

22 December 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Study on identifying the best entry points to strengthen planning, budgeting in WASH services in Bangladesh

Proposal submission deadline: 05 January 2026

Interested team of consultants/consulting/research firms are requested to submit a technical and a financial proposal through email at WaterAid-Tender-TA@wateraid.org

There will be an online pre-bid meeting scheduled on **29 December 2025, 11 AM.**

Interested bidders are requested to send their request to **WaterAid-Tender-TA@Wateraid.org before 02:00 PM on 28 December 2025**



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SECTION 1: INFORMATION TO ORGANISATIONS/INDIVIDUALS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All interested and eligible with required qualifications and experience can submit their proposal and will address as **“Bidder”**
- 1.2 Costs for preparing the proposal and attending the pre-bid and/or negotiation meeting are non-reimbursable.
- 1.3 Bidder are expected to follow highest ethical standard in their participation in the bidding process and refrain from influencing the internal selection process of WaterAid Bangladesh.
- 1.4 Any attempt of undue influence on the evaluation and selection process will lead to cancellation of the proposal from the subsequent process.
- 1.5 Any misrepresentation of facts including the facts on professional /institutional capacity will also lead to cancellation of the proposal.
- 1.6 WaterAid Bangladesh reserves the right to amend and modify this RFP document. It also reserves the right to select a bidder to provide the goods and services cited in Section 2 (Article 2.6) as deliverables of this RFP, either for the entire scope of the proposal or for a part of it.

2. Clarification and amendment of RFP documents

- 2.1 At any time before the receipt of proposals, WaterAid Bangladesh may for any reason, whether at its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by an invited organisation, amend the RFP. Any amendment shall be issued in writing and shall be posted and will be binding. WaterAid Bangladesh may at its discretion extend the deadline for the submission of proposals.

3. Preparation of proposal

Technical proposal

- 3.1 Bidder are requested to submit their proposal written in English (font-Arial, size-11). Proposals must remain valid for a minimum of 180 days after the submission date.
- 3.2 The technical part of the proposal should contain the following:
 - Appreciation of the Terms of Reference (TOR) including understanding the work
 - Detailed methodology and workplan in line with the deliverables of the assignment
 - Relevant experience and credibility to undertake the given assignment and experience in relation to the methodology proposed.
 - CV of proposed key person(s); it is desirable that the key professional staff who would be involved in the

Financial proposal

assignment have practical experience and an extended knowledge on the subject matter

- 3.3 The maximum quotation price for this assignment is **BDT 33,00,000 (Thirty-three lakh taka only)** inclusive all applicable VAT and AIT. Any proposal exceeding this limit will result in disqualification.
- 3.4 The financial proposal should contain item wise costs for the assignment with necessary details. Interested bidder are requested to use financial proposal format given in section 4A. Copy of VAT registration certificate including BIN, TIN certificate, and bank account details should be attached with the financial proposal.
- 3.5 WaterAid Bangladesh will deduct VAT and Income Tax at source according to the GoB rules and deposit the said amount to government treasury.

4. Submission of proposals

- 4.1 The technical and financial proposals should be submitted electronically to the following email address WaterAid-Tender-TA@wateraid.org with subject line as follows: **'WS4H/ Study on WASH planning and budgeting'**
- 4.2 Proposals submitted to any other e-mail account except the above will be treated as disqualified.
- 4.3 Submissions after the deadline **05 January 2026** will be treated as disqualified.
- 4.4 Two different files (PDF) should be generated for technical and financial proposals, and both the files should be submitted into one zip folder. Please name the zip folder in the name of the bidder.
- 4.5 The technical proposal should not exceed 10 pages. CVs of the key member can be annexed as appropriate; however, the organisational/ individual profile should be attached following the guidance of section 3F.

