



**USAID**  
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# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

**No.: 720-660-18-RFI-01**

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**Issuance Date:** March 21, 2018

**Comments Due Date:** April 25, 2018; 17:00 PM Kinshasa, DRC, local time

**Subject:** Input into USAID/DRC's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Planning

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The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to collect written information about the capabilities and interest of all public and private parties in participating in a co-creation process<sup>1</sup> to identify innovative solutions to increase access to sustainable Water and Sanitation in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The information will be used to help make planning decisions and influence activity design to improve future development outcomes and is published in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 10 and FAR 15.201(e).

This is an RFI, not a Request for Proposals (RFP), and is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government to issue any solicitation or ultimately award an agreement on the basis of this RFI, nor to pay for any information submitted as a result of this request, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any comments.

Any funding proposals submitted in response to this request will not be considered. Responses to this notice must be received by no later than the due date and time stated below in this notice. All information provided will become the property of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will not be returned, and will not be released publicly. USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for USAID's own purposes. Proprietary information must not be sent.

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### Background

Although the DRC is one of the most freshwater-rich countries in Africa, the water and sanitation sector is defined by very low access rates and wide disparities between urban and rural areas, major cities and marginal urban areas. The DRC failed to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for both water and sanitation, and access is substantially below sub-

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<sup>1</sup> Co-creation is defined by USAID as a collaborative process that brings together people in a workshop session to create solutions to specific development challenges. When using co-creation, USAID teams work alongside partners, stakeholders, potential implementers, and end users to collaboratively define the problem, identify new and existing solutions, build consensus around areas for action, and/ or refine plans to move forward with programs and projects. As its name implies, co-creation relies on collaboration with a diverse set of actors, allowing for a more equitable distribution of both the responsibility and ownership of outputs across all partners.

Saharan regional averages of 68% access to clean drinking water and 30% access to sanitation.<sup>2</sup> Basic water facilities are available to only 52% of the DRC's population, and less than 29% have access to basic sanitation.<sup>3</sup> Due to rapid population growth, the total number of Congolese lacking access to basic water and sanitation facilities drastically increased during the MDG period by more than a quarter to over 35 million and 53 million, respectively<sup>4</sup>, although the overall percentage with basic access increased.

Access to improved, non-shared sanitation facilities is low and nearly equivalent in both urban and rural areas, and gains at the national level have come from increases in rural access. Open defecation remains more common in rural areas, although at less than 20% of the population, the practice is relatively limited compared to other countries in the region.

The current governance structure also contributes to the poor performance of the sector, which is characterized by poor service, a bias toward specific institutions and services, low recovery rates, and weak governance. The new DRC Water Law and Policy (2015–16)<sup>5</sup> lays the foundation for new reforms and sector policies. The policy framework includes a National Water Policy, a National Hygiene Policy, and a National Sanitation Strategy and Policy, and calls for a dedicated Water Ministry, with an independent regulator for water and sanitation services. The law recognizes that access to water services is a right for all. It also acknowledges the costs involved in providing water services and provides criteria for equitable tariff setting and cost recovery. Additionally, under this law, the private sector is allowed to participate and can therefore, through market-based approaches, introduce innovative business models that would contribute towards the development of sustainable models for service delivery.

This broad mandate is as much a problem as strength. Not only must the implementers of the law navigate the complexity of the Democratic Republic of Congo's vast state apparatus during an ongoing political crisis, the unfinished decentralization effort has increasingly shifted responsibilities for infrastructure to under-resourced and inexperienced local entities (or communities), such as the *Entitees Territoriales Decentralisees* (ETDs).<sup>6</sup>

Government funding for the sector has generally declined over the MDG period from 5 percent in 1990 to 1.2 percent in 2015,<sup>7</sup> and the DRC's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector relies heavily on external partners to receive both funding and technical assistance. These donors focus activities on water resource management, governance, water supply, access, and treatment. Through the Global Water Court of 2030<sup>8</sup>, the Democratic Republic of the Congo leases the rights, on a twenty-year basis, to parcels of its water endowment, as part of a wider economic

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<sup>2</sup> Please see: <https://www.one.org/international/issues/water-and-sanitation/>

<sup>3</sup> WHO/UNICEF. 2015. Progress on sanitation and drinking water – 2015 update and MDG assessment: [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Progress-on-Sanitation-and-Drinking-Water\\_234.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Progress-on-Sanitation-and-Drinking-Water_234.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. 2017. WASH Poor in a Water-Rich Country: A Diagnostic of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo. World Bank, Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup> <http://leganet.cd/Legislation/JO/2016/JOS.13.01.2016.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> World Bank. 2017. WASH Poor in a Water-Rich Country: A Diagnostic of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo. World Bank, Washington, DC.

