USAID | KENYA AND EAST AFRICA
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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Reference: **Request for Information No. 72061520RFI000001**

Issue Date: **December 20, 2019**

Response Due Date: **January 24, 2020, 10.00 PM, Kenyan Time.**

Title: **Western Kenya Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Activities**

USAID/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA)'s Office of Economic Growth and Integration is in the process of designing a new activity to improve the sustainable management of water and sanitation services in selected counties in Western Kenya. The purpose of this RFI is to provide industry and stakeholders an opportunity to review, comment and suggest areas of enhancement in the Program Description Framework.

Responses to this RFI are strictly voluntary and USAID will not pay respondents for the information provided in response to this RFI. Information, comments, and suggestions received will be reviewed and may be incorporated into a future solicitation. Responses to this RFI will not be returned and respondents will not be notified of the result of the review.

This RFI does not restrict the Government's approach on a future solicitation. No decision has been made regarding the type of instrument that will be used (e.g. acquisition or assistance). For this reason, this RFI will be posted on both the Federal grants website, www.grants.gov and the Federal Business Opportunities website at www.fbo.gov.

INSTRUCTIONS

USAID/KEA invites the public to submit comments, suggestions, and other information for consideration regarding the overall technical approach and the feasibility and effectiveness of proposed approaches for achieving the goals and objectives. In addition, to general comments USAID/KEA would appreciate feedback on the technical viability and appropriateness of the two proposed development challenges.

Responses to this RFI will only be accepted by e-mail to **westernwash@usaid.gov** and are due by the date stated on the cover page.

Responses must be in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat formats and clearly labeled on all pages with the name of the organization responding and, "Response to RFI - Western Kenya WASH Activities."

Responses to this RFI must be limited to not more than 3 pages. Thank you for your interest in USAID programs and for taking the time to respond to this RFI.

Broad Agency Announcement

USAID/KEA is contemplating the use Broad Agency Announcement to identify merging solutions that are readily adaptable to meet this daunting development challenge.

The BAA process allows selected organizations and USAID to discuss and negotiate award parameters, ensuring that organizations have the opportunity to adapt research and development solutions for the international context as necessary in order to achieve success in the resulting demonstration projects.

Awards issued under this solicitation will be for Applied Research or Development, as those terms are defined in FAR 35.001. The definitions are restated for convenience below: "Applied research" means the effort that:

(a) normally follows basic research, but may not be severable from the related basic research;

(b) attempts to determine and exploit the potential of scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques; and;

(c) attempts to advance the state of the art. When being used by contractors in cost principle applications, this term does not include efforts whose principal aim is the design, development, or testing of specific items or services to be considered for sale; these efforts are within the definition of "development," given below.

"Development" means the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service) to meet specific performance requirements or objectives. It includes the functions of design engineering, prototyping, and engineering testing; it excludes subcontracted technical effort that is for the sole purpose of developing an additional source for an existing product. In addition, FAR 2.101 defines "basic research" as "research directed toward increasing knowledge in science. The primary aim of basic research is a fuller knowledge or understanding of the subject under study, rather than any practical application of that knowledge."

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY, issued solely for information and planning purposes. It is not a solicitation and is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government or USAID to issue any solicitation or ultimately award a contract or assistance agreement on the basis of this RFI. If a Solicitation is issued, it will be announced publicly at a later date and all interested parties must respond to that Solicitation announcement separately from any response to this announcement. The RFI is an attempt to reach out to the market in an effort to determine the scope of industry capabilities and interest and will be treated as information only. Responses (comments, suggestions an enhancements) to this notice are not applications and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding agreement.

Sincerely,

Nya Kwai Boayue
Contracting and Agreement Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Program Description

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ATTACHMENT 1 – DRAFT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FRAMEWORK

Background

Despite on-going economic progress, Kenya continues to face challenges in providing sustainable access to water and sanitation services, with only 61 percent of Kenyans having access to a basic drinking water service, and only 30 percent having access to basic sanitation (WHO/UNICEF JMP 2017). This lack of progress is largely due to weak governance and institutional capacity, inadequate sector financing, insufficient adoption of key sanitation and hygiene behaviors, and poor management of natural resources.

