

Request for Proposal for Consultancy

Development of WaterAid's Global Research Agenda

Background

In 2022, WaterAid's (WA) 10-year Global Strategy came into effect and with it major internal transitions to set the foundation to successfully achieve this strategy. The strategy sets ambitious aims - *reaching 400 million people with sustainable WASH services and mobilising US \$15 billion annually for WASH in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)* - and highlights the critical role of evidence-based action and innovation in overcoming systemic barriers and achieving transformative change. The emphasis of evidence-driven impact underpins the need for a comprehensive Global Research Agenda (GRA).

The Global Research Agenda is a strategic way to address the need for concrete evidence to inform successful interventions, policy creation, and advocacy efforts. It is essential for our work to focus on researching the key issues impacting the communities served by WA, including climate change effects on water security, the durability of sanitation solutions, and the incorporation of hygiene habits into daily routines.

Objectives

WaterAid is looking to engage a qualified consultant(s) to support the development of the Global Research Agenda. More specifically, the consultant should leverage their knowledge and relevant experience to:

- Design, operationalise and document WaterAid's GRA process exactly as set out in the "Development of the WaterAid Research Agenda—Approach v2.0 (Apr 2025)".
- Deliver a costed, time-bound research agenda (and dissemination package) that aligns with WaterAid's Global Strategic Aims, Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs) and organisational "Shifts".

Scope of Work

The approved approach is a two-phase process—**Topic Prioritisation** followed by **Gap Identification**—adapted from the Child Health & Nutrition Research

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Initiative (CHNRI) method and centered on inclusive stakeholder engagement and systematic evidence appraisal.

Key Tasks

Phase 1: Topic Prioritisation

The involves identifying and ranking proposed research areas/topics that align with the organization's strategic aims and address the most pressing issues in the sector. Specific tasks include:

1. Refine scope & approach with the internal coordination team (process managers (PMs)) and advisory group (AG).
2. Develop survey & CHNRI-style evaluation criteria (feasibility, impact, equity, etc.) in consultation with the PMs.
3. Administer the survey and conduct key-informant interviews & focus-group discussions.
4. Clean, code and score responses with PMs, AG & external experts and calculate priority scores.
5. Prepare a "Priority Topics" report and visual summary of the process results and thereafter incorporate review feedback.

Phase 2: Gap Identification

This involves identifying existing knowledge gaps within the prioritized research areas/topics (identified in Phase 1) that need to be addressed to achieve the organization's strategic aims. Specific tasks include:

1. Design a well-defined scoping review protocol.
2. Run literature searches, screen and extract evidence from internal and external sources and draft interim findings.
3. Convene diverse sector expert panel and apply a robust review framework to fill any literature gaps.
4. Utilise Phase 1 priorities to triangulate and analyse research gaps against strategic aims.
5. Prepare draft GRA, coordinate executive review and finalise after feedback.
6. Plan and deliver internal webinars (×2) and one external launch event.

Expected Deliverables

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- I. Inception Package: Detailing the objectives, approach, and workplan. It should also include stakeholder map, survey and proposed evaluation criteria.
- II. Phase 1 Report: The interim report (≤ 25 pages) on the priority topics with support documents (scored datasets and ranked priority list).
- III. Phase 2 Report: The interim gap report with supporting attachments (review protocol and expert consultation summary).
- IV. Final Report- Final Global Research Agenda (≤ 40 pages) + 4-page executive summary, accompanying slide deck.
- V. Webinar and Launch Materials: Detailed webinar and launch plans and post-launch report.

Duration

The assignment is expected to take **8-10 months starting from mid-June 2025** (*Exact dates confirmed at contract start).

Management & Reporting

The consultant reports directly to the Process Managers and works closely with the AG that provides inclusive, Federation-wide input. Formal check-ins are required at the close of each phase; invoices are tied to acceptance of deliverables.

Payment Schedule

Deliverable Milestone	Payment %
Inception package	20 %
Phase 1 priority-topics report & dataset	25 %
Phase 2 interim gap report, review protocol & consultation summary	15 %
Draft Global Research Agenda	15 %
Final GRA package, launch materials & event report	25 %

Budget Ceiling

The total professional-fee envelope **must not exceed GBP 28,000**, consistent with WaterAid's internal budget for consultants, interpretation, design, translation and launch costs.

Consultant Qualifications and Experience

The consultant profile should have at minimum:

- Proven experience running CHNRI-style or similar priority-setting processes.
- Strong experience (>8 years) in water, sanitation, hygiene, public health, or equivalent sector
- Deep understanding of the research process and thinking
- Ability to create surveys, protocols and evaluation criteria for information collection.
- Expert facilitation of remote and in-person stakeholder consultations.
- Excellent communication and project management skills.
- Excellent writing, data-visualisation and report development skills.
- Experience of working across an international and multisectoral environment to deliver work remotely.
- Advanced proficiency in English.

Desirable

- Demonstrated skills in systematic reviews (PRISMA) and mixed-methods analysis
- Deep knowledge of WASH sector in LMICs.
- Fluency in French, Spanish or Portuguese.
- Prior work with WaterAid or comparable INGOs.
- Familiarity with equity-centred research

Submission of Proposals

Interested consultants are requested to submit the following by **June 06, 2025**:

- A technical proposal, including an understanding of the Scope of Work, proposed methodology, and work plan.
- Financial proposal- itemized and including total cost.
- Curriculum Vitae of the consultant, demonstrating essential qualifications.
- Examples of previous relevant work or two client references.

Note: Any questions about this RfP or requests for further information should be directed to **The Research Team:** research@wateraid.org