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Call for Expression of Interest

Youth Climate Innovation Challenge in Turkana, Kenya (SCOREII)

CEF/KEN/2025/029

1 Timeline

Posted	Sep 19, 2025
Clarification Request Deadline	Oct 1, 2025
Application Deadline	Oct 8, 2025
Notification of Results	Oct 23, 2025
Start Date	Jan 1, 2026
End Date	Dec 31, 2026

2 Locations

A   Kenya
   a   Turkana

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

A   WASH and Environment
   a   Natural resources, environmental pollution and climate action

4 Issuing Agency

UNICEF

5 Project Background

Turkana Climate Landscape: Turkana County, Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid lands, is among the most climate-vulnerable regions in the country. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, cyclic prolonged droughts, and recurrent floods have severely affected water security, food systems, and traditional livelihoods. Chronic shortages of safe water heighten vulnerabilities across health, nutrition, and education, with children and youth bearing the greatest burden. UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index Disaster Risk Model identifies Turkana as the county with the highest level of child exposure to climate and environmental shocks in Kenya. Disruption in education, malnutrition, and livestock losses illustrate how climate change erodes the foundations of child survival and protection. Addressing this crisis requires child- and youth-centred adaptation strategies that strengthen WASH systems, build resilience, and create alternative livelihoods. SCOREII Project: In response, UNICEF, in partnership with KOICA, launched the Strengthening County Resilience against WASH-related Climate Crisis in Turkana (SCORE II) 2024 - 2027 project. SCOREII addresses chronic water insecurity, fragile sanitation systems, and weak institutional capacity to manage resources under intensifying climate shocks. The project focuses on expanding sustainable WASH services and resilience-building to safeguard child health, education, and livelihoods. It is constructing and rehabilitating community water points,

improving management through professionalized systems and public–private partnerships, and promoting sanitation via Community-Led Total Sanitation. SCORE II also supports the County Ministry of Water Services to adopt risk-based planning and management. By 2027, it aims to reach 139,500 people, including 46,744 with sustainable drinking water, ensure 80 % of targeted communities have functional rural water points, and expand improved sanitation and hygiene. Turkana Youth Climate Innovation Challenge: Within SCORE II, Activity 3.5 focuses on engaging youth in climate action and entrepreneurship under Output 3: Increasing community awareness and adaptive capacity of WASH practices. The proposed Turkana Youth Climate Innovation Challenge will empower youth to establish and scale green, climate-smart businesses that build resilience, create livelihoods, and drive local climate action. The initiative will leverage improved WASH infrastructure, such as rehabilitated boreholes, to enable businesses in water-efficient agriculture, food preservation, clean energy, and other innovations. This builds on UNICEF Kenya's experience with youth challenges, including EKYAN (agribusiness), BeGreen (waste management), and the ongoing Youth Climate Innovation Challenge in informal settlements. These initiatives show that with the right support, youth enterprises deliver both livelihoods and climate solutions. Adapting lessons to Turkana's context, the programme will provide hands-on and practical training, bootcamps, incubation, mentorship, and milestone-based seed funding. It will recognise that youth are at different stages, from idea to early business, and tailor support accordingly. The programme will also utilise YOMA, UNICEF's digital platform for youth skilling and entrepreneurship, for registration, learning, and connection to opportunities. To ensure inclusion, especially for marginalised rural youth without smartphones or connectivity, partners must complement digital tools with offline outreach. To inform the project design, UNICEF conducted an SMS poll with 366 Turkana youth. 77 % expressed interest in joining an innovation challenge. Barriers identified were lack of funding (26 %) and limited technical skills (27 %). Youth highlighted unemployment (30 %), food insecurity (18 %), and water scarcity (11 %) as challenges best addressed by business solutions. 45% highlighted financial support, followed by training and mentorship (27%) as the most helpful forms of support to start or grow businesses. Proposals should therefore ensure the programme is youth-driven, locally grounded, and solution-oriented, with strong financial, technical, and mentorship components. Focus should be on businesses linked to WASH innovations and resilient livelihoods. Integrating youth perspectives will ensure the challenge generates viable businesses while addressing Turkana's climate crisis. Selected partners will co-design and implement the programme with UNICEF, the county government, and other stakeholders, ensuring ownership, alignment with SCORE II, and sustainability. Clear exit pathways must be outlined to show how incubated businesses and skills will thrive beyond project support. By placing youth at the centre of adaptation and ensuring inclusion of marginalised groups, the partnership will create sustainable livelihoods less vulnerable to climate shocks, contributing to SCORE II's overall goal of strengthening resilience against WASH crises in Turkana.