The impacts of this lack of adequate WASH services on the well-being and productivity of Kenya's growing population are profound. Diarrheal diseases remain a leading cause of under-five mortality[1], and over 25 percent of children under five are stunted in Kenya[2]. These malnutrition rates are unlikely to improve until WASH conditions improve. Beyond that, there are negative economic, environmental, and governance consequences as a result of a lack of water and sanitation services.

Sector reform efforts have resulted in significant changes in the institutional arrangements and responsibilities for water and sanitation service provision in Kenya. The 2016 Water Act aligns the water sector with the Constitution's primary objective of devolution, recognizing that water related functions are a shared responsibility between the national government and the county government. The Water Act gives county governments the mandate for water and sanitation service provision and the development of county water works. Water service and water resource regulation remains the responsibility of the national government, as does the management of national public water works. These changes offer opportunity for new spaces for public participation and accountability, but challenges in operationalizing these reforms remain.

Purpose

The activity will work in target counties in western Kenya with the goals of (1) building a robust sanitation and hygiene market to enable the adoption of higher quality latrines and county-wide access to hygiene products; and (2) ensuring county-wide sustainable drinking water services to households, including effective management of water resources.

Relationship to USAID's Strategies

Journey to Self-Reliance
In the WASH sector, self-reliance is the ability of the government, civil society, and private sector to plan, finance, and implement sustainable solutions to ensure water resources

[1] KDHS 2014
[2] KNBS et al. 2015

management and to deliver water and sanitation services to all. Fostering self-reliance requires an unwavering focus on sector governance and finance. Increasing finance for the water and sanitation sectors and improving governance are inextricably linked. When countries have effective policies, country-led processes, mutual accountability, and institutions capable of implementing them, they attract investment from both domestic and external sources, leading to a cycle of increased capacity, greater investor confidence, increased sector finance and accelerated coverage of water and sanitation services.

The Western Kenya WASH activity will take a facilitative approach to the delivery of sustainable services by empowering and building the capacity across government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders. The activity will focus on county governments as the duty-bearers for service delivery and regulation, while taking a market-based approach to support water and sanitation service providers to operate on commercial principles. It will also aim to foster citizen engagement to demand for government to fulfill its duties in the water and sanitation sectors. With these pieces in place, the sector will be on a firm pathway towards self-reliance.

U.S. Government Global Water Strategy (GWS) and USAID's Water and Development Plan
These strategies, as required by the Water for the World Act of 2014, guide the Agency's WASH programming. The goal of USAID's Plan is to "increase the availability and sustainable management of safe water and sanitation for the underserved and most vulnerable, in alignment with U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives". Kenya was designated as a priority country under the GWS due to the high needs for WASH services and high opportunity for impact in the sector. This activity will support the achievement of all development results of the Water and Development Plan.

Concept
This activity will tackle two persistent challenges in Western Kenya. It is expected that the activity will work in some or all of the following counties:

- Bungoma
- Busia
- Homa Bay
- Kakamega
- Kisii
- Kisumu
- Migori
- Siaya

In these counties, access to basic water services is moderate, although access to water piped on premises remains very low. Open defecation rates are very low in this zone, yet access to basic sanitation services is also low. This area shows great potential to scale up commercial models of water supply and sanitation service delivery, as well as begin to move people to high levels of service with greater likelihood of long term sustainability. It will be critical for the activity to develop county-wide approaches that address the systems-level barriers and incentives for sustainable service provision.

1. *Building a robust sanitation and hygiene market*

Despite reductions in population practicing open defecation, access to basic sanitation services has not improved over the past 15 years[3]. In 2011, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation (MOPHS) initiated the Open Defecation Free (ODF) Rural Kenya Campaign, adopting Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as its core strategy. While this approach, which centers on triggering community collective action to stop open defecation, has shown success in reducing open defecation in many places, it has not led to wide adoption of improved sanitation facilities. New approaches are needed to achieve progressive realization of higher quality sanitation services. At the same time, girls and women frequently lack the water, toilets, and disposal mechanisms to manage their menstruation at school, at home, at work, and in other public institutions. This need has often been neglected in sanitation and hygiene initiatives, and new approaches to ensure safe menstrual hygiene management are needed.

