sanitation services, thereby increasing access, quality, and sustainability, while concurrently stimulating economic growth and job creation.

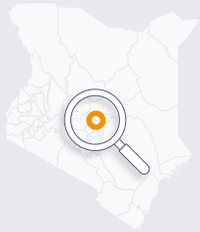
Visual representations and household surveys conducted in 2014 and 2024, combined with satellite imagery, highlight the project's impact. Areas within a 5-km radius of project sites show clear improvements. Approximately 49% of residents own agricultural land, with agricultural employment at 14.8%, slightly lower than the national average. Moreover, access to piped drinking water stands at 33%, surpassing the national average of 21%.

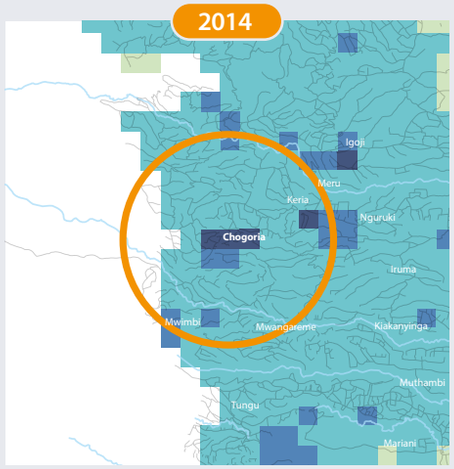
In Chogoria, household rates of child stunting and wasting are lower than the national average, standing at 5.5% and 0.1% respectively, compared to 6.2% and 2.9% nationally. While these improvements are not solely attributed to the project, they reflect broader advancements in living conditions facilitated by various development partners. Improved access to water and sanitation not only improves health outcomes, but also creates opportunities for community development.

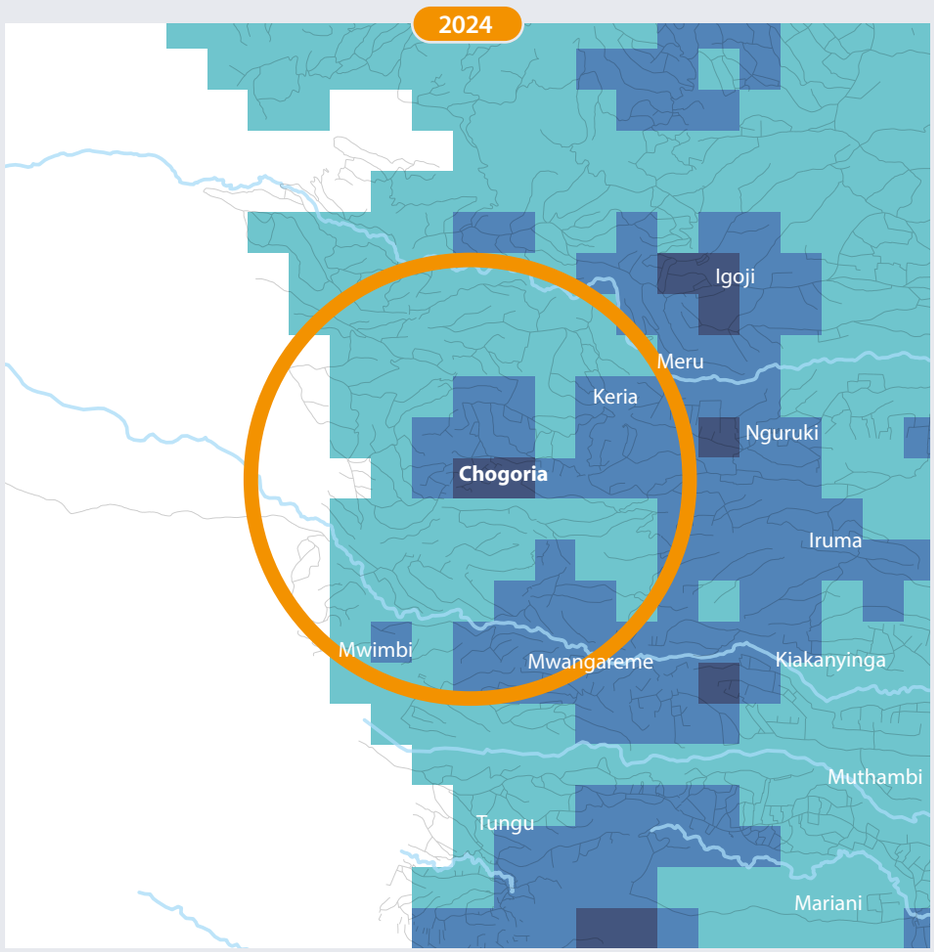


Chogoria's GDP in current USD is **$34 million**

61% increase in youth professional population







5 km project buffer Zero population

Population with improved drinking water

0 — 1000

Source: AfDB/Fraym

Changes within 5 km of the grid in Kenya from 2014 to 2024

- **4.0%** of households experienced a child (0–5) stunting
- **2 million** individuals gained access to potable water
- **11 563** direct permanent jobs of which **2592** are for women
- **32.3%** households have access to flush toilet
- **73%** of women are participating in the labour force
- **15 hours** of water supply per day (h/d)

Changes in the assessed population 2014 to 2024 in Chogoria

- **2000** pupils connected to the water supply system
- **44 000** households with improved drinking water
- **56 800** households with flush or pit sanitation system
- **43 400** households with access to electricity
- **8300** of women now have access to health facilities
- **33.7%** of adults are employed in agriculture
- **148%** increase in youth skilled manual population
- **51.6%** of household that own agricultural land
- **15 000 m³/day** water treatment plant constructed

Water and Sanitation Service Delivery Project in Eswatini. Supported by a $23 million ADB loan, the project provided 30,000 people with 24-hour water access and implemented a sewer system, reducing health and hygiene risks associated with poor sanitation practices.

To better measure and visualise its impact, the Bank partnered with Fraym, a high-tech start-up, to demonstrate how the Bank-funded[16] Towns Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Program in Kenya improved water supply and sanitation services access in Kenyan cities, thereby enhancing local populations' quality of life (see Figure 3). ■

16 Financing from the ADB and ADF windows and the Bank's Middle Income Country Technical Assistance Fund.