

Call for Expression of Interest

Integrated WASH Programming in Rural Sierra Leone

CEF/SLE/2025/002

1 Timeline

Posted	Jul 9, 2025
Clarification Request Deadline	Jul 18, 2025
Application Deadline	Jul 31, 2025
Notification of Results	Aug 15, 2025
Start Date	Sep 1, 2025
End Date	Apr 30, 2026

2 Locations

- A Sierra Leone
 - a Southern
 - b North Western
 - c North Western
 - d Southern
 - e Southern

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

- A WASH and Environment
 - a Basic sanitation
 - b Hygiene
 - c Natural resources, environmental pollution and climate action
 - d Water

4 Issuing Agency

UNICEF

5 Project Background

Access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) remains a critical challenge in rural Sierra Leone, especially for women, adolescent girls, and children. Weak infrastructure, limited resources, and socio-cultural barriers exacerbated by climate change undermine public health, education, gender equality, and community resilience. Sierra Leone is highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards, including floods, landslides, sea level rise, coastal erosion, droughts, and water scarcity, which in turn affect agriculture and food security. Environmental degradation, such as air pollution and plastic waste, compounds these threats. UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index ranks Sierra Leone as an "extremely high" risk, particularly for children. In response, the Government adopted the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in 2021 to

implement integrated, community-based climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction. UNICEF supports this through a climate-resilient WASH approach strengthening national systems, promoting sustainable, low-carbon WASH services, and improving governance. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is a critical but often neglected area that must be integrated across sectors. Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP), education, life skills, and parenting. Proper MHM ensures informed communities, inclusive learning environments, and empowered adolescents, particularly girls. It is especially vital in climate-induced emergencies or water-scarce areas where access to safe, private, and gender-sensitive sanitation is limited. UNICEF's holistic MHM approach supports girls with accurate information, access to menstrual products, and community support to challenge stigma and taboos. This contributes to better health, school attendance, and gender equity, ensuring no girl is left behind due to menstruation. Effective operation and maintenance (O&M;) of WASH infrastructure is essential for long-term sustainability. In Sierra Leone, many water points and sanitation systems become non-functional due to weak O&M; systems, especially under climate stress. UNICEF is working with local authorities, service providers, and communities to build technical skills, create accountability frameworks, and promote local ownership. These efforts are designed to ensure that WASH infrastructure remains safe, reliable, and inclusive over time. UNICEF's WASH programme addresses these challenges through three interlinked interventions: 1. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): Dignity and Opportunity for Women and Girls In many rural areas, menstruation is surrounded by misinformation, stigma, and silence. Many girls and women lack access to sanitary products, forcing them to use unsafe alternatives such as rags or leaves, which pose health risks and impact their confidence, mobility, and participation in school or work. To tackle this, menstrual hygiene education will be integrated into schools and communities. Local seamstresses will be trained to produce reusable sanitary pads, and open, stigma-free discussions will be promoted. Schools will be supported to provide girl-friendly WASH facilities and access to sanitary products. Through ADAP platforms, adolescent girls will build confidence and peer support networks, while parenting programs will engage caregivers to create supportive home environments. This comprehensive approach will boost school attendance, dignity, and gender equality. 2. Operation and Maintenance of Climate-Resilient WASH Facilities: Sustaining Progress Despite significant investments in climate-resilient WASH systems, such as solar-powered water supply, gravity-fed systems, and handpumps, many facilities in Sierra Leone have deteriorated due to poor post-construction support. UNICEF and the Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation have developed the Community Level Operation and Maintenance (CLOM) strategy to improve sustainability. The project will train local pump technicians, establish spare parts supply chains, use real-time monitoring tools like mWater, and strengthen local government oversight. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) such as Pump Technician Associations will be formalized to increase accountability. Women and youth will actively participate in WASH committees, ensuring inclusive and sustainable services. 3. Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Climate-related disasters such as flooding and coastal erosion disproportionately affect vulnerable populations in Sierra Leone, disrupting WASH, education, and health services. Coastal districts like Bonthe, Kambia, Port Loko, Moyamba, and Pujehun face heightened risks due to sea-level rise and food insecurity. To strengthen resilience, the project will implement localized Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies in 17 fishing communities. Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) will be established to develop inclusive response plans, with targeted training and representation for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

