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NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency  
Agence de Planification et de Coordination du NEPAL

## Thematic Area: Cross Cutting Issues - Gender Development



The programme works towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa by 2015 and considers gender equity, equality and women's empowerment as a pre-condition to sustainable growth and development. Key areas supported by the Spanish Fund include education, health, promotion of economic fabric as well as social and political participation, with a particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa.

The agreement with the Spanish government runs for five years and is worth 50 million Euros.

The primary areas of intervention are:

- women's economic empowerment;
- strengthening civil society and community-based organisations;
- strengthening institutions.

### What's happening in the programme?

At the third steering committee meeting held in April 2008 a total of 46 projects from 23 sub-Saharan countries were approved for funding. These organisation focus on women's empowerment issues including occupational skills, the development of income generating schemes, assisting women to be food secure, research and knowledge development, access to financing schemes, eradicating gender-based violence, access to HIV prevention, promoting girls' education, enhancing leadership skills, welfare assistance, ICT skills and environmental issues. To date 25 projects have ended, eighteen are ongoing, one is stopped and two have pending issues.

### The BIAWE Initiative

The NEPAD Spanish Fund is in the process of financing a pilot project, a Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurs (BIAWE) programme in East and Southern Africa (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa - COMESA) and West Africa (Economic Community Of West African States - ECOWAS).



The NEPAD Spanish Fund for African Women Empowerment was created in 2007 following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between NEPAD and the government of Spain. The Spanish Fund contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic empowerment of women through financial and technical assistance to projects that support gender equality and the improvement of women's economic, political and social empowerment.

### What progress has been made so far?

During its first phase in 2008, 46 projects were financed from 23 countries. A total amount of 6.285 million Euros was disbursed to the approved projects. Three regions were beneficiaries to this in sub-Saharan African. These included Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa. Out of 46 projects, 31 have ended and the remaining projects are ongoing.

In addition, 2 million Euros has been earmarked for establishing Business Incubators for Women (BIAWE) projects to be implemented by the Common Market of East Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regions.

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Through funded projects of the first call for proposals, significant progress towards the programme's objectives has been achieved, including:

- an increased number of women and girls trained in economically viable vocational skills such as ICT, leather making, needle-work, baking, catering, brick making and others
- the creation of employment opportunities through public-private partnerships,
- improved income-generating activities for women through support in agro-processing, sub-awards, and business management training.
- an increased number of women receiving agricultural assistance to boost production and promote food security
- the set-up of microcredit schemes
- an increased number of women and men have been reached with HIV and health services,
- increased awareness on gender-based violence and creation of mechanisms to address gender-based violence.
- skills development for women leaders in business and civil society
- increased number of women and girls with capacity to use ICTs.
- increased women's participation in natural resources management.

During the second phase of the Fund, 8,4million Euros will be disbursed over a period of 3 years with a new focus in three strategic sectors which are: women's economic empowerment; strengthening civil society and institutional strengthening, in order to increase the impact and cost effectiveness of the Fund in supporting interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa.

#### Who is leading the programme?

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