

Call for Expression of Interest

Improving Access to Safe and Climate Resilient WASH Services for rural Communities and Institutions in Sierra Leone (Programme Period: 2026 to 2028)

CEF/SLE/2026/001

1 Timeline

Posted	May 5, 2026
Clarification Request Deadline	May 19, 2026
Application Deadline	May 30, 2026
Notification of Results	Jul 30, 2026
Start Date	Oct 1, 2026
End Date	Jun 30, 2028

2 Locations

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

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 WASH in emergencies
 - e Water

4 Issuing Agency

UNICEF

5 Project Background

1) Project Background This project aims to strengthen climate resilient, inclusive, and sustainable WASH services in vulnerable rural and coastal communities in Sierra Leone, with a particular focus on women, adolescent girls, and

children. Implemented under the UNICEF Sierra Leone Country Programme Document (CPD) 2025–2030, it responds to persistent gaps in safe water, sanitation, and hygiene while addressing rising climate risks that undermine public health, education outcomes, gender equality, and community resilience. Sierra Leone faces recurrent floods, droughts, coastal erosion, and environmental degradation that damage WASH infrastructure and disrupt essential services—disproportionately affecting children and women and also contributing to repeated public health crises such as the Cholera outbreak. In alignment with the Government of Sierra Leone’s National Adaptation Plan and UNICEF’s climate commitments, the project integrates climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and sustainable service delivery into community-level WASH systems. Theory of Change — Impact is delivered through sequenced and mutually reinforcing interventions: 1.1 Sustainable and Climate-Resilient WASH Service Delivery - Construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in communities, schools, and PHUs. - Strengthening operation and maintenance (O&M;) systems, building on the Community-Level O&M; (CLOM) approach. - Establishing functional spare-parts supply chains and accountability between communities, service providers, and local authorities. - Meaningful participation of women and young people in WASH governance (WASHCOMs) to translate infrastructure investments into reliable and sustainable services. 1.2 Sanitation & Hygiene Behaviour Change (Chiefdom-Wide CLTS) with Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Integration - A chiefdom-wide Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach to achieve and sustain Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. - Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) mainstreamed across communities, schools, and PHUs, including access to appropriate materials, girl-friendly facilities, stigma reduction, and school- and community-based education. 2) Overall Objective Deliver a climate-resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Integrated WASH Package through a unified framework combining infrastructure development, sanitation and hygiene behaviour change, and community systems strengthening, adopting a chiefdom-wide approach. 3) Scope of Work and Packages Applicants may express interest in multiple Lots, but UNICEF will award only a maximum of two lots per organisation. Package 1: Integrated WASH — Water Supply, Sanitation, Hygiene (CLTS) & WASH in Institutions Objective: Deliver end-to-end integrated WASH services in selected communities, schools, and PHUs using a chiefdom-wide approach, including climate-resilient infrastructure, CLTS, WASHCOM strengthening, and MHM mainstreaming. Lots (illustrative) • Lot 1: Selected chiefdoms & communities in Pujehun District • Lot 2: Selected chiefdoms & communities in Bonthe District • Lot 3: Selected chiefdoms & communities in Kambia District • Lot 4: Selected chiefdoms & communities in Kailahun District Implementing Partners (IPs) may express interest in one or more Lots under Package 1; however, only one Package (across all 2 Packages) will be awarded per organisation. A1. Water Supply — Key Activities 1. Install solar-powered submersible pumps where boreholes already exist (UNICEF to provide pumps, riser pipes, controllers). 2. Construct water supply infrastructure for communities, schools, and health facilities: elevated storage towers, tap stands, valve chambers, and pump houses. 3. Trenching, pipe installation, and backfilling. 4. Convene community stakeholders’ meetings; establish or revitalise WASHCOMs. 5. Pre-construction training of WASHCOMs (three days). 6. Extend networks to schools, PHUs, and nutrition centres (where applicable). 7. Postconstruction training of WASHCOMs (using revised manual); link with VSLAs for community financing; train Village Maintenance Workers (VMWs). 8. Coordinate with Local Area Mechanics (LAMs) for preventive maintenance. 9. Rehabilitate existing water points/wells where feasible. A2. Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (Chiefdom-Wide CLTS) — Key Activities 10. Establish baselines and prepare Chiefdom ODF Plans; secure approvals from District Council/DHMT and UNICEF. 11. Implement the full CLTS cycle: institutional triggering, pre-triggering, triggering, follow-up/monitoring, verification & certification. 12. Using the Toilet Catalogue, identify and train Toilet Business Owners (TBOs)/sanitation local artisans to scale household latrine construction and stimulate local sanitation markets. 13. Coordinate with DHMT (incl. Nutrition), District Education & Social Mobilisation to align sanitation and hygiene plans with nutrition.

