USAID Effective Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services (E-WASH) Program

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) (Multiple Rounds)
USAID E-WASH Innovation Grant Fund: Utility Technical Assistance

USAID E-WASH is seeking to issue grant(s) to local non-US organizations including 1) large youth-led and women-led organizations, 2) business development service providers and non-governmental organizations, and 3) tertiary institutions for the purpose of implementing scalable innovative solutions to strengthen urban WASH governance and operations. USAID E-WASH has a strong interest in leveraging the expertise of new and underutilized partners.

Background on USAID Effective Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services (E-WASH) Program

As part of the United States Government’s (USG) efforts to address gaps in urban water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Nigeria, USAID/Nigeria aims to improve urban water service delivery by strengthening the governance, financial and technical viability of five (5) State Water Boards (SWBs) in Abia, Delta, Imo, Niger, and Taraba States (I-STAND). E-WASH will work towards achieving the following mutually reinforcing objectives:

I. Creating professionally managed and commercially oriented SWBs;
II. Improving the financial and operational viability of SWBs;
III. Strengthening policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks for improved WASH services; and
IV. Building national and state WASH advocacy, coordination, and communications for reform.

These efforts align with the USAID Water and Development Strategy 2013/2018 Strategic Objective 1: Improve health outcomes through the provision of sustainable WASH. They also align with the USAID/Nigeria Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 3, Strengthened good governance; Intermediate Result (IR) 3.2, Improved responsiveness of selected government institutions; and IR 3.3, Increased capacity for civic advocacy, monitoring and engagement; and Component 4: Build Coordination, Advocacy, and Strategic Communications to Promote Reform

The USAID E-WASH Program is part of USAID’s wider efforts to build closer coordination with the Government of Nigeria (GON), including the Federal Ministry of Water Resources (FMWR), select SWBs of Abia, Delta, Imo, Niger, and Taraba allied stakeholders to advance broad-based economic growth and resilience through improved WASH services in urban areas.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date of Announcement</th>
<th>November 9, 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>REOI to be submitted by email to:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grants@ewash.rti.org">grants@ewash.rti.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bidders Conference</td>
<td>November 16, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Submission deadline</td>
<td>November 18, 2020</td>
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</table>
**USAID E-WASH Theory of Change:**

Increased access to sustainable WASH services will only be achieved in urban areas within Nigeria when SWBs undergo a reorganization process to develop professional and commercially oriented practices that enable them to operate efficiently as commercial entities. They must have autonomous, accountable, and transparent management and strengthened corporate governance with clear priorities for effective and inclusive service provision. Well-functioning SWBs must have performance-based contracts, good monitoring capabilities, trained personnel, cost recovery, a proper tariff structure, and asset maintenance management systems. Creating good corporate governance in SWBs is essential to increase access to sustainable water services.

USAID E-WASH targets urban WASH challenges, especially at the water board or utility level, building from five key assumptions:

- The state governments that own the water boards will be committed to reform efforts.
- Governance improvements in the water boards will be strengthened by state governments’ motivation and willingness to entrench corporate structure in the water boards.
- The state governments are committed to adjust tariffs in terms of both cost recovery and affordability.
- Broad-based stakeholder engagement, effective civil society engagement, and accountability mechanisms are necessary to monitor and advocate for reform.
- USAID can continue to work effectively with other development partners, particularly the World Bank and African Development Bank, to achieve meaningful scale and impact; and
- USAID’s efforts will catalyze governance improvements within the SWBs.

**USAID E-WASH Innovation Grant Fund: Utility Technical Assistance**

The E-WASH project, is aimed at improving urban water service delivery by strengthening the governance, financial, and technical viability of the participating state water boards (SWBs) in Nigeria, to address gaps in urban water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Nigeria. There is a dear need to address the enormous challenges faced by the urban WASH service delivery including particularly on the technical operations and related matters. The reform is intended at providing opportunity for increase in investment in infrastructure and expand access to water and sanitation to large unserved and underserved populations. This will help the SWBs perform better and will raise the quality of services for their customers; facilitate services-driven economic performance; improve state finances by increasing cost recovery, reducing subsidies, and increase the state’s capacity to sustainably serve all customers in selected urban areas, including the poor. Technical issues pertaining to physical and commercial losses, quality of drinking water and shortage of supplies will be addressed and lead to improved technical and financial performance of the targeted water utility and will foster short-, medium- and long-term investment planning that will allow for access of relevant funding as applicable.

