



# DONKEY-DRAWN WATER CARTERS

## Nouakchott - MAURITANIA

Nouakchott: population 700,000 - 1,000 Ouguiya (UM) = US\$ 0.53



When piped water pressure is low, barrels are filled from underground storage tanks, fed from the public network.



Nouakchott, a desert city, has unplanned settlements at its periphery and nearby desert villages that lie beyond the reach of the city water network.

### MORE THAN A QUARTER OF HOUSEHOLDS SERVED BY CARTERS

The National Water and Electricity Company (SONELEC) serves only the downtown area and planned residential areas. Donkey-powered water carts deliver water throughout the city. Their activity represents:

- 16 percent of total water sales,
- 80 percent of water sector employment.

### YOUNG RURAL MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

Most water carters are young men with little schooling who work full-time in this recently developed service. There are three types of carters:

- the hired hands, paid UM 9,000/month (3 percent of carters)
- the cart leasers, who receive half of the daily take and pay for upkeep of cart tires and for donkey fodder (11 percent of carters)
- the cart owners, who have invested UM 28,000 for the cart, the donkey and two water barrels (86 percent of carters)

It is a profitable business:

- Cost of water: 175 UM/m<sup>3</sup> or 35 UM/barrel
- Average selling price: 625 UM/m<sup>3</sup> or 125 UM/barrel; varies depending on the distance from the standpipe, how much sand there is on the roadways, how available SONELEC water is at the time.
- Daily average sales volume: 1,400 liters/day (7 barrels).

### AT THE STANDPIPES, CARTERS GET THEIR WATER AND GET TOGETHER

- Except for a few nearby poor families, only carters may draw water from standpipes.
- But clients may stop by to place their orders with carters parked around the standpipes.
- An improved standpipe model allow barrels to be filled directly from taps connected to raised storage tanks.



Water at the standpipe costs 175 UM/m<sup>3</sup>



Water delivered to a residence or construction site costs 625 UM/m<sup>3</sup>



An improved standpipe model located near a conventional one