6 Expected Results

Package 1: Integrated WASH — Water Supply, Sanitation, Hygiene (CLTS) & WASH in Institutions 14. Train community volunteer hygiene promoters (via CHWs) in proper handwashing and safe excreta disposal (including infants). 15. Support sanitation financing mechanisms (e.g., VSLAs) to increase household uptake. 16. Support WASH in Schools: establish and train School Environmental Health Clubs; engage students as co-designers, actively reflect on their needs, identifying barriers, and informing the adaptation of WASH activities and infrastructure to ensure they are safe, inclusive, and responsive. 17. Establish school gardens using wastewater channelled from the tap stand 18. Promote safe menstrual hygiene management (MHM) among women and adolescent girls across communities, including schools. 19. Identify and train local seamstresses to produce reusable sanitary pads for sale to interested persons in communities and local markets. 20. Rehabilitate selected (dysfunctional) water points (e.g., hand-dug wells, handpumps) with community contributions for deepening/improvements where required. Package 2: Post-Construction Sustainability (O&M;, Functionality Monitoring, Supply Chains) • Lot 1: CLOM in Pujehun and Kailahun Districts • Lot 2: CLOM in Koinadugu and Falaba Districts Objective: Ensure long-term functionality, sustainability, and community

ownership of climate-resilient WASH systems (e.g., gravity-fed, solar-powered, handpumps) through structured post-construction support, capacity building, and spare-parts market development. • Community-based technician selection & deployment (2–3 pump technicians per chiefdom). The selection criteria will be determined at the district stakeholders meeting. • Capacity building for WASH actors: technicians, district engineers, and retailers; formalize Pump Technician Associations as CBOs; build technical and business skills of the pump technicians. • Real-time functionality monitoring using mWater; explore integration with national WASHIMS. • Sustainable spare-parts supply chains through local suppliers/retailers. Identify local suppliers to establish reliable spare part outlets in partnership with local suppliers and retailers • Routine maintenance tours and functionality data collection. • Institutionalise WASHCOMs for O&M; engage District Councils, Water Directorates for oversight and backstopping; train/support LAMs with user-fee backed models. • Sanitation marketing and private sector engagement: promote TBOs and establish Sanitation Loan Revolving Funds (SLRFs) or Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs). • Technology adaptation & inclusion: climate-resilient, user-friendly, inclusive of women and persons with disabilities. • Stakeholder engagement & planning with District Councils, DHMTs, schools, and community health

Expected Results and Key Indicators Package 1: Integrated WASH — Water Supply, Sanitation, Hygiene (CLTS) & WASH in Institutions A1. Water Supply Improved access to reliable, safe, climate-resilient water supply services in targeted communities and institutions, with ≥90% of supported systems functional throughout the Programme period and meeting national technical standards. Key Indicators: • Number of functional water supply systems constructed/rehabilitated (boreholes, handpumps, piped schemes, institutional systems). • Percentage of supported water points functional at quarterly monitoring. • Number of water systems certified following quality assurance/testing. • Number of WASHCOMs established/strengthened and functioning. • Number of active Local Area Mechanics with linkage to communities for water system repairs

B1. Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (Chiefdom-Wide CLTS): Improved sanitation and hygiene practices at the community level, including completion of the full CLTS cycle and sustained ODF in targeted communities during and beyond the Programme period. Key Indicators: • Number of households supported with technically guided sanitation construction. • Number of local artisans (TBOs) trained and actively constructed household latrines. • Number of chiefdoms triggered and verified under CLTS. • Number of chiefdoms maintaining ODF at post-verification monitoring. • Percentage of households observed practicing key hygiene behaviours (e.g., handwashing). • Number of girls and women reached with MHM education/awareness sessions. • Number of schools and PHUs integrating MHM into WASH activities. • Number of menstrual hygiene materials distributed with usage demonstrations. • Number of local producers (seamstresses) trained to produce reusable pads.