It is the potential grantee is expected to acquaint the utility of the need, step-up the supply capacity in order to meet the daily demand, and build and increase the active connections to reach the urban poor and/or the irregular urban settlements with the quality that meets the standard. Urban water supply services are currently inadequate for the needs of the urban populace. Large numbers of households in cities do not have access to one of the most basic of human needs—a safe and reliable supply of drinking water.

Award(s) will contribute to one or more of the results below:
**Result 1**: The targeted state water board will have improved technical infrastructure and approach that will lead to better operational and financial viability. This should include how it will improve services to the urban poor.

**Result 2**: The targeted utility will receive innovative support to optimize its technical operations, such as reducing the physical & commercial loss in water delivery.

**Result 3**: The targeted utility will improve the drinking water quality to deliver safe and reliable services.

**Minimum Eligibility Criteria.**

Applicants must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements to qualify for funding under this REOI.

- Be legally registered as a non us non-governmental organization or for-profit private entity and having capacity to operate in Nigeria.
- Have a physical office in Nigeria.
- Have demonstrative success in the proposed area of intervention and other WASH related solutions.
- Preferred to have been active for at least 3 years' operating within their sector and respective state.
- Have three (3) or more full time or part time staff.
- Any proposed partnerships with other companies or organizations must be explicitly stated.
- Be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project, not acting as an intermediary/consultant.
- Be willing to comply with all technical and financial requirements for participation in the program, including reporting and documentation of project activities, communication strategy and capacity development opportunities.
- Be eligible to receive funded awards from the United States government.

Organizations that do not meet the criteria above will not be considered.

**Application Process**

The application process for the E-WASH Innovation Grant will take place in two steps as described below

1) **Stage One – Concept Note:**

Applicants will submit a Concept Note using the template provided below, following the instructions contained in this document. will acknowledge the submission of Concept Papers within three (3) business days. RTI will review Concept Papers against the merit review criteria detailed below. RTI will provide individual results to each applicant within 15 working days following the meeting of the Technical Evaluation Committee. Applicants who do not meet the objectives, minimum eligibility requirements or receives inadequate rating will be rejected.

2) **Stage Two – Full Application:**

Successful applicants from Stage One will be invited to a Co-creation and ideation workshop, which will be facilitated by relevant technical advisors. The ideation workshop will provide successful concept note applicants with support to address weaknesses identified in their concept note and align concepts to USAID E-WASH's objectives. A technical advisor will
support the applicant in expansion of the concept note to a program description and grant application. Applicants will submit a grant application in response to a Request for Application (RFA). Grant Applications will be evaluated based on the technical factors detailed in the RFA.

This funding opportunity will be open until November 18, 2020 and concept notes will be accepted through the entire funding opportunity time. Concept notes will be reviewed by Technical Evaluation Committee on a bimonthly basis in accordance with the stated factors below.

There will be a bidder’s conference on November 16, 2020 at 1pm WAT using the Zoom application. To participate, kindly send your request to grants@ewash.rti.org by 5pm on November 15, 2020 and a meeting link and instructions on how to log on will be shared with you.

Interested organizations should kindly send their indication of interest/concept note by email to grants@ewash.rti.org with the email subject “E-WASH Innovation Grant Fund: UOA” on or before 19th November, 2020.

Stage One-Concept Note Technical Evaluation Criteria

Concept papers will be reviewed by a Technical Evaluation Committee according to the criteria described below. The purpose of this review is to ensure that prospective partners bring appropriate capabilities, experiences and potential contributions to the co-creation process (if held) and ultimately the implementation of activities. A concept paper is determined to be successful if it receives a PASS overall based on the criteria below, which are listed in descending order of importance.

