



## **Request for Proposals**

### **End of Program Evaluation: Advancing financial innovations in Bangladesh to meet the water and sanitation needs of the poor**

**January 2022**

**Response deadline:** 14 February, 2022 by 5:00 pm BST

#### **1. General instructions**

- A. Water.org requests proposals from research and evaluation firms to conduct an end of program evaluation study for a program aimed at improving access to water and sanitation in Bangladesh primarily through microfinancing.
- B. The evaluation will require the firm to facilitate and coordinate with Water.org staff and partner microfinance institutions for data collection in the program areas in Bangladesh. The project requires the firm to submit the deliverables outlined in section 4.
- C. Invoicing will occur upon completion and approval of the deliverables outlined as above in Section 4 of this document.
- D. Water.org is not liable for any expenditure incurred by responding firms prior to issuance of an executed contract with Water.org.
- E. Submissions must be typed and submitted only by email and must follow the format of the requests for information in Section 5: Submissions Requirements. Unless agreed upon with Water.org, no changes or corrections to a response will be allowed after the deadline.
- F. Proposed schedule:
  - 14 February 2022 – RFP submissions due by 5:00 PM BST.
  - 25 February 2022 – Results announced
  - 1 March 2022 – Contract begins
  - 30 September 2022 – Contract ends
- G. The proposals must be submitted by email to Md. Shazedul Islam and Ms. Heather Arney by Subject line should read “Bangladesh Evaluation <<name of bidding firm>>.” The proposal

must contain a technical proposal and a financial bid using Water.org's budgeting format.

## **2. Scope of work**

### **A. Overview**

For 30 years, Water.org has been at the forefront of developing and delivering sustainable solutions to the global water crisis. Water.org pioneers innovative, community-driven and market-based solutions to provide universal access to safe water and sanitation, giving women hope, children health and communities a future. To date, Water.org has positively transformed millions of lives around the world, ensuring a better life for generations ahead.

Through its flagship WaterCredit model, Water.org provides financial and technical assistance to local institutions (primarily microfinance institutions), building their capacity to offer affordable financing for water supply and sanitation services (WSS) to customers at the base of the economic pyramid (BOP). These financial products are designed based on an analysis of local market demand. Philanthropic resources provide the up-front technical assistance financial institutions need to develop these new loan portfolios. The end result: more people empowered with safe water and toilets and a sustainable, local market built for those at the BOP. WaterCredit has reached more than 40 million people across 13 countries through nine million microloans. The average size of a WaterCredit loan is US\$364, and the global average repayment of a WaterCredit loan since 2003 is 99 percent. Further, more than 87 percent of borrowers are women. More details can be found on the organization's [website](#).

Water.org is implementing a four-year program, from September 2018 – August 2022, to expand its WaterCredit activities to reach an estimated 520,000 people with safe water and/or sanitation in Bangladesh. This program will expand upon the MFI-led WaterCredit model as well as develop and test innovative approaches to sustainable water and sanitation solutions in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, Water.org has identified and partnered with 6 local microfinance institutions (MFIs) and 1 microfinance association to further develop and scale sustainable financial products that empower those at the base of the pyramid (BOP) to invest in their own water and sanitation needs. This includes the construction of water improvements and/or toilets within their homes. Water.org is also supporting the local organizations in conducting education campaigns and build awareness of critical hygiene practices, enabling sustainable improvements in community health and well-being. The program is being implemented by the MFIs in 61 of the 64 districts across all 8 divisions of Bangladesh.

### **B. Objectives of the evaluation**

The final evaluation is based on the programmatic theory of change and result framework with key performance indicators. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the program has met or is on track to meet overall goals, take inventory of lessons learned, build on experience, and make recommendations that will allow the model to be improved and refined during future iterations. The final evaluation should include information that can be shared internally and externally.

More specially, the evaluation will assess the program's progress across the following areas:

- Achievements of the programs with the respect to the targets set out at the beginning.
- Household experience and impacts: people reached and extent in which women, children and those living at the base of the economic pyramid have benefited, including the sustainability of the water and sanitation improvements. The consultant will need to conduct approximately 4,200 household surveys. Final number of surveys will be determined by Water.org and the selected firm.
- Partner financial institutions: the degree of scale among partners and their ability to scale their WSS loan portfolios to reach more people in existing and new geographies.
- Sustained WSS portfolio lending: degree in which existing and new partner financial institutions are progressing toward sustained WSS operations.
- Systems level: enabling change through a multi-stakeholder coalition to influence, update, and advance favorable policy and regulatory frameworks for WSS financing.

Based on the findings, the evaluation shall:

- Synthesize insights and draw lessons learned from the program development and delivery.
- Make recommendations for similar programs in the future.

Please refer to Annexure A: Key Objectives of the Program for more information on the key performance indicators and targets that the evaluator would need to measure under the endline evaluation.

