



Request for Proposals

Assessment of Market Potential for Climate-Resilient WASH Loan Products and its Regional Mapping for the Microfinance Institutions in India

Response deadline: May 15th, 2026 by 5:00 pm IST

1. General instructions

- A. Water.org requests proposals from research and evaluation firms to conduct an assessment study for a project aimed at mapping the climate resilient water supply and sanitation loan products that can be offered and scaled by the microfinance institutions in India.
- B. The assessment will require the firm to facilitate and coordinate with Water.org staff and partner for data collection in the program areas in India. The program requires the firm to submit the deliverables outlined in section 2 Scope of Work.
- C. Water.org is not liable for any expenditure incurred by responding firms prior to issuance of an executed contract with Water.org.
- D. Submissions must be typed and submitted only by email and must follow the format of the requests for information in Section 4: Submissions Requirements. Unless agreed upon with Water.org, no changes or corrections to a response will be allowed after the deadline.
- E. Proposed schedule:
 - May 15th, 2026 – RFP submissions due by 5:00 PM IST.
 - May 30th, 2026 – Results announced
 - June 20th, 2026 – Contract begins
 - October 31st, 2026 – Contract ends

The proposals must be submitted by email to Gaurav Agarawal (Portfolio Lead) at gagarwal@water.org, copying to Sudhir Arya at sarya@water.org (Director Financial Institution Partnership) by 15th May 5:00 PM India Standard Time. Subject line should read **“Assessment of Market Potential for Climate-Resilient WASH Loan Products and its Regional Mapping for Microfinance Institutions in India”** <<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 29 million people across 13 countries through six 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](#).

Purpose

This RfP has been prepared with the aim of engaging a third-party firm to generate actionable insights and practical support for integrating climate-resilient WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) loan products into the portfolios of partner MFIs working with Water.org. Climate change is intensifying challenges around water scarcity, sanitation infrastructure, and community resilience, particularly for vulnerable populations who rely on microfinance services. By conducting both primary and secondary research, the consultancy will assess the demand, feasibility, and design requirements of WASH loan products that explicitly address climate risks. It will provide technical assistance to MFIs in adapting and executing these products, ensuring that they are not only conceptually sound but also operationally viable. This includes identifying specific geographic locations where climate-resilient WASH loan products will have the greatest relevance and impact, supporting MFIs in tailoring product features to local contexts, and building institutional capacity for effective rollout.

Ultimately, the study and execution support aim to strengthen the ability of MFIs to offer financial solutions that enhance community resilience to climate change, improve access to safe water and sanitation, and contribute to sustainable development goals. The consultancy will serve as both a knowledge partner and an implementation enabler, ensuring that climate-resilient WASH loan products are embedded into the financial ecosystem in a way that is scalable, impactful, and responsive to the needs of low-income households.

Rationale

- Understand the demand and feasibility of climate-resilient WASH loan products.
- Provide Water.org's MFI partners (3-4) with practical tools and strategies to integrate

these products into their portfolios.

- Identify geographic areas where climate vulnerabilities intersect with WASH needs, ensuring interventions are targeted and impactful.
- Support MFIs not only in product design but also in execution, capacity building, and monitoring, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.

By combining rigorous research with hands-on implementation support, the consultancy will help Water.org's large size 3-4 MFIs partners pioneer innovative financial solutions that strengthen community resilience, improve health outcomes, and contribute to broader climate adaptation and sustainable development goals.

B. Objectives of the study:

The overall objective of this program is to enable Water.org and its partner MFIs to design, pilot, and operationalize climate resilient WASH loan products that strengthen community resilience and expand access to safe water and sanitation. Specifically, the program seeks to:

1. *Assess Needs and Opportunities*
 - Identify the demand for climate resilient WASH loan products among low-income households.
 - Understand the barriers and opportunities for MFIs to integrate such products into their portfolios.
2. *Generate Evidence and Insights*
 - Conduct primary and secondary research to build robust evidence base on climate resilient WASH financing.
 - Document best practices and lessons learned from similar interventions globally and regionally.
3. *Design and Recommend Products*
 - Develop product design features that align with climate resilience and WASH needs.
 - Recommend operational frameworks for MFIs to adapt these products.
4. *Identify Priority Locations*
 - Map geographic areas where climate vulnerabilities intersect with WASH needs.
 - Provide location specific guidance for piloting and scaling products.
5. *Support Execution and Capacity Building*
 - Provide technical assistance to MFIs in rolling out climate resilient WASH loan products.
 - Build institutional capacity through training, tools, and monitoring frameworks to ensure sustainability.