5. Proposal evaluation

- 5.1 The evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals in relation to the RFP and the TOR and applying the set evaluation criteria and point system specified herein. Each responsive proposal will be given score. Proposal(s) will be rejected at this stage if it does not respond to important aspects of the TOR.
- 5.2 The final selection will be done following a Quality and Cost Based (QCBS) method. This will be done by applying a weight of 80% and 20% respectively to the technical and financial proposal respectively. However, the financial evaluation will be made only for the technically qualified bidders.

Technical proposal: **80**

- Understanding of the assignment: **25**
- Proposed methodology and workplan: **20**
- Composition of the team: **20**
- Professional experience and accomplishments: **15**

- Financial proposal with a detailed breakdown: **20**

5.3 WaterAid reserves the right to accept and reject any proposal without assigning any reason or whatsoever and may decide to go for re-advertisement without going further down the process.

5.4 Once the proposals are evaluated, WaterAid may enter into negotiation, if required, with one or more bidders for final selection.

5.5 If negotiations fail, WaterAid Bangladesh may invite the consultant with next highest score to negotiate a contract or go for re-advertisement with fresh Requests for Proposals (RFP).

6. Pre-bid meeting

6.1 There will be an online pre-bid meeting scheduled on **29 December 2025, 11 AM.**

Interested bidders are requested to send their request to **WaterAid-Tender-TA@Wateraid.org before 02:00 PM on 28 December 2025**

7. Presentation and negotiation

7.1 Once the proposals are evaluated, only the shortlisted bidder will be contacted for next process for presentation or further clarifications. However, if any bidder does not communicate within two weeks, the proposal will be treated as un-successful.

7.2 WaterAid Bangladesh may enter into negotiation with one or more bidders before final selection. If negotiations fail, WaterAid Bangladesh will then invite those bidders whose proposals received the next highest score. If none of the invited proposals led to an agreement, a new RFP will be called upon.

7.3 The presentation and negotiations may include a discussion on the proposed methodology, workplan, staffing, costing, or any suggestions made by the bidder to improve the TOR.

7.4 WaterAid Bangladesh and the contracted organisation/ group of individuals may revise the TOR which should be incorporated final contract document.

8. Awarding of contract

8.1 The selected bidder is expected to sign an agreement with WaterAid within a week of communication of selection decision and before commencing the work.

- 9. Penalty clause** 9.1 The bidder is expected to deliver required outputs within the stipulated timeframe maintaining the quality. If for any reason, the bidder fails to deliver required deliverables within stipulated time, the bidder needs to inform WaterAid intime with valid and acceptable explanation in written. Failing to this may evoke penalty clause at the rate of 0.5% for each day of delay.
- 10. Confidentiality** 10.1 Information relating to evaluation of proposals and recommendations concerning awards will not be disclosed to the organisations who submitted the proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with the process, until the winner has been notified with award of the contract.
- 11. Focal person** 11.1 Md Golam Rasul
Research and Knowledge Management Coordinator
WaterAid Bangladesh
Can be reached directly at: GolamRasul@wateraid.org

SECTION 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Background

The study presented here forms part of the broader [WASH Systems for Health project](#), a multi-country initiative funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the Government of the UK and implemented across six countries. This programme brings together several key partners, including SNV Nepal, IRC, the University of Leeds, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), and WaterAid UK, to strengthen national and local WASH systems with a particular focus on improving health outcomes. Within this consortium, WaterAid Bangladesh is leading the country-level research. Thus, a strong expectation from the research team, including the consultant/consultancy firm, is close collaboration with project partners to ensure that the study remains aligned with wider programme objectives.

In Bangladesh, the national legal, policy, and regulatory framework for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) is largely established. However, there remain significant challenges at the local level, particularly in rural areas and small towns, where planning is inadequate, WASH budget allocation is insufficient, and budget utilisation is poor. Despite the provisions of the Local Government Act, which aims to decentralise service delivery and planning from the central government to local authorities, the planning and budgeting processes for WASH services remain highly centralised, with local governments playing a limited role. While Union Parishads and Municipalities are legally responsible for WASH service delivery, the intended devolution of funds and personnel has not occurred. As a result, local planning is often weak, reactive, and disconnected from the needs of the communities it aims to serve.