<sup>7</sup> Id.

<sup>8</sup> Water Security: The Water-Food-Energy-Climate Nexus. The World Economic Forum Water Initiative (Geneva). Washington: Island Press, Feb 2011

development plan. Despite all the efforts and investment in the sector, the country still confronts the recurrence of well-characterized epidemic-prone diseases such as cholera.

In order to address this challenge of strengthen the WASH sector in the DRC and also achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 6, a substantial increase in sector financing will be necessary. But, it is important to note that these gaps cannot be closed by simply leveraging more financing, instead, what is also needed is the adaptation of innovative business practices and technology that would improve, and sustain quality and coverage of water and sanitation service provision.

USAID's overall goal in the DRC, as outlined in its Country Development Cooperation Strategy for 2015–2019,<sup>9</sup> is to support the country's long-term transition to more effective and empowering development. To maximize impact, USAID programming targets specific institutions, geographic regions, and technical sectors. Development Objective (DO) 1 focuses on strengthening national-level institutions. DO 2 targets provincial and local institutions in the provinces that make up the former, larger, Kasai and Katanga provinces, as well as large urban populations in the cities of Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. Transition Objective (TO) 3 focuses on conflict-affected areas of eastern DRC: North and South Kivu, Tanganyika, and parts of Maniema and Orientale provinces. Coordinated donor efforts in these regions are around key infrastructure investments for roads, rail, water, and power funded primarily by the African Development Bank and the World Bank.

Since 2008, USAID/DRC has made significant investments in water programming. Investments to date have been focused on supporting direct water and sanitation service provision and promoting adoption of improved hygiene behaviors as part of the implementation of the government's "Healthy Village and schools"(Villages et Ecoles Assainis, VEA) program<sup>10</sup>.

Within this framework, and in response to the challenges and opportunities mentioned above, USAID/DRC is in the process of designing its next phase of activities in the DRC related to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). It is anticipated that these activities will be implemented over a period of approximately five years from 2019 - 2024. USAID seeks to incorporate feedback from a wide range of actors in various sectors in order to improve the program design of new WASH activities for the greatest impact in the following areas (not listed in order of importance):

#### Potential Areas for Programming

- ❖ Systems approach to thinking about water, sanitation and hygiene
- ❖ Quality service delivery, equity and sustainability
- ❖ Effective gender-responsive WASH services
- ❖ Increased access and use of affordable and appropriate WASH products and services;
- ❖ Increased adoption of WASH behaviors for improved health using evidence-based approaches.
- ❖ Nexus between Food Security, Nutrition and WASH
- ❖ Outbreaks (Cholera, etc)

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<sup>9</sup> USAID/DRC CDCS: <https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/cdcs>

<sup>10</sup> For example, see: [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2012\\_Evaluation\\_du\\_Programme\\_EVA-RDC.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2012_Evaluation_du_Programme_EVA-RDC.pdf)

- ❖ Private sector expertise to improve sustainable access to WASH products/services
- ❖ Innovative financing to support market development in order to increase access to WASH products/services
- ❖ Improved governance of the WASH sector

Throughout these program areas, USAID is seeking to address the lack of sustainability in WASH programming by incorporating research<sup>11</sup> as well as 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) that would lead to systemic improvements in the WASH sector. More specifically, this holistic and strategic approach of research, and scientific and technical knowledge would address issues related to WASH system analysis, specifically, quality and coverage of water and sanitation services; emphasize the strengthening of capacity of formal and informal institutions that are the most active in the sector through innovative business practices; and engage the private sector with the goal of increasing sustainable models of service delivery.

### **Submission Instructions**

Individuals and Organizations that wish to provide input to USAID must utilize the attached template developed for this purpose. Interested parties who consider themselves qualified to address the above-listed task areas are invited to submit a response to this RFI in the form of the attached template no later than **April 25, 2018 at 17:00PM** Kinshasa, DRC, local time. All responses under this RFI must be emailed to Amy McQuade at [amcquade@usaid.gov](mailto:amcquade@usaid.gov) with a copy to A&A Specialist Andre Nkuluntu at [ankuluntu@usaid.gov](mailto:ankuluntu@usaid.gov).

The issuance of this request will not restrict the Government's ultimate approach, if any. Respondents are advised that USAID is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information, answer questions or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted. Any information submitted in response to this notice is voluntary. Not responding to this request does not preclude participation in any future solicitation, if any is issued.

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<sup>11</sup>Research is defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 2.101 as: "**Basic research**" means that 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. And in FAR 35.001: "**Applied research**" means that effort which (1) normally follows basic research, but may not be severable from the related basic research, (2) attempts to determine and exploit the potential of scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques, and (3) attempts to advance the state of the art. Applied research does not include efforts whose principal aim is design, development, or test of specific items or services to be considered for sale; these efforts are within the definition of the term "development," defined in this subsection. FAR 35.001: "**Development**" as used in this part, 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.

