

SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Priority Action

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>World Vision</i>
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Date of submission	<i>18 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Realising the human right to water through women-centered, multi-sectoral approaches
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
4 and 5
Description of the action <i>Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)</i>
World Vision's Beyond Access program is a sequenced, multisector initiative that tackles the root causes of extreme poverty by intentionally linking mindset change, water and sanitation access, and economic empowerment — with women and girls at the center. The programme operates across multiple countries, targeting communities where women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of water insecurity. Proposed activities include: • Water infrastructure and WASH services: Bringing clean water sources closer to communities, improving sanitation facilities, and delivering hygiene behaviour change programming — including menstrual health — to reduce waterborne illness and free women's time. • Mindset change programming: Implementing mindset change training (in World Vision's case, the Empowered Worldview and Celebrating Families models) to shift harmful norms, reduce gender-based violence, and foster equitable household decision-making around water use and hygiene. • Economic empowerment integration: Through the savings group model as well the Inclusive Market Knowledge and Access approach, women gain financial literacy and access to capital, enabling them to sustain and advocate for household and community WASH improvements.

These activities are deliberately sequenced, so each intervention reinforces the others: improved water access frees time for economic participation, while stronger household relationships support sustained hygiene practice adoption.

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

Women and girls living in extreme poverty bear the greatest burden of water insecurity, commonly spending hours and energy daily collecting water instead of attending school or earning income. Harmful cultural norms further limit women's decision-making power and economic participation. Even when water access improves, without addressing underlying gender inequities and economic barriers, transformation stalls. Current WASH investments often operate in isolation, missing the compounding benefits of integrated programming. Beyond Access addresses this gap by sequencing WASH, mindset change, and economic empowerment interventions, because the human right to water and sanitation cannot be realised without dismantling what holds women back.

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

World Vision's Beyond Access program completed a three-year Phase 1 pilot (October 2022–September 2025) across Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, providing rigorous evidence that intentionally sequencing behaviour change, WASH, and economic empowerment interventions produces measurable, statistically significant gains for women and girls.

Independent evaluations conducted by local research partners, in collaboration with Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, measured outcomes at baseline, midline, and endline. Key results include:

Water and Sanitation Access

- Women gaining access to a basic clean water source within a 30-minute round trip improved by an average of 29 percentage points across all four countries, with Kenya showing the greatest gain — nearly 60 percentage points (from 3% to 62%).
- Household sanitation coverage increased across all countries by 16 to 25 percentage points, reducing waterborne disease risk while improving privacy, dignity, and safety for women and girls.

Economic Outcomes

- Women with personal savings increased by an average of 51 percentage points, with Guatemala rising from 14% to 80% and Honduras from 7% to 78%.
- Women earning income from a small business or employment increased by an average of 42 percentage points, with Honduras showing a 72-point gain.

Empowerment and Agency

- Women's participation in community water decision-making increased by an average of 31 percentage points — particularly significant given that women historically bore

primary responsibility for water collection while being excluded from planning processes.

Emory University's Water Journeys research further confirmed that water collection imposed substantial physical, time, and economic burdens on women, and that improved access directly enabled greater economic participation. Two peer-reviewed publications in PLOS further document these findings.

These results informed the design of Phase 2, now scaling to 12 countries through 2030.

[Endline research report link](#)

[Emory Water Journeys Research Publication](#)

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

The primary target group is women and girls in rural settings, though can also be applied in urban and peri-urban contexts. Extra priority is given to people with intersecting vulnerabilities, such as women and girls from indigenous communities or women and girls with disabilities. While these are the primary target group, Beyond Access engages at a broader level, including men and community leaders, recognising that women and girls cannot be empowered without broad stakeholder engagement.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

Beyond Access pairs WASH investment with gender norm transformation and economic empowerment, dismantling compounding inequalities. Women's participation in community water decision-making increased from an average of 19% to 46% on average, directly advancing the inclusive governance essential to realizing water and sanitation as human rights. On **availability** and **accessibility**, basic water access improved by an average of 29 percentage points across four countries — nearly 60 points in Kenya alone. On **acceptability** and **quality**, sanitation coverage rose 16–25 percentage points, improving dignity, privacy, and safety for women and girls. **Affordability** is addressed through community-led infrastructure and savings group models building local financial resilience.

