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TERMS OF REFERENCE

National Consultant, ASWA III Systems strengthening and knowledge management (National Candidates only)

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Abuja, Nigeria & Remote, with travel to Kaduna and Adamawa, and Abuja
DURATION OF CONTRACT	**6 months**

Purpose of Assignment

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (DGIS), through UNICEF, is supporting the Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA III) programme across eight countries, including Nigeria. The programme targets improved access to equitable, sustainable and climate resilient WASH services in low-income contexts characterized by limited WASH coverage and poor development outcomes.

In Nigeria, ASWA III is being implemented in Kaduna and Adamawa, where access to basic WASH services remains low and gender disparities persist. In addition to improving WASH service delivery, ASWA III also aims to strengthen systems for WASH service delivery. Key systems strengthening initiatives under ASWA III include support to the Heads of State Initiative (HOSI), strengthening WASH monitoring, knowledge management, and evidence generation, and improving WASH sector sustainability.

To address these issues, UNICEF supported the state governments to develop Sustainability Compacts and Action plans in response to the 2021 Sector-wide Sustainability Check (SWSC) findings. UNICEF has also supported the update of the WASH Information Management System (WASHIMS) to integrate climate resilience, sustainability, and gender equality indicators, and improved government capacity to report on WASH routinely on the WASHIMS. For the HOSI, UNICEF supported the government to engage in regional and global meetings hosted by the African Minister's Council on Water and the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. In 2026, the Government of Nigeria was also supported to engage in discussions WASH financing and meaningful youth engagement at the IRC WASH Systems Leadership Symposium in Kigali, and to advance the Water Compact in collaboration with the Nigeria Water Development Partner's Group.

Building on these foundations, a systems strengthening consultant is required to support the federal and state governments to advance on the knowledge management and evidence generation, WASH service sustainability and the HOSI.

Specifically, the consultant will document promising practices from ASWA III, build the system to generate evidence on WASH impacts across health and education outcomes, support the states to advance on their sustainability response plans, and support the federal government on the HOSI. Key activities that will include:

1) Development of 4 knowledge products documenting progress on climate resilience, sustainability and gender transformative WASH

2) Establishment of indicators and collection of baseline (2024), 2025 and 2026 data of key health and education outcomes from routing government monitoring systems related to WASH, in the ASWA III targeted local government areas (LGA) and communities (Lere and Kagarko LGA in Kaduna, and Shelleng and Ganye LGAs in Adamawa)

3) Support state governments to advance and institutionalize priority actions in the state sustainability plans, and the federal government to develop a concrete activities to be implemented from January 2026 – 2027 in response to the 2021 SWSC.

4) Support the federal government with engagement and initiatives related to HOSI, including: preparations for the UN Water Conference (December 2026), implementation and documentation of 2-3 priority actions from the Nigerian Youth - Government Collaborative Work Plan following the Kigali symposium, and finalization and implementation of the Nigeria Water Compact.

The consultancy will also serve a learning and adaptive management function, providing actionable recommendations to strengthen implementation, improve programme effectiveness, and enhance sustainability of ASWA III for the remaining programme period and beyond.

Scope of Work

Reporting to the WASH Manager, the consultant will undertake activities and produce deliverables in relation to systems strengthening and knowledge management. The assignment will include several components.

Inception Phase

- Review key documents, including the ASWA III programme documents, GALA report and gender action plans, Sustainability Check (2021) and state response plans, and monitoring data
- Develop an inception report outlining methodology and workplan
- Refine approach and final work plan in consultation with UNICEF

Production of knowledge products

- In collaboration with the supervisor and after review of the ASWA III programme documents, propose sites/examples to be documented as promising practices, for approval of the supervisor [thematic focus will include promising practices on strengthening climate resilient WASH services delivery, improving livelihoods through WASH businesses, gender transformative WASH, and improving WASH service sustainability]
- Provide a template(s) and outline(s) for the data collection required to produce the knowledge products
- Review data and conduct key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field work as needed, to produce the documentation
- Prepare knowledge products using agreed upon templates

Evidence generation on WASH impacts

- Scope indicators routinely measured in the Health and Education sectors (through state, LGA and facility level monitoring) and propose key indicators to be measured to determine associations between WASH and health and education outcomes
- Develop template and tools for data collection and data consolidation
- Collect baseline, 2025 and 2026 data
- Compare data collected against WASHIMS data from ASWA III interventions, and produce initial analysis and report on initial associations found (if any)

