

**Call for Expression of Interest**

**High-Level Engagement to Strengthen Political Leadership, Systems Performance, and Financing for Water and Sanitation**

**CEF/NLD/2026/001**

**1 Timeline**

Posted	Feb 25, 2026
Clarification Request Deadline	Mar 17, 2026
Application Deadline	Mar 17, 2026
Notification of Results	Mar 28, 2026
Start Date	Mar 29, 2026
End Date	Mar 28, 2027

**2 Locations**

- A Netherlands
  - a Provincie Zuid-Holland

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

- A WASH and Environment
  - a Basic sanitation
  - b Hygiene
  - c Water

**4 Issuing Agency**

UNICEF

**5 Project Background**

Access to safe water and sanitation is a fundamental human right and a critical foundation for public health, human capital development, gender equality, and climate resilience. However, progress towards universal access remains off track. Billions of people continue to lack safely managed services, and inequalities persist, disproportionately affecting women, children, and marginalized populations. These challenges are compounded by climate change, rapid urbanization, fragile governance systems, and constrained public financing. While technical solutions to expand water and sanitation services are well established, progress is increasingly constrained by systemic challenges. Political commitment is often insufficiently sustained or translated into policy reforms and investments. Water and sanitation remain under-prioritized within national development plans and global financing frameworks, limiting the scale, predictability, and equity of investments. In addition, fragmented advocacy and limited coordination across stakeholders weaken the sector’s ability to position itself as a strategic priority within broader agendas such as health, climate, and economic growth. Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a global multi-stakeholder partnership of approximately 500

governments, civil society organizations, development partners, private sector actors, and research institutions. Through its Strategy (2020–2030), SWA works to address these systemic challenges by strengthening political leadership, promoting mutual accountability, and improving system performance to mobilize sustainable financing. This project aims to accelerate progress towards universal, equitable, and sustainable water and sanitation services by strengthening high-level political engagement, enhancing evidence-based advocacy, and supporting country-level systems reforms. It builds on SWA’s Heads of State Initiatives (HoSI), which provide a platform for countries to drive integrated reforms across governance, financing, and service delivery. The project will support engagement in key global and regional processes, including the 2026 UN Water Conference and other strategic forums, to position water and sanitation at the center of development agendas. It will also strengthen coordination, knowledge exchange, and accountability across stakeholders, while providing targeted technical assistance to countries to improve financing systems and attract investments. Through these efforts, the project will strengthen enabling environments, enhance policy coherence, and support countries to take priority actions towards universal, equitable, and sustainable water and sanitation services.

## 6 **Expected Results**

Outcome Political leadership, multi-stakeholder accountability, and financing systems are strengthened to accelerate equitable and sustainable access to water and sanitation, with increased prioritization of populations most left behind.

Output 1: Sustained Political Will to Accelerate the Realization of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation and Eliminate Inequalities Key Activities 1.1 Support strategic engagement in the 2026 UN Water Conference, including the preparation of key messages for high-level dialogues on investments in water and sanitation. 1.2 Develop analytical outputs, including a report on tariff reforms under the “All Systems Connect” initiative, to inform policy development and strengthen financial sustainability. 1.3 Facilitate knowledge exchange and political engagement through global platforms such as Stockholm World Water Week, including dedicated events on the Heads of State Initiatives. 1.4 Strengthen engagement in sub-regional processes, particularly in the Pacific and Middle East and North Africa (MENA), to expand participation and raise the profile of SWA and HoSI in under-engaged regions. 1.5 Deliver targeted communications and advocacy activities to reinforce political commitments and promote the human rights to water and sanitation. 1.6 Support public engagement through the Global Leadership Committee to strengthen visibility and advocacy on human rights. Expected Result Strengthened political commitment supports systems-strengthening reforms in at least six countries, increasing the prioritization of water and sanitation within national policies and global agendas

Output 2: Strengthened Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability Key Activities 2.1 Produce and disseminate quarterly Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM) stories, highlighting progress, challenges, and lessons learned. 2.2 Promote knowledge sharing and peer learning across SWA constituencies through communications products and engagement platforms. 2.3 Strengthen the use and visibility of accountability mechanisms to support coordinated action among governments, civil society, development partners, and other stakeholders. Expected Result Multi-stakeholder collaboration is strengthened, with improved transparency, coordination, and accountability contributing to more effective and inclusive water and sanitation service delivery

Output 3: Well-Performing Systems Attract Investments and Strengthen Financial Flows that Prioritize Those Left Behind Key Activities 3.1 Engage in strategic global and regional finance and development forums, ensuring water and sanitation are reflected in discussions, communiqués, and official engagements. 3.2 Develop and disseminate flagship advocacy products, including policy briefs, op-eds, and engagement packages, to position water and sanitation within macro-fiscal, climate, and development finance narratives. 3.3 Promote alignment and co-branding of key messages across partners to strengthen coherence and amplify impact. 3.4 Provide targeted technical assistance to four countries to strengthen financing systems, including tariff reforms, planning, and investment strategies. Expected Result Water and sanitation are increasingly positioned within development finance agendas, and strengthened country systems enable increased, more sustainable, and more equitable financial flows to the sector

## 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	The proposed approach clearly addresses the expected results as described in the CFEI and presents a feasible, coherent plan to deliver them. The methodology demonstrates strong understanding of systems strengthening, stakeholder coordination and civil society engagement for the WASH sector	40
Cost effectiveness	The budget is reasonable, well-justified, and aligned with the proposed activities and scope. Resources are used efficiently, demonstrating the ability to achieve results without unnecessary cost.	20
Sector expertise and experience	Sanitation systems strengthening and climate-resilient sanitation Demonstrated experience supporting safely managed sanitation (SMS) and climate-resilient sanitation (CRS) at national and sub-national levels. Proven ability to design and deliver capacity development, conduct area-wide sanitation assessments, and document lessons learned for sector use. Menstrual health and hygiene and global advocacy Clear experience in global MHH coordination and advocacy, for example acting as secretariat of a global menstrual collective. Demonstrated capacity to conduct or apply political economy analyses (PEA) or similar policy/advocacy diagnostics in LMICs. Enhancing civil society engagement in multi-stakeholder collaboration Clear experience in support civil society to engage with multi-stakeholder coordination platforms	40

## 10 Attachments

Description	URL
Table of Expected Project Outputs and Associated Activities and Performance	<a href="#">Download the document here</a>

## 11 Concept Note Template

[Download the document here](#)

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

[UN Partner Portal](#)