The challenges in the WASH sector are further illustrated by the patterns of budget allocation. Nearly half of the WASH sector budget is allocated to urban Water and Sewerage Authorities (WASAs), which serve only six major cities. Notably, Dhaka alone receives 43 per cent of the national WASH allocation, while rural and hard-to-reach areas receive less than one per cent. Moreover, approximately 50 to 60 per cent of the total WASH budget remains unutilised each year, a trend that has persisted over the past five years. These systemic issues from underutilisation of funds and centralised planning to skewed allocation and weak local government capacity have contributed to slow progress in achieving safely managed WASH services.

Considering these challenges, WaterAid Bangladesh aimed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the WASH planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems in Bangladesh, with the objective of identifying critical entry points for strengthening these processes. Specifically, the research will assess whether interventions from the WASH system for Health project have had an impact on the planning process, leading to more effective allocation and utilisation of WASH budgets. To achieve this, WaterAid Bangladesh, with the support of IRC WASH, is conducting this study in

collaboration with the University of Leeds and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

2.2 Research questions

The overall objective of the assignment is answering two broad research questions (RQ) including

- **Research question 1:** *How do governments plan and budget for improvements in WASH services (what, and who, drives or influences decisions) and how is this related to funding allocation and expenditure?*
- **Research question 2:** *To what extent do project interventions aimed at strengthening the planning process change budget allocation for WASH services, and ultimately delivery of those plans by local government?*

The research questions have been further subdivided into specific objectives which are as follows:

Research question 1

- a. To describe how local governments plan and budget for improvements in WASH services – both formal and informal processes. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - the extent of community participation, especially involvement of women, and inclusion of marginalised groups.
 - the extent to which WASH data informs planning (and how it may be affected by the quality and availability of this data)
 - how annual WASH planning links to longer-term strategic WASH plans (and periodic plans, where they exist)
 - how decisions are made (accountability and transparency) and by who
- b. To assess what local contextual factors may shape deviations from official WASH planning and budgeting processes.
- c. To analyse how local government plans are co-ordinated or influenced by planning at other tiers of Government, or by other Government agencies (e.g. DPHE in Bangladesh).
- d. To assess how closely actual allocation of central funds reflect local government plans, and what other factors influence this.
- e. To review to what extent WASH budgets are fully utilised by local government, and what factors limit this.
- f. Based on the above, to identify critical systemic blockages in the planning, budgeting process and thus identify suitable entry points for systems strengthening.

Research question 2

- a. To review existing project plans to strengthen the planning process based on the above analysis, and make adjustments where needed (and if feasible utilising existing project resources).

- b. To assess the extent to which project interventions have been successful in leading to increased budget allocation, improved coordination and more effective utilisation of budgets.

2.3 Study areas

This study will be conducted in two climate-vulnerable regions in Bangladesh: Lalmonirhat and Paikgacha Municipality and at Haridhali and Chandkhali Unions within Paikgacha Upazila. Additionally, interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders from relevant line ministries and departments of the Government of Bangladesh involved in the delivery of WASH services. These interviews will take place at both the national and sub-national levels.

2.4 Methodology

The study will employ qualitative research methods for data collection, as outlined in section 5A. The selected consultancy firm/ consultants will work in close collaboration with the WaterAid Bangladesh team, who will provide direct management and day-to-day guidance and coordination of research activities, and researchers from WaterAid UK, the University of Leeds and LSHTM, who will collaborate with the team as needed, contributing technical insight and participating in periodic discussions to support the overall quality of the research.

WaterAid Bangladesh has obtained ethical approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institute of Health Economics (IHE), University of Dhaka. It is expected that the selected consultancy firm/ consultants will ensure full ethical compliance throughout the study, including informed consent, confidentiality, and safeguarding protocols.