C. Study Methodology:

Methodological Framework

The study will adopt a mixed-method, cross-sectional approach, combining quantitative household surveys, direct observation of WASH infrastructure, and qualitative stakeholder

consultations. Given the short duration, the approach will emphasize parallel execution, rapid data collection, and iterative analysis.

Borrower's profile / criteria to be included in the study:

- Low-income (BoP) MFI borrowers who have availed loans for WASH-related investments
- Borrowers in climate-vulnerable areas with functional or partially functional water and sanitation facilities (with or without climate-resilient features)

Quantitative

The quantitative component of the study will adopt a structured household survey approach exclusively targeting MFI borrowers who have availed loans within the past 18–30 months. A sample of approximately 150–200 borrowers per state will be surveyed to capture key information on household socio-economic profiles, WASH awareness and practices, exposure to climate-related risks, and loan utilization patterns. The survey will also assess the type, functionality, and usage of water and sanitation infrastructure created through the loan. This will be complemented by a structured observation checklist to physically verify the presence and condition of WASH facilities, including any climate-resilient features. The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistical methods to identify trends and variations across geographies and borrower segments, generating actionable insights to inform the design and scaling of climate-resilient WASH loan products within MFI portfolios.

Qualitative

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): with MFI stakeholders to gain deeper insights into the design, delivery, and utilization of WASH-related loans. Interviews will be conducted with MFI staff, including loan officers, branch managers, and field coordinators, to understand operational processes, borrower engagement, and challenges in promoting WASH and climate-resilient investments.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): will be conducted with MFI loan borrowers to understand their needs, preferences, and decision-making processes related to WASH investments. It will also help to explore borrower experiences with loan utilization, challenges faced in adopting water and sanitation solutions, awareness and uptake of climate-resilient features, and gaps between their requirements and available financial products.

Study Location and sample size

The study will be conducted across different states, which will be identified by the third-party firm based on the relevance to climate-resilient WASH products and the presence of climate-vulnerable (climate-prone) geographies, such as drought- or flood-affected regions, along with the operational presence of partner MFIs. A minimum of 4-5 states should be identified by the agency.

D. Deliverables:

The third-party firm will coordinate with Water.org's partners for data collection in the program

areas. The assignment requires the third-party firm to participate in or submit the following deliverables:

- Submission of Inception report including:
 - i. Proposed sampling methodology
 - ii. Workplan/timeline to ensure timely completion.
 - iii. Enumerator training
 - iv. Data quality assurance practices
 - v. Data Ethics protocols
- Study tools: Quantitative and Qualitative questionnaires.
- Data collection Field plan: The third-party firm will submit a detailed field plan and conduct data collection per the approved sample size and sampling method. The third-party firm is expected to coordinate with the branch officials and field coordinators to conduct qualitative interviews.
- Transcribe the qualitative interviews from local language to English for analysis purposes
- Study report: Draft and final study report with key recommendations.
- Presentation slide deck and webinar to Water.org stakeholders on key learnings and recommendations.

3. Budget

The proposed budget should not exceed \$40,000

4. Proposed schedule and key dates

Water.org anticipates that this assignment will be completed by August 2026. Water.org understands that activities and timelines per activity may change over the life of the contract; however, an approximate expected timeline for the key activities are as follows:

Deliverables	Timeline
Agency selection	4 th week of May'26
Signing of MoU	2 nd – 3 rd week of Jun'26
Kick-off meeting	4 th week of June'26
Inception Report Due	15 th July'26
Submission of Data Collection Tool and Review	30 th July'26
Training of enumerators	10 th August'26
Data collection	10 th September'26
Draft report submission	30 th September'26
Final report and Final Presentation (PPT deck) for dissemination discussion	31 st October'26

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. Brief descriptions of the key activities that the third-party will conduct in order to meet the described deliverables
- b. Relevant Experience and expertise: Provide details of the project's team experience of similar scope, complexity and nature you have worked on previously.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 \$40,000.

6. Criteria for submission

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

1. The proposed staffing plan includes at least one native or fluent English speaker.
2. The proposed staffing plan includes a sufficient number of qualified enumerators to conduct household surveys and in-depth interviews with partner officials.
3. Demonstrated experience and familiarity with the WASH and/or microfinance/banking sector.
4. The third party will maintain independence and the highest professional ethical standards and confidentiality in collecting and reviewing information and presenting the assessment results. Consultants will not share any information and observation with the Water.org partners without permission.

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:

Gaurav Agarwal, Portfolio Lead
GAgarawal@water.org

Sudhir Arya, Director, Financial Institution Partnerships
sarya@water.org