Sustainability Response plans support

- Review state sustainability compacts and in collaboration with state governments, select priority actions (2-3) to support state to implement and institutionalize during the consultancy timeframe, in consultation

with UNICEF; this will include virtual support and field visits

- Support the federal government to develop a concrete, costed plan to advance sustainability actions at the federal level, in response to the findings of the SWSC (2021) and the draft national response plan
- Produce consolidated report on sustainability actions advanced per state, good practices and gaps observed, and recommendations to further strengthen WASH service sustainability

HOSI and UN Water Conference support

- Attend meetings (virtually or in person) on the WASH compact finalization and next steps, UN Water Conference preparations, youth engagement discussions, and other systems strengthening initiatives related to HOSI
- Support government with preparations for the UN Water Conference,
- Support government and youth to implement priority actions in the Nigerian Youth - Government Collaborative Work Plan
- Document progress on the HOSI, challenges, lessons learnt, and recommendations for UNICEF to advance the HOSI agenda

Deliverables

- Prepare and submit the following key documents:
    - Inception report
    - 2 templates developed and approved by UNICEF: a) for WASH impact data collection, and b) for knowledge products
    - Four knowledge products (draft and final incorporating feedback)
    - Data collected and inputted into spreadsheet on Health and Education indicators from 2024 – 2026 in ASWA III-project areas
    - Analysis report of WASH associations with Health and Education outcomes
    - Federal level sustainability action plan (Jan – Dec 2027)
    - Report on state sustainability activities supported and key outcomes, challenges, lessons learnt and key recommendations
    - Report including briefing notes and documents prepared related to UNICEF's support to the UN Water Conference
    - Report on HOSI activities, including support provided to various initiatives, challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
Inception Phase	Deliverable #1 Inception report including: methodology and work plan, and 2 templates for WASH impact data	13 November 2026

	collection and knowledge products	
Production of knowledge products	Deliverable #2 4 final knowledge products	15 January 2027
Evidence generation on WASH Impact	Deliverable #3 Three-year data and analysis report of initial WASH associations with Health and Education outcomes	15 February 2027
Sustainability response plans support	Deliverable #4 Federal government sustainability plan and report on sustainability actions advanced in two ASWA III states	28 February 2027
HOSI UN Water Conference support	Deliverable #**5** Report outlining support to Water Compact and preparatory activities for UN Water Conference (including briefing notes and other documents prepared) Briefing notes and documents related to UNICEF's support to the UN Water Conference and other HOSI-related initiatives	15 December 2027
HOSI support	Deliverable #6 Report on HOSI progress challenges, lessons learnt, and recommendations for UNICEF to advance the HOSI agenda	15 April 2027

Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF's policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors are

responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the health insurance (and visa if applicable) required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.
- UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Minimum requirements:

Education:

- Advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in one or more of the following fields: Public Health, Community Health, Public Administration, Social Sciences, WASH Engineering, Monitoring and Evaluation, or other closely related disciplines relevant to the assignment.

Work Experience:

- At least 7 years of progressively responsible professional experience in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and public health
- Demonstrated experience in supporting high-level government engagements for international conferences and meetings
- Proven expertise in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), including design and implementation of data management and data collection tools
- Strong track record in applying evidence and analysis to inform programme design, strategy development, and policy recommendations.
- Experience in knowledge management, and quantitative and qualitative research methodologies
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience of supporting sustainability initiatives for WASH services
- Experience working with government institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, and community stakeholders, particularly in low-resource or development contexts.
- Excellent facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and communication skills, including ability to interact effectively with diverse audiences at national and local levels.
- Strong analytical, synthesis, and report writing skills, with ability to produce high-quality, evidence-based outputs within tight deadlines.

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:

- Strong understanding of WASH systems strengthening, including institutional arrangements, governance, financing, planning and monitoring
- Familiarity with WASH service sustainability assessments and approaches.
- Experience in gender-sensitive and inclusive data collection and analysis, including addressing ethical considerations and safeguarding.
- Proficiency in data analysis tools (qualitative and/or quantitative) is desirable.
- Strong understanding of climate resilient WASH, and WASH and gender equality

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in English (written and spoken) is required.
- Working knowledge of Hausa or other relevant local languages in Kaduna and Adamawa is a strong asset.

Desirables:

- Experience working in Northern Nigeria, particularly Kaduna and/or Adamawa States.
- Strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, with sensitivity to local contexts.

Technical Proposal:

- Comprehensive technical proposal must be submitted outlining how the work is to be conducted and proposed timelines. Applications without a technical proposal will not be considered.