6 Expected Results

Package 1: Promoting Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Among Adolescent Girls and Women in Pujehun (Kpanga, Makpele Chiefdoms), Port Loko (Bailor, Masilmani), Moyamba (Shenge, Parti, Tissana Wharf/Point, Katta, Plantain Island), Bonthe (Mbokie, Saama, Mania, Hangisite, York). The project adopts a Chiefdom-wide approach inspired by UNICEF's Sanitation and Hygiene interventions, ensuring comprehensive menstrual hygiene management (MHM) across communities, schools, and peripheral health units (PHUs). It includes educating girls, women, and communities on menstrual health through workshops and promoting reusable sanitary pads. Training programs for local seamstresses will enable the production of reusable pads, fostering economic development. The initiative also features product distribution with usage demonstrations, awareness campaigns to reduce stigma, and collaborations with schools, health centres, and community leaders to sustain efforts. A robust monitoring framework will track progress, while targeted workshops address menstrual taboos, fostering an inclusive environment for effective MHM practices. Result# 1: MHM Package in Iceland-funded communities: Bailor and Masilmani in Portloko, Shenge, Parti, Tissana Wharf, Tissana Point, Katta, Plantain Island in Moyamba. Result# 2: MHM & CLTS Package Including Community Management (Mbokie, Saama, Mania, Hangisite, and York). See the attachment for detailed activities. Package 2: Ensuring the sustainability of climate-resilient WASH infrastructure in Moyamba and Bonthe District. Following the successful installation of climate-resilient WASH infrastructure, including gravity-fed systems, solar-powered water supplies, and handpumps in selected communities in Moyamba and Bonthe Districts, this project aims to ensure long-term functionality, sustainability, and community ownership of these systems. Through a structured

Post-Construction Support strategy, the project promotes community-led WASH facility management models by building the technical capacity of local actors, fostering strong coordination with district and national authorities, and ensuring access to essential spare parts and maintenance services. So following are the indicative activities to achieve the results. See the attachment for detailed activities. Package 3: Strengthening Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) in 17 fishing communities in 5 coastal districts: Port Loko, Moyamba, Bonthe, Kambia, and Pujehun To strengthen resilience and enhance local disaster response capacity, this project proposes a comprehensive Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) initiative targeting 17 fishing communities across five coastal districts: Port Loko, Moyamba, Bonthe, Kambia, and Pujehun. The initiative will be implemented through inclusive, participatory approaches that involve women, youth, and marginalized groups at every stage. By establishing and empowering Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), building local capacities, and implementing localized DRR action plans, the project aims to improve community readiness, protect critical WASH infrastructure, and ensure that DRR efforts are inclusive, sustainable, and community-led. See the attachment for detailed activities.

7 Indicative Budget

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8 Other Information

Interested, experienced and eligible Implementing Partners are encouraged to apply for all three packages; however, only one package will be awarded to the best-value applicant to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities, minimize implementation risks, and acknowledge that a single IP may not possess the required expertise across all thematic area. All applicants are strongly advised to carefully review and understand the specific requirements and objectives of each package before submitting their application. However, Implementing Partners currently engaged in the implementation of ongoing UNICEF-supported WASH programmes are discouraged from applying, in order to avoid overlap between Programme Documents (PDs).

9 Selection Criteria

Name	Description	Weight
Contribution of resource	This selection criterion is used to assess the resources the CSO/NGO will contribute- whether financial or non-financial- and the relationship between direct and indirect project costs. The contribution of the partners will be key in the project and form the basis of decision-making. At least 5-15% is expected as compared to the total cost. Further, the weight is factored into: i. Level of direct cost contribution (5 points) ii. Level of the operational cost compared to UNICEF contribution (5 points). If contribution is in the range of 5-15% (10 points).	20
Local experience and presence	Partner to justify their local experience and presence. Does the partner have an office in the area fully equipped with personnel? Have the partners implemented WASH projects in the area in the last 1-3 years? In summary, the partner should inform in its submission on operational office in the project district, country experience and if has implemented the project in the district in the last 1-3 year they are applying for as well as describe their operational capacity on that area. For example, an ongoing programme in operation; knowledge of the local context; engagement of children and communities; trust from local communities; existing networks; established consultation and feedback mechanisms with local communities. (10 points)	10

Sector expertise and experience	Partners are expected to provide relevant information of their organization sector of expertise solidly justified with experience of past years of projects implemented. Has the NGO implemented WASH programmes in the past e.g., drilling boreholes, construction of water supply systems, sanitation, and hygiene promotion through CLTS, and provision of WASH services in Institutions (school and health facilities)? How was the completion? Since WASH requires technical/ (engineering) and community mobilization expertise. Does the partner have the technical/engineering expertise to design and supervise the WASH construction work and CLTS? (35 points)	35
Project management	Partners are expected to demonstrate their project management skills in terms of timely input of human resources, financial resources, and time input to deliver quality results (5 Points). Partner identifies and assesses the risk and appropriate mitigation measures are in place to avoid any delay of the project (5 Points). Clearly articulate the project performance monitoring and reporting (10 points).	20
Sustainability of intervention	Partners are expected to demonstrate how they assessed the sustainability of the interventions, including the transition/exit plan at the end of the project.	15

10 Attachments

Description	URL
UNICEF_Concept_Note_Template_with_Guideline	Download the document here
Detailed EOI	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](#)