



CONSULTANCY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: National Consultant- Water Resource and Water Governance

Data Collection

Division: UNICEF Office of Innovation, Sustainable WASH Hub, Copenhagen, Denmark

Duration: 4 months,

Duty Station: Nairobi, Kenya

Start date: 01 January, 2026

Advertising summary

The WASH Innovation Hub (WASH Hub) is implementing Groundwater mapping and exploration initiatives in the Horn of Africa and beyond. The initiative uses a combination of satellite data, digital mapping approaches, local knowledge and on-the-ground verification to identify and map deep aquifers. Building on from this approach the WASH hub is looking to understand how to develop innovative finance models to support the expansion of sustainable water sources and cost recovery opportunities.

The purpose of this assignment is to undertake a comprehensive assessment of existing data, reports and other knowledge on water resources, water demand data, stakeholder and utility data, tariff structures, and existing affordability/willingness to pay analysis in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Northern Kenya.

The study does not generate new information, but will consolidate existing evidence and data, identify knowledge gaps, and develop a structured database to inform the WASH Hub and sector investments in climate-resilient water supply services design. This work is important to inform the innovative financing models in the Horn of Africa and beyond. The tasks require a national consultant who can easily interact with different level of government, Kenyan institutions and is available travel to field locations.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a child safeguarding perspective? YES NO

If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. To save their lives. To defend their rights. To help them fulfill their potential.

Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, every day, to build a better world for everyone.

And we never give up.

For every child...innovate

UNICEF has a 70-year history of innovating for children. We believe that new approaches, partnerships and technologies that support realizing children's rights are critical to improving their lives. The **Office of Innovation** is a creative, interactive, and agile team in UNICEF. We sit at a unique intersection, where an organization that works on huge global issues meets the start-up thinking, the technology, and the partners that turn this energy into scalable solutions.

The **Sustainable WASH Innovation Hub**, based in Copenhagen, Denmark, aims to source, pilot and scale transformational and frontier climate resilient innovations that respond to key programmatic challenges that, if solved, will unlock faster progress for a water secure future for children and young people. One of the key global challenges that the Hub will address through exploration and scale of innovative solutions will be tackling foreseen climate change impacts on WASH services and delivery access. The Hub will also support research and innovation on the links between climate change and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The Hub will bring together a passionate community of strategic partners including children and young people, academia, private entrepreneurs, public policy makers, social development and humanitarian actors, and our global UNICEF WASH / CEED and innovation colleagues in 150+ countries. Collectively we will co-create, advocate, enable, convene, and motivate for innovative sustainable solutions to long-standing barriers and emerging opportunities for a WASH secure and climate resilient future for every child.

How can you make a difference?

The consultant will play a pivotal role in laying out the groundwork for an innovative approach to successful, sustainable, and evidence-based groundwater resource development and management. They will work closely with the Kenya Country office and the WASH innovation hub team which includes water and finance experts. The outcome of the consultancy work will be the identification of up to 4 potential pilot sites in the ASL counties (Wajir, Garissa, Mandera, Marsabite, Turkana and Samburu) of Northern Kenya.

The consultant will outline for each potential site:

- Overview of the sustainability of the water source for identified location and logic for selection

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- Top line overview of community expenditure on water and other investments
- County government appetite for innovation
- Outline any further studies needed to inform pilot design in identified sites

Map and assess the different financing models that support water resource management and governance

Your main responsibilities will be:

The consultant will be expected to compile reports for up to 4 locations outlining the below to the best of their ability with existing data sets. They will be expected to keep a database of the data used to compile the reports and outline how the data can be accessed in future.

The work for this consultancy is split into two areas.

1. Summary of potential sites, which should outline (to the best of their ability with the data available):

Local Water Resources Assessment

- Based on existing data, studies and reports, assess the current status of groundwater, surface water, aquifers, recharge, and seasonal variability.
- Climate risk assessment on availability and use of water sources - rainfall patterns and projections, drought cycles / water scarcity, floods, community dynamics and conflicts. Identify and collate existing resources (e.g., hydrogeological surveys, research from universities and development partners, etc).
- Document accessibility of this information (custodians, portals, MoUs).
- Identify gaps in monitoring, climate impact projections, and spatial coverage.

Water Demand Assessment

- Review current and projected water demand, considering population distribution, agricultural uses and needs, livestock, migration patterns, and climate forecast for the regions
- Establish the average number of months /days that livestock depends on permanent groundwater sources per year and patterns overtime in the climate cycle calendar.
- Map existing datasets
- Assess accessibility of data sources.
- Identify gaps in disaggregated demand data and climate-linked projections.

Stakeholder Mapping and Capacity Needs

- Identify and map all relevant stakeholders, including county water departments, utilities, water user associations, NGOs, CBOs, donor agencies, and private-sector actors active in water supply and resource management in ASAL counties.
- Document their roles, mandates, geographic coverage, and current interventions, highlighting overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for improved coordination.
- Assess institutional capacities (technical, financial, human resource, governance) to plan, operate, and regulate water services in the ASAL context.
- Identify critical capacity development needs for both government and non-government actors, especially in areas such as data management, monitoring, operation and maintenance, water quality, climate resilience, and financial sustainability of services.