**Appendix 1: Request for Information (RFI) Response Template**  
**USAID/Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**  
**Office of Health**  
**RFI-720-660-18-RFI-01**

Name:  
Title:  
Organization:  
Email:

USAID/DRC/HEALTH is interested in responses to the following specific questions. (Respondents are encouraged to review the questions and include responses to the most relevant questions in their submissions. Respondents do **not** need to respond to all the questions listed below.):

1. Regarding the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (GDRC) role in the issuance of decrees, what are likely blockages to the implementation of the DRC Water Law and Policy (2015–16) at a national and provincial level? What opportunities are there to influence the legal process, especially in terms of measures that should be prioritized? What risks are there?
2. What are the ongoing effects of the decentralization and deconcentration processes on the WASH sector? To what extent and in what ways can the decentralization and deconcentration processes contribute to effectiveness and ownership of WASH services? How can the effects be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively?
3. How can we frame mutually-beneficial mechanisms for private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to engage at the policy level, in ways that support country plans and strategies for universal access to WASH? How can we harness private sector contributions to improve the enabling environment for WASH? How can we leverage private sector resources to increase access and improve services?
4. What technology, products, and business models<sup>12</sup> could be incorporated to improve access to sustainable and efficient water and sanitation services as well as sharpen the

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incentives for service providers to perform better and produce stronger results? Are there opportunities to address product gaps in low-cost, appropriate sanitation products and services, and to improve service/supply chains to reach those with low access?

5. Is gender considered as a dimension of market opportunity, as a lens on production, distribution or financing? What is the gender dimension of new products, services and business models for WASH?
6. What are the structural market challenges to service delivery in WASH? Are spare parts supply chains the main barrier to rural WASH access and sustainability? What are other WASH service-delivery constraints and potential solutions?
7. Please outline the characteristics of a specific WASH activity (in the WASH program areas listed in the RFI) that would help USAID/DRC to catalyze increased financing (private investment for water or sanitation infrastructure, services, and water resource management) for quality services that are sustainable.
8. What research and development tools, strategy, or indicators might guide future WASH service delivery programs in conflict-affected areas, specifically with “host” communities that regularly experience displacement and long-term humanitarian crises, to help maximize the extent to which innovation can contribute to build sustainable functioning systems?
9. Water pricing is a challenging issue, as it lies at the heart of the equity versus efficiency dilemma. The limited financing available to the sector has been focused in two institutional channels: (1) the urban water utility Régie de Distribution d’Eau (REGIDESO) for urban areas, and (2) the Ecole et Village assainis (EVA) program led by UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health. What is the level of access and quality of WASH services experienced by marginal urban areas and rural areas as compared to more affluent areas? How can innovation, both technical and financial, help in tackling this challenge?
10. How can USAID better leverage Life-Cycle Cost analyses<sup>13</sup> and a Multiple Use Services<sup>14</sup> approach to support policy makers and implementers of government and civil society to better plan, budget and finance WASH services?
11. What adaptive management approaches and learning questions should USAID consider to ensure flexible, responsive programming for WASH in DRC?
12. USAID/DRC is considering pursuing a co-creation<sup>15</sup> design process with selected applicants. Please explain your experience (if any) and interest in co-creation.

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<sup>13</sup> Life-Cycle Costs Approach: Costing Sustainable Services. Available online:

<http://www.ircwash.org/resources/briefing-note-1a-life-cycle-costs-approach-costing-sustainable-service>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://www.usaid.gov/global-waters/september-2010/multiple-use-water>

<sup>15</sup> Co-creation is defined by USAID as a collaborative process that brings together people in a workshop session to create solutions to specific development challenges. When using co-creation, USAID teams work alongside partners, stakeholders, potential implementers, and end users to collaboratively define the problem, identify new and

13. Should USAID/DRC decide to host a co-creation design process, please specify which location your organization prefers to travel to (at their own expense) to participate in the co-creation process should you be selected:

- a.) Kinshasa, DRC
- b.) Goma, DRC
- c.) Washington, D.C.

B. In addition to the specific questions, requested above, please outline below any general program recommendations, relevant context, existing capacities, or other information pertinent to the design of future USAID/DRC WASH programming relevant to its objectives and programming areas as noted in the RFI that you would like to share here.

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existing solutions, build consensus around areas for action, and/ or refine plans to move forward with programs and projects. As its name implies, co-creation relies on collaboration with a diverse set of actors, allowing for a more equitable distribution of both the responsibility and ownership of outputs across all partners.