[Note: The criteria below are for the concept paper only. Additional criteria will be circulated as a part of a full Request for Applications for Stage Two Applicants.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Element</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting E-WASH Objectives</td>
<td>The extent to which the Concept Paper explains how the technical approach will improve WASH services through effective and safely managed delivery to satisfy the customers and optimize coverage that will foster the financial and operational sustainability of the participating State Water Utilities.</td>
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<td>Technical Approach</td>
<td>The degree to which the proposed approach presents a cohesive plan that is technically sound, innovative, feasible, and cost effective, in addressing financial and physical loss reduction in WASH operations and promoting and eliminating water related health hazards in E-WASH the participating States. And the extent to which the proposed plan for measuring results is feasible and relevant to monitoring project impact.</td>
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<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>The extent to which the Concept Paper’s proposed approach is sustainable and increases the likelihood that urban WASH stakeholders,</td>
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enhance continuity in the reform process for greater improvement.

| Institutional Capacity | The degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience in implementing demand-side governance solutions or WASH projects, consistent with the Round program statement and results. The concept paper demonstrates an appropriate management structure, organizational capabilities, expertise, experience, and building of the stakeholders’ capacities. |

RTI will assess its level of confidence that the applicant will successfully perform based on the technical evaluation criteria listed above. In doing so, RTI will utilize the following confidence approach to select successful applicants from Stage One:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>RTI has <em>high confidence</em> that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, and will be successful in performing with <em>little or no</em> intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>RTI has <em>some confidence</em> that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, and will be successful in performing with <em>some</em> intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>RTI has <em>low confidence</em> that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, or will be successful in performing <em>even with</em> intervention.</td>
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<td><strong>Name of applying organisation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Project name</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Date of submission</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Proposed grant value (NGN)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Proposed project duration (in months)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Contact name</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Contact position</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Senior sponsor name and position (if different to contact)</strong></td>
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**Overview**: Please introduce your organisation, including background, vision, and mission. Please outline the geographies in which you operate, your target population and your current programmes and interventions.

**Context**: If relevant, describe your organization’s any existing programmes and / or interventions which focus on urban WASH, gender and social inclusion, mobile technology, or both.
Proposed project. Describe the project, objectives, and rationale, including how it fits into your overall mission. What is your ‘offering’? (this can be a mobile-based product or service, or tariff marketing campaign, etc) How will it help you better reach and serve the urban poor in terms of WASH service delivery? What is innovative about the approach you are proposing?

Target population: Define the target population for this project, stating also which geographic focus it will take. Note: E-WASH implements only in Abia, Delta, Imo, Niger and Taraba States

Definition of success: How do you define success for the proposed project? What do you anticipate is the concrete social value of this project, including the potential large-scale increase in access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services? Please share any quantitative targets you may already have, including those relating to the number of resource-poor women served.
**Sustainability:** How will you ensure that your offering is sustained beyond the Innovation Fund grant period?

**Delivery and management:** How do you plan to deliver the project, e.g. through a consultant or through existing staff? Who will be responsible for the implementation of the project and for the deployment of the grant funds? Who will be responsible for managing the partnerships?

**Use of funds:** How do you anticipate using this grant funding? Why is this grant necessary to move the project forward? How will you ensure that the impact of the Innovation Fund grant is additive, rather than duplicative, with regards to other funding your organisation receives?

**Please complete the following section**

1. Is your organisation a for-profit entity? __Yes __No
2. Is your organisation registered in Nigeria? __Yes __No. If so, please attach a copy of registration.
3. Has your organisation been in operation for 3 years or more? __Yes __No
4. If awarded a grant, is your organisation willing and able to share commercial project data (e.g. subscriber data, brand tracker, etc.) with USAID E-WASH on a confidential basis? __Yes __No