Review of existing Tariff Structures and Setup

- Review current water market across the focus counties in Northern Kenya and water tariff-setting mechanisms in rural schemes for both domestic and livestock, urban utilities, private and informal water markets.
- Identify and collate available tariff data (Utilities, NGOs, county records as appropriate).

- Document accessibility of this information.
- Identify gaps in rural and informal market tariff data

Affordability and Willingness to Pay analysis

- Review household-level affordability and willingness-to-pay studies in ASAL contexts.
- Collate socio-economic datasets on household income and livelihood, agricultural needs and expenditure, water expenditure, and coping mechanisms.
- Document accessibility of this information.
- Identify knowledge gaps, including ASAL-specific and gender-disaggregated data.
- Identify sources of conflict and possible mitigation measures

Establishing What Finance Models Exist

- Map and document existing financing models for water resources and governance in Northern Kenya, covering public, community, private, donor/NGO, and emerging/innovative mechanisms.
- In discussion the WASH hub finance team analyze the sustainability and inclusiveness of these models, including their effectiveness in covering operation and maintenance, and their reach to marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- With inputs on criteria from the WASH hub finance team assess alignment with governance systems at county and national levels, including transparency and accountability.
- Identify financing gaps and opportunities for scaling up resilient, innovative, and blended financing approaches to strengthen water resources management and governance.

Clarity on data leveraged

- Compile a clear report on the data used, available data and where to find it
- Design and populate a structured format that outlines all identified datasets, studies, and information sources, organized by theme (resources, demand, stakeholders, tariffs, affordability etc).

2. Outline further studies required for selected sites

Based on the sites proposed by the consultant they are asked to outline existing data gaps and outline how studies in those sites would need to be designed to ensure data gaps are addressed.

Description of assignment

	Deliverables/Outputs	Tasks/ Deliverables/ Outputs	Delivery deadline	% of payment/ Estimated combined working days
1	Deliverable 1: Inception Report	Deliver an inception report (up to 20 pages) outlining the planned work approach, timelines, activities and review process	31/01/2026	10%
2	Deliverable 2: Proposed site selection outlining each data used, logic for decision and data gaps.	Up to four site reports of 20 pages with annexes which outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status overview 	27/02/2026	40%

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local water resources assessment Water demand assessment Stakeholder mapping and capacity needs Existing Tariff structures Affordability and willingness to pay Finance models Gap analysis in knowledge, studies, evidence Recommendations for future studies 		
3	Deliverable 3: Outline of data used to document reports, noting how it can be accessed in future	A structured report developed that consolidates all identified datasets, studies, and information sources, location and reference for future use by UNICEF	31/03/2026	20%
4	Deliverable 4: Final synthesis report summarizing findings and strategic recommendations in target counties	A comprehensive final report (max. 20 pages) summarizing the findings of the and identifying potential pilot site locations outlining providing recommendations for future groundwater resource development and management initiatives, with supporting annexes that can be used for key audiences (to be defined in discussion with the WASH hub), with supporting summary documents and presentation.	30/04/2026	20%
5	Deliverable 5: Presentation of findings to UNICEF and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional/ global workshop/ webinar & slide deck. 	30/05/2026	10%

To qualify as an advocate for every child you will have...

- An advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in Hydrogeology, Hydrology, Water Resources Management, other Water related sciences or other relevant field.
**A first University Degree in a relevant field combined with 2 additional years of professional experience may be accepted in lieu of an Advanced University Degree.*
- A minimum of 8 years of relevant professional experience at the national and/or international levels, in water resource assessments, water governance, and/or other directly related technical fields is required.
- Strong understanding of Kenya's water governance, water sector policies and institutional landscape is an asset
- Experience of supporting county or national actors in the Kenyan context is considered an asset

- Demonstrated ability to identify and extract key data relevant to governance strategies and technical programs for water
- Demonstrated ability to synthesize complex data and produce actionable insights and reports
- Knowledge and experience of finance in WASH considered an asset
- Excellent analytical, report-writing, and communication skills.
- Developing country work experience and/or familiarity with emergency is considered an asset.
- Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) or a local language is an asset.

Travel:

- The consultant will be based in Kenya and is expected to travel to relevant counties in Northern Kenya if required to access relevant existing data
- The consultant will work closely with the UNICEF team in Nairobi and will be encouraged to visit at least 3 times during the contract
- The consultant is responsible for arranging his/her own travel, including travel insurance. No visa requirements are expected for this contract.

Payment details and further considerations

- € Payment of professional fees will be based on the submission of agreed 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.

How to apply:

- € Interested applicants are required to submit a comprehensive CV with a financial proposal with all-inclusive fee. Please see the financial proposal template.
- € Financial proposal must include travel costs (economy class) and daily subsistence allowance, if travel is required as per TOR and any other estimated costs: visa, travel/health insurance
- € **Applications without a financial proposal will not be considered.**

For every Child, you demonstrate...

UNICEF's values of Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability, and Sustainability ([CRITAS](#)).

To view our competency framework, please visit [here](#).

UNICEF is here to serve the world's most disadvantaged children and our global workforce must reflect the diversity of those children. The UNICEF family is committed to include everyone, irrespective of their race/ethnicity, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, socio-economic background, or any other personal characteristic.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants/individual contractors 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.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.

Remarks:

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and advance to the next stage of the selection process.

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 to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance 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.