2.5 Scopes of Work

The work will include, but is not limited to, the following tasks at each stage of the study for validation and feedback:

Desk work

- Review of the relevant policies, documents, and project documents aligned with the research objective.
- Revisit the research protocol and suggest modifications to align with the research questions.
- Review and finalise the data collection tools in consultation with the research team.
- Develop and finalise the data collection and analysis plan, ensuring it aligns with the research objectives and in collaboration with the research team.

Field data collection

- Conduct fieldwork in the selected study sites using the data collection approaches in the section 5A for Research Question 1 and 2 (RQ1, RQ2)

Data analysis

- Propose a detailed data analysis plan, employing appropriate qualitative data analysis techniques to ensure robust and insightful findings.
- For Research Question 1 (RQ1), data analysis will be conducted using the framework analysis approach.
- As outlined for Research Question 2 (RQ2), a contribution analysis will be employed to answer the research question.
- Maintain clear and organised documentation of data, coding frameworks, and analytical decisions.

Writing

- Submit an inception report with all the finalised approaches.
- The selected consultancy firm/ consultants will prepare a comprehensive report for Research Question 1 (RQ1), ensuring that all comments and feedback from the research team are addressed.
- The selected consultancy firm/ consultants will prepare a detailed report that highlights the impact of the project's interventions on changes in budget allocation, utilisation, and the effective delivery of WASH services by local governments.
- The selected consultancy firm/ consultants will collaborate with WaterAid team, UoL, and LSHTM to draft a manuscript for Research Question 1 and 2 (RQ1 & RQ2), focusing on the key findings from the analysis and contributing to the overall research output.

2.6 Deliverables and Timeframe

This study aims to continue **until December 2027**. The consultant will be engaged in the study throughout this period, but there are likely to be periods of more focused effort to ensure that data collection is aligned with the government's budget cycle and planning process at the local government level. However, the partnership modality will be reviewed upon the completion of Research Question 1 (RQ1). A detailed timeline is provided below

Inception Phase:

- **Inception report (Due within four weeks of signing the contract)**
 - The inception report should include
 - list of documents to be reviewed
 - finalised methodology
 - final data collection tools, analysis plan
 - Detailed workplan with key milestone
 - The inception report will be reviewed and approved by WaterAid Bangladesh.

Phase 1 (January- December 2026):

- **Desk review report** including the mapping of the formal WASH planning process and checklist to guide the primary data collection process, and candidate Theory of Change (ToC)
- **Draft report** including the methodology and findings from the framework analysis of RQ1 and final ToC for RQ2
- **Final report**
The final report should be submitted within one week after receiving feedback on the draft and should not exceed 35 pages (excluding annexes). It should include:
 - High-quality executive summary that is concise and well-articulated
 - Synthesis of the study's key issues and insights

Phase 2 (March-December 2027):

- **Draft report** for contribution analysis to answer the RQ 2
- **Final report**
 - The final report should be submitted within one week after receiving feedback on the draft and should not exceed 40 pages (excluding annexes). It should include:
 - High-quality executive summary that is concise and well-articulated
 - Synthesis of the study's key issues and insights
 - key recommendations

The final deliverables will also include:

- Hardcopy (1 copy) and soft copy of each report
- Raw and cleaned datasets, full transcripts, audio/video recordings, field notes, photographs, observation checklists, consent forms, analytical frameworks, and codebooks

2.7 Mode of Payment

The payment will be made in following four instalments

Instalments	Percentage	Schedule for payment
First	20%	After receiving inception report
Second	40%	After receiving the deliverables of phase 1
Third	40%	After receiving the deliverables of phase 2 and handover of final deliverables of final report.

