

Vacancy: Programme Manager – Urban Water Catalyst Initiative

We are seeking a programme manager for the UWCI Turnaround Facility. UWCI is a small, ambitious start-up operating at the intersection of global development, water, climate, and infrastructure finance. This is not a conventional programme management role: the postholder will be expected to bring initiative, strategic thinking, and genuine flexibility to a fast-moving environment where priorities shift, opportunities emerge quickly, and every team member contributes beyond their formal job description.

About the Urban Water Catalyst Initiative

The Urban Water Catalyst Initiative (UWCI) is a joint initiative of KfW and GIZ (Germany) on behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in partnership with WaterWorX, representing the Dutch water utilities. Its mission is to accelerate public urban water and sanitation utility performance in the Global South by enhancing creditworthiness, operational efficiency, and resilience, ultimately enabling utilities to bridge the financing gap to achieve SDGs 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation) and 13 (Climate Action).

The initiative offers tailored support to reform-minded utilities through executive mentoring, technical assistance, small grants for efficiency improvements, and later-stage repayable investment financing. The goal is to create financially sustainable, high-performing, and resilient urban water utilities capable of expanding water access and sanitation services.

The Stichting UWCI Turnaround Facility

On 20 February 2025, the UWCI formally incorporated the Stichting UWCI Turnaround Facility (the Facility), an independent foundation designed to manage grants and provide technical support to urban water utilities in the Global South.

The UWCI Turnaround Facility is located in Utrecht, the Netherlands. It is registered as non-profit / charitable organisation under Dutch law. It is governed by Articles of Associations as well as various internal policies. The foundation will implement its mandate with a small, dedicated team of international professionals affiliated to water, climate and finance topics.

The Facility is led by the Management Board and controlled by a Supervisory Council. Currently, the Foundation supports seven water and wastewater utilities located in Colombia,

Egypt, Tanzania, Kenya and Indonesia. In future, additional utilities might be supported located e.g. in Morocco, Moldova, Vietnam and other countries from the Global South.

More information on the foundation's offering and approach is available under www.urbanwaterci.org.

Role Context: Why This Role Exists

UWCI is a lean start-up organisation with outsized ambitions. The team is small, the mission is large, and the pace of change is fast. The Programme Manager will be the operational backbone of the Facility's programme work — but this role is designed for someone who wants to do more than execute a defined task list. The postholder will be expected to contribute to strategic conversations, take on special projects at the direction of the Management Board, and bring genuine initiative to an organisation that is still defining and refining how it works. Things are changing quickly at UWCI, and the right candidate will see that as an opportunity rather than a constraint.

Your Tasks

The programme manager reports to the Management Board of the Foundation.

Your tasks will be: In addition to the responsibilities listed below, the postholder will be called upon to support special projects and provide strategic input as UWCI's programme evolves. The balance of activities will shift week to week, that is a feature, not a bug. This role suits someone who is as comfortable contributing to a strategic discussion as executing a complex procurement process.

- You will act as key account manager for the Foundation's service providers and implementation partners (e.g. technical assistance organisations) in relation to the technical and financial support activities in various partner utilities.
- You will prepare, tender, manage and monitor service contracts and financing agreements between the UWCI Foundation and implementing partners and service providers.
- You will report on the performance of service providers or implementing partners of the UWCI Foundation.
- You will ensure compliance of contracts and agreements with UWCI's policies and procedures, including environmental and social policies.
- You will contribute to assessments of the progress and results in water utilities supported by UWCI.

- You will contribute to organizing Calls for Applications issued by UWCI to identify new partner utilities.
- You will work conceptually and based on evidence on the UWCI offering and methodology (e.g. in form of handbooks) to assist water utilities and its monitoring framework
- You will support the management board in the preparation of reports to the Supervisory Council and the foundation's donors.
- Raise awareness of the UWCI and the Facility's work in the international policy debate on financing SDG 6 and SDG 13.
- Cultivate trustful relationships with potential financiers and utility partners.
- Represent UWCI on international conferences and events.
- Contribute to the development of financing instruments and support alignment with the future approaches of unlocking utility financing.
- Explore new funding sources and mechanisms to support the continued expansion and impact of the UWCI.
- Other duties as defined, in support of UWCI's mission and objectives

Your Profile

We are looking for a highly motivated professional. Given UWCI's start-up nature and pace of change, we place particular weight on adaptability, a bias toward action, and the willingness to take initiative in ambiguous situations. The right candidate will be comfortable operating with limited supervision, able to manage shifting priorities without losing threads, and genuinely energised by building something new rather than maintaining an established system. Desired qualifications and expertise include:

- University degree (Master) in engineering, social / political science, economics, business administration, environmental management, or other relevant area
- Proven professional experience: At least 5 years' work experience in international cooperation context, preferably in the water-climate sector
- Expertise in management of service contracts and/or grant agreements
- Expertise in water utility management and finance: Strong background in the financing and/or management of water utilities, development finance, and public policy, ideally with a focus on SDG 6 and SDG 13.
- International experience: At least 1 year work experience in a country in the Global South, preferably in UWCI target regions (Sub-Saharan African, North African, South-East Asia or Latin America).

- Readiness to work with international teams, also in digital / remote settings.
- Commitment, reliability, intercultural understanding and sensitivity to gender.
- Language skills: Fluency in English, with additional languages (e.g. French, Spanish, German, Dutch) as an asset.
- Willingness to travel to the Facility's head office in the Netherlands, project sites in the Global South, and attend international conferences up to 30% of the work time.
- Comfort working in diverse, sometimes challenging environments.
- High levels of initiative and self-direction; comfortable operating with ambiguity and without close supervision.

What we offer:

- Location: UWCI is based in the Netherlands, but as a Globally operating organization, the position can be fulfilled remotely.
- Contract type: 1.0 fte, (40 hours per week)
- Contract: Contracting through an Employer of record, based in the country of residence of the candidate.
- Salary will be based on experience and qualifications and location of employment; in addition to a competitive salary UCWI provides leave days; Public Holidays and secondary benefits, like contribution to health insurance and pension in line with the requirements in the country of residence of the candidate.
- You will be working with an international and agile team of dedicated people and a network of committed organisations and individuals supporting the mission of the Facility. As a start-up, UWCI is building its team, its systems, and its culture in real time — this is an opportunity to shape the organisation, not just join it.
- Travel to project sites and meetings with stakeholders is a requirement for this position.
- A realistic path for role evolution: as UWCI grows, this position is expected to develop in scope, seniority, and strategic weight, commensurate with organisational need and individual performance. We are building something ambitious, and we want the people who build it with us to grow alongside it.

Application and Recruitment Process:

We invite you to apply for this exciting opportunity by Monday 15th June 2026.

Interviews will be scheduled on 22nd and 23rd June

Please submit the following documents to applications@urbanwaterci.org

- Motivational letter (1 page)
- CV (2 pages)
- References of previous positions

- Copies of certificates of university education or other major training

For further information, please contact us via applications@urbanwaterci.org

We warmly welcome applicants of all nationalities to join our diverse international team. In support of our commitment to gender balance, women are especially encouraged to apply.

When applying, please indicate your earliest possible starting date.