

SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Flagship Initiative

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Sustainable Sanitation Alliance - SuSanA</i>
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Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words)</i>
Citywide Inclusive Sanitation Accelerator for Water Forward Country Compacts
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
This initiative addresses guiding questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 by focusing on institutional reform, local government capacity, innovative financing, and the post-2030 agenda
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
Urban sanitation is the weakest link in the water agenda. Most people without safely managed sanitation live in fast-growing towns and cities where most households rely on on-site systems, yet investment and institutions remain sewer-centric and serve only a connected better-off minority. Faecal sludge goes uncollected, untreated and discharged into the environment, exposing the poorest to disease and indignity. National plans count toilets but rarely address the whole service chain or assign responsibility for non-sewered sanitation. This systemic failure undermines the human rights to water and sanitation, particularly the principles of accessibility and affordability. Across the new Water Forward country compacts, urban wastewater is the least-specified commitment: several set access targets with no treatment metric, faecal-sludge chain or costed plan. Closing this gap requires governments, utilities, regulators, financiers and communities to act together around a common service model. A coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required to deliver citywide safely managed sanitation.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
The Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) Accelerator is a partnership platform embedding CWIS as the delivery framework for the urban-sanitation pillar of Water Forward country

water compacts. CWIS is a public-service approach where cities or utilities ensure safely managed sanitation for all across the entire service chain—using a strategic mix of sewered and non-sewered solutions rather than defaulting to conventional sewers. Rooted in established thematic hubs, regional platforms, and projects, the Accelerator formalizes CWIS within the Water Forward Framework, streamlining existing efforts.

Shared objective: Every resident in participating cities benefits from safely managed sanitation, leaving no group behind.

The Accelerator is catalytic, integrating into existing government compacts by providing: (i) a citywide service-planning method converting coverage targets into costed sewered-plus-faecal-sludge programs; (ii) an institutional reform package with clear mandates, regulation, performance indicators, and utility creditworthiness; and (iii) a bankable finance structure blending public budgets, concessional finance (including climate, green, and blue funding), results-based financing, and private capital.

It is transformational and scalable, as CWIS aligns with compact architecture (policy reform to responsibility, institutions to accountability, and investment to resource planning) enabling replication across ~25 compacts and beyond. It unites stakeholders (ministries, regulators, local governments, utilities, enterprises, development banks, and communities) through a common language, shared SDG 6.2 and 6.3 metrics, and a single accountability framework, turning fragmented projects into a coordinated, country-led program.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

The Accelerator drives systemic change by shifting urban sanitation from counting infrastructures and facilities to delivering measurable, citywide services at scale. It standardizes the Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) method across compacts, transforming one-off projects into a replicable national program and regional benchmark, with early adopters like Kenya, Angola, and Sierra Leone leading the way.

Expected outcomes, set by each country, include:

- Citywide service plans adopted for priority cities, covering all residents through sewered and non-sewered solutions.
- Safely managed sanitation and treated-wastewater indicators (SDG 6.2 and 6.3) added to compact monitoring, with annual public reporting.
- Faecal-sludge treatment capacity and safe-management rates increased along the whole chain.
- Utilities placed on creditworthiness and performance pathways, unlocking repeatable finance.

Accountability is ensured through a public results dashboard tracking progress against targets, independent verification of safely managed sanitation, and mutual-accountability reviews involving government, regulators, and civil society. Equity-disaggregated indicators (e.g., informal settlements, gender) should also be reported.

Moving beyond dialogue, the initiative is anchored in binding, signed compacts and costed investment pipelines, delivering actionable plans, financing packages, and monitoring

frameworks for immediate implementation. Compacts demonstrate a return of US\$5–10 for every US\$1 invested, while creating jobs across the sanitation service chain.