Chiefdom-Wide Implementation Consistent implementation of sanitation, hygiene, and MHM interventions across all communities within targeted chiefdoms, ensuring harmonized technical standards, behaviour change messaging, and post-ODF follow-up. Key Indicators: • Number of chiefdoms implementing a chiefdom-wide approach. • Percentage of communities within targeted chiefdoms reached.

7 Indicative Budget

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8 Other Information

E1. Community Systems & Sustainability (Package 2) Strengthened community capacity to manage and sustain WASH services, with systems in place for routine O&M; and monitoring. Key Indicators: • Number of WASHCOMs actively involved in O&M.; • Number of community members trained in basic O&M; functions (with tools available). • Number of Local Area Mechanics (LAMs) trained and equipped with active linkage with communities for water systems repairs. • Percentage of communities applying agreed maintenance arrangements including user-fees.

Institutional Linkages (WASH in Schools/Health) Improved integration of sanitation and hygiene within schools and health facilities, with institutions actively promoting WASH practices. Key Indicators: • Number of schools implementing WASH in Schools Sanitation & hygiene activities. • Number of schools with school gardens managed effectively by the School Health Clubs • Number of health facilities integrating sanitation and hygiene promotion. • Number of school-based clubs or platforms promoting safe hygiene behaviours.

Cross-Cutting Implementation Requirements

a) **Chiefdom-Wide Approach** Apply consistent technical standards, messaging, and post-ODF follow-up across all communities in targeted chiefdoms.

b) **Climate & Seasonal Risk** Integrate basic climate risk analysis and seasonal planning to protect infrastructure and service continuity—especially in flood-prone areas and during the rainy season.

c) **Community Systems & Sustainability** Strengthen WASHCOMs, local leadership, and monitoring mechanisms to support O&M; and accountability beyond construction.

d) **Institutional Linkages** Link sanitation and hygiene activities with schools and PHUs

Eligibility and Submission Eligible Applicants: Registered and experienced CSOs/NGOs with demonstrated WASH, CLTS, MHM, and/or O&M;/systems-strengthening expertise in Sierra Leone. CSOs/NGOs should mention

about existing Safeguarding/PSEA measures, anti-fraud and ethical compliance standards, and prior experience collaborating with government authorities. Submission Package (concise, evidence-based):

- Cover letter specifying Package(s)
- Organizational profile (governance, legal status, staffing, policies incl. safeguarding, PSEA, antifraud).
- Relevant experience (last 3–5 years) with references and results.
- Technical approach aligned with this EOI (methods, staffing, risks/mitigation, MEL).
- Workplan with indicative timeline and key milestones.
- Budget summary with partner contribution (cash/in-kind) clearly stated.
- Geographic presence and local capacity (offices, staff, assets).
- Annexes: CVs of key staff; registrations; past performance; sample tools (e.g., ODF plans, mWater dashboards).

Note: Implementing Partners currently engaged in ongoing UNICEF-supported WASH Programme Documents (PDs) are discouraged from applying to avoid overlap.

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 10-15% is expected as compared to the total cost. Further, the weight is factored into: • Direct cost contribution level (5). • Operational cost vs UNICEF contribution (5). • Overall contribution ratio (10–15% expected) (10).	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 on their organisation’s sector of expertise, supported by solid justification and experience from 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 (schools 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 point)	15

10 Attachments

Description	URL
Concept Note template	Download the document here
Tentative budget for package 2 (use one per lot)	Download the document here
Tentative budget for package 1 (use one per lot)	Download the document here

EOI-WASH Interventions 2026 to 2028 Updated

[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](#)