Market-based solutions are critical for improving the quality of sanitation and hygiene products and services, beyond what can be built under a "Do-It-Yourself" model, such as that promoted through CLTS. This activity will work to counter previous, full subsidy approaches, to market sanitation and hygiene products as desirable and aspirational, rather than relying on health promotion to motivate adoption. Engagement with private sector actors will be critical to stimulate innovation and investment to meet demand, while considering affordability, sustainability, and local market conditions. USAID is seeking innovative approaches to strengthen market actors such as sanitation enterprises, sales agents, and financial institutions to lay the foundation for a functioning, sustainable market for sanitation and hygiene.

2. *Ensuring county-wide sustainable drinking water services to households*

While access to basic water services has been increasing, existing rural water services suffer from poor financial and technical sustainability. Recent evidence shows that rates of non-functionality for rural water services are often around 40%. Poorly managed water resources and climate variability also impact many water supply sources in terms of both quantity and quality. In an effort to facilitate better delivery of services, as opposed to funding infrastructure and direct service provision, this activity will apply a range of approaches to both professionalize rural water services and strengthen water utilities, while protecting the watersheds and effectively managing the water resources that these services rely upon.

In areas served by formal Water and Sanitation Companies (WASCOs), there is a need to improve the operational performance of these utilities in order to allow them to engage more effectively with commercial finance. However, much of the population in these

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[3] washdata.org

counties lie outside the service area of these WASCOs. In those rural areas, the activity will need to identify ways to work with the private sector, government, and civil society to expand services, improve the quality of services, monitor service delivery, and enforce environmental standards. New approaches to address the challenge of providing reliable operations and maintenance services to these disparate water systems will be needed to address the on-going challenge of functionality. In order to ensure both the quality and quantity of water supply services, the management of water resources needs to be better integrated into water supply activities. The activity will identify opportunities to directly link the work of water resource user associations with that of service providers to protect water sources.

County governments are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all citizens have reliable water services. Therefore, this activity will strengthen institutional capacity at the county level to plan for, finance, and manage water and sanitation services. Monitoring and regulation of water services is particularly important for rural services delivered by private sector actors or community based organizations. To address this need, the activity will develop approaches to support the creation and use of water and sanitation regulations, and monitoring and asset management systems that are fit-for-purpose and can be financed and managed by local officials.

Cross Cutting Principles

- *Private Sector Engagement* - An enterprise-driven approach is critical in meeting consumer demand for WASH services and is therefore a key focus of this activity. The activity will work to leverage private-sector expertise, technology, investment and other capabilities to provide relevant water and sanitation solutions and improve the sustainability of WASH service delivery. Potential private sector partners may range from large, multinational corporations to local enterprises providing services in a limited geographic area.

- *Partner with Local Civil Society* - Civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens have an important role to play in holding government actors accountable for delivering the services they are mandated to provide. Kenya WASH CSO investments towards lobbying and advocacy have increased in recent years, yet they need to build legitimacy and expertise in order to monitor the performance of government and hold it to account. This activity will engage with CSOs to support their advocacy efforts and enhance engagement with citizen groups to build a better understanding of the services citizens are entitled to.

- *Youth* - Engaging youth will be a critical component of this activity. In particular, leveraging previous investments by USAID/KEA, as well as identifying innovative ways to strategically engage youth in citizen advocacy, entrepreneurship, and behavior change efforts will be essential to seeing sustained results.

- *Leveraging Resources* - As USAID moves away from a direct service delivery role in Kenya, this activity will need to leverage resources to achieve sustainable results. Leveraging resources from the domestic public sector, commercial financial institutions, or other private sector actors will be critical to achieving results.

- *Coordination* - The activity will foster coordination and collaboration platforms that bring together relevant stakeholders at county and national levels. This will enable better allocation of resources within counties as stakeholders better coordinate their investment and work to jointly monitor sector progress. It will also enable cross-learning between those in the sector in order to more quickly scale up innovations and promising approaches. Proactive, intentional coordination and collaboration with county governments and other USAID-funded activities in target counties will also be critical to ensure results are maximized.

- *Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting* - A continuous commitment to learning about new approaches and adapting as necessary through the life of the activity will be critical to success. While the activity may need to test an array of approaches to ensure results, it must need to learn from its interventions and quickly focus on efforts that are producing results, drop those that are not, and adapt interventions where appropriate.