Human rights and inclusion focus *Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)*

CWIS operationalizes the human rights to water and sanitation by making a public authority accountable for service to everyone in a city, explicitly including those that markets and conventional sewer networks frequently bypass. It embeds the AAAQ principles:

- Availability: whole-chain service, not just toilets
- Accessibility: priority for informal settlements, peri-urban and unserved neighborhoods
- Affordability: tariff and subsidy design that protects low-income households
- Quality and safety: safe containment, treatment and disposal protecting public and environmental health

Equity is a design principle, not an add-on: planning starts from the unserved, and progress is measured with disaggregated indicators covering informal settlements, women and girls, persons with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable situations. By eliminating open defecation and unsafe faecal-sludge and wastewater discharge, the initiative directly reduces the disease, dignity and time burdens borne disproportionately by the poorest and by women and children.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative contributes to all four SDG 6 accelerators:

- Financing and Investment: structures bankable sanitation programmes blending public budgets, concessional finance (including climate, green and blue funding), results-based financing and private capital, and strengthens utility creditworthiness.
- Innovation and Technology: promotes a technology-neutral mix of sewered and non-sewered solutions, digital monitoring of service delivery, and resource recovery and water/sludge reuse.
- Capacity Development: builds the mandates, regulatory capability and utility performance systems that sustain services, and develops a professional mixed faecal-sludge- and wastewater management workforce that operates with health and safety.
- Data and Information Systems: institutionalizes SDG 6.2 and 6.3 monitoring (safely managed sanitation and treated wastewater) with equity-disaggregated, publicly reported indicators feeding national systems.

Aligning these accelerators within government-led compacts reinforces the Framework's emphasis on country-led, coordinated delivery rather than fragmented projects.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

There is strong evidence that CWIS is an effective pathway to safely managed sanitation at scale. The World Bank has influenced approximately US\$5.6 billion in sanitation funding using CWIS principles, benefiting an estimated 16 million people over the last decade. While

the International Water Association has recently published a discussion paper on the current status and future directions of CWIS, which synthesises insights from interviews with numerous sanitation stakeholders globally, providing evidence-based reflections to refine CWIS as a practical and adaptable framework to accelerate urban sanitation progress in the coming decade.

Proven examples span diverse contexts:

- **Senegal:** the national utility ONAS runs a structured faecal-sludge management system in Dakar, combining scheduled desludging, treatment infrastructure and private-sector delivery.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** the Grand Abidjan programme integrates sewerage expansion, faecal-sludge management and wastewater treatment in a metropolitan-scale CWIS approach supported by PPP arrangements.
- **Uganda:** embedding CWIS within governance structures formalised private service providers and improved service continuity.
- **Odisha, India:** inclusive service models empower women and transgender groups to operate septage treatment facilities.
- **Bangladesh:** digital monitoring strengthens oversight across the sanitation service chain; and research confirms that targeted, pro-poor subsidies for on-site services significantly increase access in low-income communities.

SuSanA's global network of 15,000 members provides a robust, practice-based evidence platform for scaling these results. Supported by the extensive knowledge base of SuSanA, these experiences show that institutionalizing CWIS principles within national policies, regulatory frameworks and financing mechanisms is critical for achieving sustainable, equitable and resilient sanitation outcomes.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative is deliberately additive. Its primary vehicle is the Water Forward platform of the World Bank, other development partners and government counterparts, and their country water compacts (14 formalised, around 25 in preparation), supplying a delivery method for their urban-sanitation pillar. It draws on the global CWIS movement and tools developed by the World Bank, the Gates Foundation and partners, and on the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership's mutual-accountability mechanisms. It aligns with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and UN-Water monitoring (JMP/GLAAS) for measurement. At country level it builds on existing national WASH and sanitation strategies, utility-reform programmes and faecal sludge and wastewater management initiatives already named in the compacts (for example Senegal's ONAS, Côte d'Ivoire's Grand Abidjan, Sierra Leone's WASH programme). Rather than creating new institutions, it connects and strengthens these efforts around a shared citywide service model and common metrics.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

The CWIS Accelerator operates through a clear division of roles and multi-layered governance. The Country Compact, owned by national governments, is implemented by ministries, regulators, local governments, and utilities, with development banks and other funders financing the pipeline.

