

Call for Expression of Interest

Empowering Young People Through Life Skilling, Entrepreneurship, and Meaningful Engagement to Promote Automated Renewable Energy-Integration in Water Systems in Erbil Governorate

CEF/IRQ/2025/004

1 Timeline

Posted	May 20, 2025
Clarification Request Deadline	May 29, 2025
Application Deadline	Jun 3, 2025
Notification of Results	Jun 20, 2025
Start Date	Jul 15, 2025
End Date	Jan 14, 2026

2 Locations

- A Iraq
 - a Kurdistan

3 Sector(s) and area(s) of specialization

- A Cross Sectoral Areas
 - a Gender equality and women empowerment
 - b Training, capacity building and capacity development
 - c Youth leadership and participation
- B WASH and Environment
 - a Energy
 - b Natural resources, environmental pollution and climate action
 - c Water

4 Issuing Agency

UNICEF

5 Project Background

Water scarcity has emerged as Iraq's most critical environmental challenge. Currently, only 60% of households have access to safely managed water services, with significant disparities between regions. Projections show the gap

between water supply and demand could increase from 5 to 10.9 billion cubic meters by 2035, and by 2060, half the population may not have sufficient access to water⁵. Despite these alarming figures, just 5% of Iraqis perceive climate change as the country's greatest environmental threat, highlighting the disconnect between environmental realities and public perception often caused by the intangible nature of climate change and limited access to reliable, relatable information. Encouragingly, young people in Iraq are showing better awareness of climate change compared to older generations. A recent survey found that 67% of under-18s recognize a "climate emergency," compared to 62% of the general population and just 56% of those over 60. However, knowledge does not always translate into action. Studies among university students revealed that while nearly half could correctly define climate change, few understood its urgency or were actively engaging in solutions. Furthermore, only 1% of Iraqi young people identified environmental awareness as their top priority, placing it eighth overall in young people concerns. Erbil Governorate is among the most climate-vulnerable areas in the region, facing growing risks of water scarcity and groundwater depletion. According to the Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2024), the water sector in Erbil scores 3.2 out of 5 in climate sensitivity, underscoring its high vulnerability to climate-related impacts on water resources. To address these challenges and unlock the potential of Iraq's young people, comprehensive and inclusive shift toward a green economy is required. An integrated approach that combines WASH, ADAP, social and behavior change (SBC), and gender equality is essential. This approach addresses the complex interplay of water scarcity, climate vulnerability, and social exclusion ensuring that interventions are sustainable, equitable, and resilient across communities and young people with specific focus on (Maharati programming- UNICEF- Iraq brand for Youth/ Adolescent Development and Participation). One strategic solution is the solarization of water boreholes, which improves water access while reducing dependency on fossil fuels and cutting greenhouse gas emissions. By leveraging solar energy, communities can secure a more reliable water supply amid increasing climate variability. The impact of this solution is further enhanced through the integration of automation and real-time monitoring, allowing continuous tracking of water levels, pressure, quality (including free residual chlorine), and overall system efficiency. This data-driven approach ensures timely maintenance and optimal resource management. A key pillar of this integrated approach is young people's empowerment. By training young people in solar installation, system maintenance, water monitoring, and data analysis, the project equips them with in-demand green skills and improves their employability/entrepreneurship skills. These adolescents and youth become not only beneficiaries but active contributors to climate resilience. The initiative also connects young people with relevant stakeholders in the water sector, including the private sector, universities to ensure the implemented module characterized by sustainability and scalability. Additionally, UNICEF and partners will establish the required criteria and mechanisms to equip UNICEF trained young people with more training and opportunities through referral to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Finance Corporation (IFC). The project aims to open doors to decent work and entrepreneurship in the green economy through available platforms which will be more crystalized during collaborations establishment with mentioned partners. Green skills encompassing both technical and soft competencies in renewable energy, water conservation, advocacy, and environmental leadership are fundamental for building a climate-smart generation. Embedding these skills into life skills education, promoting civic engagement, and ensuring gender-responsive programming will amplify the impact. UNICEF is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation, supporting adolescents and youth with the tools, platforms, and opportunities they need to become informed, engaged, and empowered changemakers.

6 Expected Results

100 young people (50% girls) (100 will receive LSCE training through receiving learning pathways will be assigned to key training thematic areas including (Integrated water management, data collection and analysis, trained on green skills, entrepreneurial, and life skills). (Enrolled young people in the LSCE will be categorized based on project training tracks (e.g. 30 for water management, impact assessment, and solar green energy) with technical background)) 20 young people (40% girls) supported green social enterprises. Young people Advisory Group established with equal gender representation (10 young people) 1,000 people reached through young people-led gender-sensitive advocacy and SBC campaigns and provide feedback on UNICEF interventions. 1 Impact assessment and 1 case study led by young people on solar and greywater systems and impact, with gender-disaggregated data. The case study will include a component for gender-specific analysis and highlighting the unique impacts of solar and greywater systems on women and men 1 innovation lab is established in the youth center and functional.

7 Indicative Budget

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8 **Other Information**

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9 **Selection Criteria**

Name	Description	Weight
Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results	Clarity of activities and expected results, Attention/Prioritization of the most vulnerable groups, Adequacy and clarity of proposed budget (including contribution by CSO), covering all programme aspects.	50
Sector expertise and experience	Expertise and experience in the required sectors (WASH, ADAP, SBC, Gender and climate), Local experience, presence, and community relations, Management ability, Sustainability of intervention, Experience working with UN/UNICEF and Government.	20
Innovative approach	Replicability and scalability, experience in programme modeling, suitability plan and Innovative approach.	20
Project management	Realistic time table and interventions, clear implementation plan and approaches, monitoring and evaluation framework/plan.	10

10 **Attachments**

Description	URL
Attached is the TOR for the proposed project.	Download the document here

11 **Concept Note Template**

[Download the document here](#)

12 **For more information on this partnership opportunity, and to apply, please visit**

[UN Partner Portal](#)