6 Expected Results

Objectives: The project aims to empower young people in Turkana to establish and scale green and climate-smart businesses that strengthen community resilience, create sustainable livelihoods and contribute to local climate action. The specific objectives are to: 1. Build youth skills in entrepreneurship, innovation, digital literacy, and technical expertise to design and manage climate-smart businesses in areas such as WASH and agriculture 2. Expand access to mentorship, markets, and networks by connecting young people to experienced mentors, trainers, investors, and private sector actors who can help youth-led enterprises grow and become sustainable 3. Strengthen partnerships and support systems by fostering collaboration with county government, private sector, accelerators, and other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for youth innovation/entrepreneurship 4. Leverage the YOMA platform to equip young people with digital profiles, guided skills pathways, and access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities 5. Promote sustainable livelihoods and resilience by supporting youth to develop alternative income sources less vulnerable to climate shocks, reducing dependency on fragile pastoral systems Expected Results and Key Components: The project will support 125 young people (18–24 years) across Turkana's five sub-counties (Turkana Central, Loima, Lokiriama, Turkana North, Kibish), with a target of 52% male, 48% female, and 2% people with disabilities. Participants will gain the skills, resources, and networks to establish and/or scale climate-smart businesses, contributing to county resilience. The below activities are suggested by UNICEF as a guide, and partners are encouraged to contextualise and adapt on them based on their local experience and expertise. Proposals may introduce additional or alternative approaches, provided they contribute to the overall objectives and expected results of the programme. Outcome: Engagement of youth in climate actions and entrepreneurship Output 1: Co-creation and programme finalisation: An inception report and work plan will be developed, engaging critical local partners in Turkana. Co-creation workshops and focus group discussions with youth will shape the innovation challenge to reflect their needs. County government and stakeholders will be engaged to align with SCOREII and county development strategies, ensuring ownership and sustainability. Output 2: YOMA platform integration (with offline alternatives): YOMA platform will be the central tool for youth registration, learning, programme visibility, and activity tracking, complemented with offline solutions for those

without reliable connectivity. Youth will be assisted to register, build digital profiles, and access tailored learning pathways and opportunities. Output 3: Programme launch and youth mobilization: The challenge will be launched, targeting 200–300 applications, with 125 participants selected for the bootcamp. Outreach will prioritise marginalised groups and rural youth, with local language promotion and offline options. Applications will be evaluated against agreed criteria, and shortlisted youth (83 with no prior businesses & 42 with early-stage businesses) will be invited. Support will also be provided to those not selected by linking them to other opportunities. Output 4: Climate innovation bootcamp (skills & capacity development): The bootcamp will provide intensive training for 125 participants on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, ICT, climate-smart business models, market research, prototyping, and digital marketing. It will also include mentorship, field visits, and PSEA training. At the end, 10–15 top innovators will be selected for incubation and seed funding. Output 5: Incubation and seed-funding: The 10–15 selected youth businesses receive tailored incubation support, including workspace, technical guidance, networking, and mentorship from industry experts. Seed funding will be disbursed on a milestone basis, with verification of achievements before release of funds. Youth will be linked to accelerators, private sector actors, financial institutions, and investors to expand their businesses. Those not selected for incubation will remain engaged through networking and learning opportunities. Output 6: Planning, monitoring, & sustainability: Selected innovators develop milestone-based work plans, supported by continuous monitoring and feedback. Progress will be tracked through indicators such as revenue growth, profitability, access to investment, job creation, and social impact. Sustainability plans and exit strategies will be developed to ensure long-term operation of incubated businesses. The programme will conclude with a graduation/reflection event and a final report. Follow-up will be conducted with youth after graduation to assess ongoing performance and community impacts.

7 *Indicative Budget*

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8 *Other Information*

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9 *Selection Criteria*

Name	Description	Weight
Clarity of activities and expected results	Clarity and logical sequencing of the proposed activities	10
Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results	Relevance and alignment of proposal to achieve the expected results as well as the overall SCOREII objectives. Clear strategy for reaching and including youth from rural/marginalised areas and those without internet/smartphones, female youth, and youth with disabilities, ensuring their equitable participation	20
Sector expertise and experience	Expertise/experience in supporting youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and business development, capacity to deliver tailored training and mentorship and mobilise/engage with local youth. Expertise/experience in climate resilience and adaptation, particularly in WASH and sustainable livelihoods.	15
Local experience and presence	Local experience and presence in Turkana and similar ASAL counties in Kenya, strong connection with youth and ecosystem partners in these regions.	15
Project management	Operational capacity to manage program delivery, including staffing, financial and risk management, managing cohorts of youth, and ensuring integration with SCOREII and county government priorities. Partners are expected to have full-time staff in Turkana for the duration of this project.	10
Sustainability of intervention	Strategies ensuring sustainability of interventions beyond project period (e.g., capacity-building of youth, linkages to markets) and potential to scale or replicate models across Turkana and other ASALs	10
Innovative approach	Innovative solutions based on previous experience and lessons learned. Weight will be given to partners who can effectively contextualise or reinterpret suggested activities in ways that are innovative and demonstrating a deep understanding of the local context.	10

| Cost effectiveness | Budget clarity and adequacy in relation to proposed results. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency of resource use to deliver the results. | 10 |

10 **Attachments**

Description	URL
Detailed call for expression of interest outlining background, description	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