The Accelerator, convened by SuSanA, serves as the enabling platform, supported by its 15,000 members and connected to existing CWIS hubs including the World Bank CWIS Initiative, the AfDB's Africa Urban Sanitation Investment Initiative, the Gates Foundation's CWIS Hub for Africa, ESAWAS, and UN-Habitat/GWOPA.

Governance includes a steering group of hub and funding partners, country focal points linked to compact coordination units, and a public results dashboard with civil-society oversight. Decision-making rests with countries, while the Accelerator convenes, standardizes, and tracks progress.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

Two foundations already exist.

- On the **Compact side**, governments have signed Water Forward water compacts (2026) that prioritise urban sanitation, including Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cambodia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Angola.
- On the **Accelerator side**, CWIS hubs are already operating: the World Bank CWIS Initiative, the Gates Foundation's CWIS Technical Assistance Hubs for Africa and Asia, and the ESAWAS regional regulators' network. The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) and its 15,000 members provide an established global platform.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) and its global membership are well placed to champion and convene the Accelerator. The roughly 25 countries preparing Water Forward compacts are natural candidates to adopt it, alongside early movers (Kenya, Angola, Sierra Leone). Further support could come from CWIS hub partners (World Bank, UN-Habitat/GWOPA, ESAWAS, Eawag/Sandec, IHE Delft), bilateral agencies (German Development Cooperation, AFD), philanthropic funders (Gates Foundation, Stone Family Foundation, Water Aid), regional bodies (AMCOW, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank), UN-Water, WHO and UNICEF, and utilities and private sanitation operators seeking bankable pipelines.

Existing financing / resource mobilization

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

The CWIS Accelerator leverages existing resources and partnerships to drive impact. Country Compacts, financed by a combination of the World Bank, regional development banks, other development partners and national budgets (e.g., Senegal: ~US\$2.4bn, Côte d'Ivoire: ~US\$3.5bn, Kenya: US\$7.6bn), carry large, costed sanitation pipelines.

The Accelerator's enabling work is supported by the Gates Foundation (CWIS Technical Assistance Hub for Africa and tools) and the World Bank's CWIS Initiative (~US\$6bn influenced across 25 countries). SuSanA, with financial and in-kind support from partners like BMZ, WaterAid, UNICEF, and the World Bank, contributes expertise, knowledge exchange, peer learning (via working groups and regional chapters), facilitation, coordination,

knowledge management (library), and global tools/digital platforms (SFD Portal, Sanitation Workers Hub, Resource Recovery Toolbox).

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

The CWIS Accelerator mobilizes financial resources, investments, and partnerships through a two-layered financing strategy to ensure implementation and scale-up.

Enabling Layer (Accelerator Funding):

The Accelerator's core functions—secretariat, citywide service planning, capacity development, knowledge tools, and results dashboard—are funded through catalytic, grant-based resources. These include a light multi-donor facility hosted by SuSanA, philanthropic grants, bilateral technical-assistance grants, and multilateral trust funds, such as the World Bank's Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership. This layer sustains and connects existing CWIS hubs (e.g., Africa TA Hub), providing them a permanent home through SuSanA.

Compact Layer (Capital Mobilization):

The Accelerator transforms citywide plans into bankable projects leveraging project-preparation facilities and transaction advisory services (e.g., MDB project-preparation funds, IFC advisory, Global Infrastructure Facility). This unlocks significant capital for delivery and enables smaller investments to attract substantially larger funding.

By aligning with Water Forward's financing coalition, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, and the Sanitation and Water for All platform, the initiative ensures coordinated resource mobilization. A standardized CWIS method reduces preparation and transaction costs, creating replicable, investable urban sanitation investment programs. This approach maximizes public budgets, private-sector engagement, and blended finance, ensuring sustainable scale-up.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

The Flagship is a multi-decade initiative designed to outlast the 2026 Conference. Its foundation phase (2026–2028) focuses on establishing the platform, developing the first citywide service plans, and forging key partnerships. The scaling phase (2028–2032) expands these plans and secures financing across participating compacts. Finally, the consolidation phase (2032–2040 and beyond) drives progress toward universal safely managed urban sanitation, aligning with national compact cycles and the post-2030 global agenda.