2.8 Team Composition and expected competency

The bidder is expected to propose and deploy a competent team with appropriate expertise to successfully deliver the assignment. Key competencies include:

- Experience/ understanding of WASH systems strengthening
- Experience of working with local government institutions and understanding of public administration and governance
- Expertise in qualitative data collection & analysis, and ability to clearly articulate findings in reports

The minimum team composition should include:

Principal Investigator (PI): A senior professional with demonstrated expertise in WASH, governance, public administration, and a strong understanding of the administrative and governance structure of Bangladesh, to clearly investigate the power dynamics at play. The PI will provide overall technical leadership and ensure the methodological rigour of the study. Additionally, prior experience with mentioned methods of data analysis (Framework Analysis, Contribution Analysis, Thematic Analysis) will be added as an advantage.

Three Research Assistants (RAs): Responsible for coordinating fieldwork, data collection (KIIs, FGDs, observations), and maintaining liaison with local government institutions, as well as WaterAid Bangladesh. The RAs should have a background in social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology, geography, development studies, public administration) and proven experience in similar field-based qualitative research/ study.

Data Analyst: A professional with an academic background in anthropology, sociology, or a related field with experience in managing and analysing qualitative data (thematic analysis, framework analysis, contribution analysis) using qualitative data analysis tools (Nvivo). This person will lead data coding and synthesis in collaboration with the PI and the team at WaterAid, UoL and LSHTM.

The above roles must be clearly identified in the proposal, with short bio and CVs demonstrating relevant experience and qualifications.

SECTION 3: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

- 3A. Forwarding letter format
- 3B. Suitability for the assignment
- 3C. Understanding of the Assignment
- 3D. Implementation Strategy
- 3E. Team Composition
- 3F. Relevant Experience
- 3G. Company Profile
- 3H. Ethical Practice
- 3I. Annexures

3A. FORWARDING LETTER FORMAT

(Please use letterhead pad)

[*Location, Date*]

To

The Country Director
WaterAid Bangladesh
House 97/B, Road 25, Block A

Banani, Dhaka 1213

Dear Sir:

We the undersigned are offering to provide the following assignment in accordance with your Request for Proposal (RFP) dated [*Date*] on "[*Subject*]".

We are hereby submitting our proposal, which includes this Technical Proposal, and a Financial Proposal.

If negotiations are held during the period of validity of the proposal, i.e., before [*Date*] we undertake to negotiate on the basis of the proposed staff. Our proposal is binding upon us and subject to the modifications resulting from contract negotiations.

We understand you are not bound to accept any proposal you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Authorised Signature:

Name:

Title:

Name of Organisation:

Address:

Technical Proposal

3B. Understanding of the Assignment

(please provide one-page concept note on over all understanding of the assignment)

3C. Implementation Strategy

- Methodology

(please describe about the methodology/approach to be adopted or applied to collect, analysis, evaluate the data)

- Deliverables

(please specify the major deliverable to be achieve from the study)

- Work Plan

(please provide detail work plan with work chart)

3D. Team Composition

(please provide short BIO of the proposed key team members in below format)

Name	
Role of this Assignment	
Academic Background	
Professional Summary	<i>(a brief overview summarizing your expertise for the proposed position. Mention your years of experience, key sectors, and expertise for the proposed position)</i>
Professional Experience	<i>(please mention your last five relevant experiences for the proposed position; it can be either narratives or tabular format)</i> <i>Professional Experiences should include the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>- Name of the organization and job title</i><i>- Duration</i><i>- Key responsibilities</i>
Publications	<i>(Please mention maximum five relevant publications and provide accessible links to the output. In the case of a confidential project report, share the link to the executive summary of the report)</i>

3E. Relevant Experience

(relevant services carried out in the last three years that best illustrate qualifications)

Using the format below, please provide maximum 10 examples for which your organisation, either individually as a corporate entity or as one of the major companies within an association, was legally contracted.