### **Existing efforts**

The evaluation will build upon the baseline and midterm studies.

Baseline:

- The baseline survey was conducted in 2019 by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.
- The key objective of the study was to collect baseline data to be used in this impact evaluation at the end of the program and to set benchmarks for KPIs for programme outcomes. The baseline interviewed 3,200 surveys. The raw data will be provided for the selected firm to use in the endline evaluation.

Midterm:

- The midterm was completed in August 2021. The midterm objectives were to 1) assess the extent to which the program has met, or is on track to meet overall goals; 2) make an inventory of lessons learned, build on experience and make recommendations; and 3) serve as an opportunity to share experiences internally and externally.

### **C. Methodology**

The evaluation will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis to assess progress against the programmatic outcomes.

The evaluation will primarily be based on the following methods and datasets:

### **Review of program information**

During the inception phase, the consulting firm will cross-reference the original strategies and indicators identified in the intervention and design the evaluation accordingly. MIS data and other documentation from Water.org's MIS system (WaterPortal), baseline, midterm, and other program documentation are to be used.

### **Quantitative household survey analysis**

Baseline surveys were conducted among potential WSS clients dispersed across the program areas of the partner MFIs from September 2019 to November 2019. At the baseline, a total of 3,200 households in Bangladesh were surveyed. The firm would be required to survey these baseline respondents. A percentage of these baseline respondents availed loans for water and/or sanitation improvements. The firm would need to evaluate the impacts of the program on the baseline respondents who went on to avail loans. Water.org will provide the final list of respondents in the endline sample. The areas in which the surveys need to be conducted are presented in Annexure B.

In addition to the panel surveys, household surveys would be conducted for additional households to overcome any attrition in the baseline sample. The data from these additional surveys could be used in the primary research design or in performing robustness checks. The firm would need to evaluate the household impacts and estimate robust and unbiased treatment effects using an appropriate quasi-experimental design. An appropriate comparison group would need to be identified via matching or other techniques. A survey questionnaire similar to the one used for the baseline survey will be provided by Water.org and used for each MFI partner. The questionnaire will cover a range of topics consistent with the evaluation objectives and will primarily be closed ended for quantitative analysis. The questionnaire will need to be modified and translated in local languages by the firm. Translation would require being translated from English to Bangla and then back to English to ensure accuracy.

Only 3 partners participated in the baseline survey. We would explore with the hired consultant to increase the sampling size to ~4,200 household visits to collect additional data from an **additional three MFI partners** and through matching. The methodology would need to be discussed and determined in consultation with the hired consultant.

Note that the 7<sup>th</sup> partner is a microfinance association which started its program 2021, and is currently less than 1 percent of the program's impact. Due to this, we do not expect that households will not be interviewed from this partner. The evaluation for this partner will include the following:

- Brief description of WaterCredit Adoption model
- Evaluate the progress of the intervention against intervention targets and use household monitoring data if available.
- Identify lesson learned to date through desk review and stakeholder interviews

All household surveys will be administered through mWater, a digital tool and platform. The surveys are planned to be in-person with the assumption that COVID-19 cases will decline in Bangladesh after the Omicron wave. The selected firm must have a COVID-19 protocol in place that meets local and global safety practices.

**Key informant interviews:** The selected firm will need to conduct key informant interviews with selected personnel from Water.org’s partner organizations and Water.org staff to capture more in-depth qualitative information.

**Outcome harvesting:** Outcome harvesting is being undertaken to understand the impacts due to the contribution of Water.org’s advocacy efforts. The selected firm would need to include the findings of the outcome harvesting exercise in the report.

**WaterCredit sustainability tool:** To gauge partners’ progress towards an operational and sustainable WaterCredit loan portfolio, a WaterCredit assessment tool will be used. Developed by Water.org, the WaterCredit assessment tool is used to assess the water and sanitation portfolio over time, tracking its progression towards sustainability, both operationally and financially. The tool will be administered by Water.org staff (or contractor), but the selected firm would need to synthesize and incorporate the findings and results into the evaluation.

### 3. Budget

The proposed budget should not exceed of \$85,000.

### 4. Deliverables and key dates

The program requires the firm to submit the deliverables outlined in the following table.