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

Beyond Access Phase 2 (2025–2030) targets measurable change across WASH, mindset change, and economic empowerment across 12 countries, tracked through rigorous baseline, midline, and endline evaluations.

Key Phase 2 targets include:

- 360,000 people gaining access to a basic drinking water source
- 150,000 people trained in Empowered Worldview, shifting dependency mindsets and strengthening household economic planning

- 130,000 savings group members, with women in leadership positions and digitized groups

Other key indicators include:

- Increased household access to basic sanitation facilities and handwashing with soap
- Trained WASH Committees with resource mobilisation systems in place
- Participants in Celebrating Families workshops, equipping men and women to build equitable, violence-free homes
- Women producers trained in market systems development, strengthening income generation and food security

Progress will be tracked quarterly against sex- and age- and disability-disaggregated indicators, building on Phase 1's statistically significant gains and ensuring the program remains evidence-based and responsive to community needs.

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

Beyond Access Phase 2 is currently being implemented (2025–2030) across 9 countries — Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, and will be in 12 by 2028 (adding Ghana, Viet Nam and Zambia). It is being implemented by World Vision US in partnership with World Vision national offices and local implementation partners. The implementation timeline in a specific location depends on contextual factors (existing water access, market access, financial credit availability, etc.), but takes, on average, three years.

Implementation follows a deliberate three-component sequence:

Mindset Change is initiated first, using the Empowered Worldview model and Celebrating Families workshops to shift harmful gender norms and build household agency. Faith and community leaders are engaged as champions of change. Training of Trainers ensures local capacity and sustainability beyond program closure. Community Voice and Action groups support local-level advocacy.

WASH Infrastructure and Services are delivered in parallel, constructing and rehabilitating water supply systems, sanitation facilities, and handwashing stations in communities, schools, and healthcare facilities. WASH Committees are trained with resource mobilisation systems for long-term operations and maintenance. Hygiene behavior change programming, including menstrual health, accompanies all infrastructure investment.

Economic Empowerment through the Savings for Transformation model equips women with financial literacy, business planning, and market linkages. Mature savings groups access microfinance through VisionFund International, extending program reach and sustainability.

Coordination mechanisms include: quarterly digital (mWater) and narrative reporting to World Vision US; and baseline, midline, and endline evaluations led by local research partners.

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

Within World Vision, Beyond Access is funded via blended, leveraged funding, including local government investment, project-specific funds, and funds from World Vision's child sponsorship approach. Shared funding is integral to the success of this multi-sectoral program.

Specific costs are dependent on the needs in the area of implementation. Budget must be allocated to support:

- GEDSI assessment in communities
- Baseline and endline activities
- Staff training on relevant models
- Community mindset change trainings, including individual empowerment (Empowered Worldview), women's leadership, family empowerment (Celebrating Families), and male engagement
- Community WASH infrastructure, inclusion schools and healthcare facilities
- Economic empowerment programming, including savings groups and market access
- Coordination staff to support integrated activities

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

Beyond Access was explicitly designed for replication. Phase 1 demonstrated that the integrated, sequenced model produced statistically significant gains across four diverse contexts — Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe —confirming cross-regional adaptability.

Phase 2 expansion to 12 countries on three continents validates this scalability. The model's core architecture — sequencing behaviour change, WASH, and economic empowerment — is context-adaptable, with localised materials, local research partners, and community-led implementation ensuring cultural relevance in each setting.

World Vision has the scale, expertise and core models to expand the programme. Other stakeholders could implement the same methodology, using these or similar models.

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

Government engagement is critical to the success of all World Vision programming. This engagement typically occurs at the community level, but given World Vision's strength of government relationships from the local to national level, member state endorsement is highly likely. Beyond Access is currently being implemented in: Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Ghana, Viet Nam and Zambia are beginning implementation in the next two years.

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

This initiative also contributes to ID (b): water for prosperity. When freed from the burden of water collection, women and girls have more time for economic participation. It also connects

to the data and accountability workstream as it utilises mWater to track participation and outcomes, ensuring transparency and accountability.