Name of the assignment	Digital link (if available)	Completion date	Client name with contact details

3F. Company Profile

(Please attach portfolio and other relevant documents maximum)

3G. Ethical Practice

(please specify, Safeguarding, Health & Safety)

3H. Annexures

(please add annexures if any)

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

- 4A. Summary of budget/costs, including narratives**
- 4B. Legal Document**

4A. Summary of budget/costs, including narratives

(The financial budget summary should be prepared in line with below guidance)

- A separate forwarding letter for financial proposal may or may not be submitted.
- Budget for the assignment should be broken down into individual items covering all logistical, travel, accommodation, staff, equipment and other costs.
- The financial proposal should clearly identify, item wise cost for the assignment with necessary details. ***The budget must be including applicable AIT; however, VAT can be mentioned separately at the bottom on total budgeted amount.*** WaterAid Bangladesh shall deduct VAT and Tax at source as per government rules.
- Apart from the activities mentioned in this RFP, the consultant is expected to list any other/additional services WaterAid shall be receiving under this agreement.
- **Calculation Format (please maintain below format for your financial budgeting)**

Name of item/deliverables	Unit	Unit Price	Total Price
Component -01		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
a.			
b.			
c. (please add more rows as required)			
Component -02		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
a.			
b.			
c. (please add more rows as required)			
Component -03		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
a.			
b.			
c. (please add more rows as required)			
Component -04		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
a.			
b.			
c. (please add more rows as required)			
Component -05		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
a.			

b.			
c. <i>(please add more rows as required)</i>			
Sub-Total (including AIT)		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Applicable VAT 15%		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Gross Total		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX

4B. Legal Document

Please attach all updated legal documents mentioned below:

- Copy of Trade License
- Copy of TIN certificate
- Copy of BIN certificate
- Copy of PSR (last tax return submission acknowledgement slip) and
- Bank Detail or Copy of Cheque Leaf

SECTION 5: ANNEXURE

5A. Data Collection and Analysis Matrix

Research Question	Method	Purpose	List of Respondents / Sources	Estimated Quantity	Data Analysis
Research Objective 1	Desk Review	Understand formal WASH planning and budgeting frameworks and previous studies	National/local policies, WASH strategies, prior research	Multiple documents	Framework Analysis is used for RO1 to systematically compare themes across different stakeholders and sites.
	In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)	Explore how planning and budgeting occur in practice, who is involved, and what influences decisions	Municipality: Mayor, PNO, Ward Councillor, WLCC member, NGO, CBO, DPHE Union: Chairman, DPHE, Ward councillor, WLCC member, NGO, CBO	~16 interviews	
	Non-Participant Observation	Observe real-time planning/budget meetings to document stakeholder participation, data use, and decision-making processes	Planning/budget meetings at local government level	~8 meetings (2 per site)	
	Document Review	Verify formal plans, budgets, and expenditures and compare with observations and interview findings	Annual development plans, budget documents, minutes	4 LG units	
	Political Economy Analysis <i>(if feasible)</i>	Analyse deeper institutional and political dynamics influencing WASH planning and budgeting	Stakeholders from government, community leaders, secondary sources	TBD	

Research Objective 2	Budget Document Review (Baseline and Endline)	Track changes in budget allocations and expenditure before and after interventions	Budget documents, expenditure reports from all study units	4 LG units	<p>Thematic Analysis is applied to FGDs and KIIs in RO2 to explore patterns of change and stakeholder experiences.</p> <p>This is followed by CA.</p> <p>Contribution Analysis (CA) underpins RO2 to link observed changes to the intervention logic model (ToC), considering alternative explanations.</p>
	Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) – <i>Endline only</i>	Assess perceived impact of interventions on coordination, participation, and budget outcomes	<p>Municipality: Mayor, PNO, Ward Councillor, WLCC member, NGO, CBO, DPHE</p> <p>Union: Chairman, DPHE, Ward councillor, WLCC member, NGO, CBO,</p>	12 KIIs	
	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) – <i>Endline only</i>	Gather group perspectives on changes in the planning and budgeting process due to interventions	Community members, CBOs, women leaders, LG officials	4 FGDs (1 per site)	
	Process Documentation	Record changes in procedures, coordination, and practices over the course of the intervention	Meeting minutes, activity logs, reports	All study sites	