Deliverable	Date
A kick-off meeting with Water.org to clarify roles and responsibilities (to be conducted remotely).	Start of contract, March 2022
Inception report, including desk review and outline of design approach and data inventory methodology	April 2022
Data collection tools including household surveys and stakeholder interviews, finalized and translated	April 2022
Data collection completed, 4,200 household interviews and stakeholder interviews	April – July 2022
Data analyzed and findings synthesized, raw data submitted to Water.org including household and stakeholder interviews	July 2022
Draft report for Water.org feedback (anticipate 2-3 rounds of iteration)	August 2022
Final evaluation report, not to exceed 25 pages (excluding annexes)	August 2022
7 partner summary reports draft	September 2022
7 partner summary reports finalized	September 2022
Present findings to Water.org and partner stakeholders	August / September 2022

## **5. Submission requirements**

To be considered under this RFP, please submit the following:

### **A. Technical Proposal**

A narrative proposal (no more than 10 pages excluding annexes) should include the following sections:

- a. Evaluation Methodology: Describe your overall approach including, and not limited to, data collection approach, data quality assurance measures, field planning and staffing plans.
- b. Relevant Experience: Provide details of projects of similar scope, complexity and nature you have worked on previously.
- c. Specific Expertise: Describe your expertise specific to conducting sustainability analysis, i.e., operational self-sufficiency and financial modelling.
- d. Key Personnel and Staffing: Describe the key personnel and a staffing plan for the project. Include CVs (no more than 2 pages each and attached as annex) of key personnel who would be part of the proposed plan.
- e. Timeline: Include a detailed timeline of key activities.

### **B. Financial proposal**

The financial proposal should include a detailed budget and a budget narrative. Please use the attached excel budget workbook to prepare and submit the budget. The cost estimates used to prepare the budget should be presented in USD as explained in the excel budget workbook. The budget should not exceed \$85,000.

## **6. Criteria for submission**

Applicants may be individuals, groups of individuals with a designated team lead, or firms. Applicants must have at a minimum the following qualifications:

- Proposed staffing plan includes at least one native or fluent English speaker as lead writer.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting sustainability analysis.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting operational self-sufficiency (OSS) using financial data.

## 7. Selection process

All proposals submitted by the deadline will be carefully reviewed by the Selection Committee based on established selection criteria. The selection process may involve phone interviews with applicants. The final decision will be based on the overall quality of the technical proposal and value for money. The Selection Committee reserves the right to reject any or may cancel any submission at any time prior to agreement if it is in the best interests of Water.org.

## 8. Contact

Proposals and queries related to the RFP should be sent through email to:

Md. Shazedul Islam  
Program Manager  
sislam@water.org

Ms. Heather Arney  
Sr. Manager, Insights and Innovations  
harney@water.org

## Annexure A: Key Objectives of the Program

### Outcome 1

Diverse segments of the those living in poverty have sustained access to affordable financial instruments. Water.org anticipates 445,500 WaterCredit loans to be disbursed over the life of the grant (updated from 115,555).

#### Indicators

Increase in the number of (current) partners achieving a sustainable WSS loan portfolio
Increase in new financial institution partners progressing toward a WSS loan portfolio
\$136 million in capital mobilized for WSS loans (increased from \$30M)
Increase in uptake of insurance-linked loans for deep tube wells
Increase in financial institutions which adopt digital solutions for WSS loan transactions
Increase in districts where WSS loans are being offered
More than 90% of WSS clients are female

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More than 85% of client households live under \$6 per day

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## Outcome 2

Institutions, practitioners, and governments are influenced to prioritize water and sanitation financing in policy and practice.

### Indicators

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Increase in number of partnerships among key stakeholders (multilateral, government, national banks)

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Partnerships progress against predetermined goals and milestones

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Increase in priority of WSS financing among targeted institutions

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## Outcome 3

Households living in poverty benefit from improved WSS improvements and hygiene practices.

### Indicator

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Increase in number of people reached with improved water and sanitation, progressing  
along WSS ladder (joint-monitoring program)

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Increase in number of loans disbursed for improved water and sanitation

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Increase in prevalence of key hygiene behaviors in the family

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Reduction in time spent collecting water and fulfilling sanitation needs

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Reported reduction of stress to access water and sanitation facility

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Increase in water security and reliability in the home

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Increase in dignity, safety, and security

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Increase in household income and savings

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Increase in access to arsenic-safe water from deep tube wells

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Additional indicators to be collected and analyzed.

- Client experiences, including capacity for borrowers to repay loan, degree of financial burden, loan term satisfaction
- Climate change household experience and resiliency
- Microfinance and climate resiliency

## Annexure B: Household survey areas

Row Labels	Count of Division
Barisal	142
Chittagong	1098
Dhaka	555
Khulna	120
Mymensingh	419
Rajshahi	497
Rangpur	369
(blank)	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3200</b>
Row Labels	Count of Division
<b>BURO</b>	<b>1994</b>
Barisal	47
Chittagong	711
Dhaka	306
Khulna	120
Mymensingh	220
Rajshahi	221
Rangpur	369
<b>POPI</b>	<b>448</b>
Dhaka	249
Mymensingh	199
<b>UDDIPAN</b>	<b>758</b>
Barisal	95
Chittagong	387
Rajshahi	276
<b>(blank)</b>	
(blank)	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3200</b>