

Project to rehabilitate the network for collecting and draining rainwater in Port Gentil, Gabon

A project to reduce flood risk and improve safety for residents



©Jean-Michel DAUGE

Open channels draining rainwater at Port Gentil in Gabon

These channels regularly overflow during rainy periods and put neighbouring populations at risk

Port-Gentil is a coastal city in the north-west of Gabon. It is also the economic capital of the country which produces about three-quarters of its wealth with an oil industry and wood industry. The problem of stormwater drainage in Port Gentil is due to a flat landscape, proximity of the sea and the water-table very close to the surface. The existing infrastructure is largely inadequate and in very poor condition.. In consequence, when it rains, the city regularly experiences floods that put its population and services at risk.

Aware of of the importance of what is at stake, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Gabonese government have put in place funding to rehabilitate the existing collection network and drain the city's rainwater.

Beyond the increase of collective awareness with regards to rainwater management and public health, the expected benefits will be many:

- a significant reduction of the flood risk
- a reduction of water-borne diseases
- lower health costs,
- overall improvement of the living environment
- improved safety and the opening up of the poorest neighbourhoods

A project carried out for and with the people

Within the scope of the environmental impact assessment studies, during the consultation meetings facilitated by Egis, the people likely to be affected by the works expressed their willingness to be involved in the definition and implementation of the project. This request was fully justified since a number of assets and people, located within project's right-of-way, were going to be moved. Egis, commissioned to supervise the construction works, seized this opportunity to set up a consultation process involving the main parties concerned by the project's environmental and social aspects (representatives of the local population, local authorities, the company). This collective work, which took place over several months, contributed to adjustments to the project, ensuring it was more in line with the key issues and the needs of the population.

Technical details

The work to be carried out will involve approximately 23.8 km of the so-called "primary" open channel network, draining 80% from the current population of Port Gentil. The channels will either be constructed using reinforced concrete, of varying depth and width (up to 8 m wide), or rehabilitated for concrete or sheet pile channels. They will also be made deeper to allow the tide to rise up to the inner city areas. A number of bridges and walkways will also have to be enlarged, reinforced and/or upgraded.