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	*Sustainable Sanitation Alliance - SuSanA*
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Date of submission	*18.06.2026*

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title *A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).*
Institutionalizing the 0.5% GDP Minimum Baseline for Universal Sanitation Access
Guiding question(s) addressed *Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.*
This proposal addresses Guiding Questions (4), on innovative financing, budgeting and resource-allocation approaches, and (1), on policies, institutional and regulatory frameworks that extend services to underserved populations and 3) Building the capacity of local governments to deliver a human-rights-based approach (HRBA).
Description of the action *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)*
This action establishes a structured mechanism for Member to create and protect dedicated sanitation budget lines of at least 0.5% of GDP (with flexibility up to 2% in high-need contexts) integrated into National Development Plans (NDPs). This ensures Ministries of Finance prioritize sanitation as a costed national commitment, rather than a discretionary add-on. Key activities include: 1) Legal Safeguards: Ring-fence sanitation budgets within NDPs and national treasuries to prevent fund diversion. 2) Annual Reviews: Conduct "Sanitation Budget Reviews" (based on the Ngor model) to track disbursement and absorption, ensuring funds are spent effectively. 3) Capacity Building: Strengthen local governments to deliver human-rights-based sanitation and promote resource-recovery systems as revenue-generating pathways. By securing the public finance that already provides 91% of sector spending — and protecting operations and maintenance (O&M), which can double total need to 1.1–1.4% of GDP, the action shifts countries from ad-hoc capital investment to reliable, inclusive, safely

managed services. Anchoring allocations in human rights ensures funding reaches those currently underserved, marginalized or left behind.

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)

Sanitation is chronically underfunded; in LMICs, public spending averages just 0.25% of GDP (half the 0.5% target) and sanitation receives only about a third of WASH budgets, leaving a 46% gap between need and available funding. However, the core issue extends beyond allocation size: while declarations and budget lines are easily established, most countries struggle to translate them into protected, fully spent, and pro-poor expenditure. Without ring-fenced, well-absorbed and equitably targeted finance, countries cannot meet SDG 6.2 targets or address the persistent service gaps that leave marginalized populations without safely managed sanitation.

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)

Evidence confirms that dedicated public finance drives sanitation access—but commitments alone are not enough. In Africa, the eThekwini (2008) and Ngor (2015) Declarations set a 0.5% GDP target, yet by 2022, only Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe met it, with average allocations stagnating at 0.25% (AMCOW, 2024). This highlights a persistent implementation gap.

Where finance is sustained and ring-fenced, results are transformative. In South Asia, India’s Swachh Bharat Mission directed protected public budgets, boosting rural sanitation access from under 40% (2014) to near-universal coverage in five years. In Latin America, Peru’s sanitation access rose from 54% to 71% (1990–2010) through sustained investment, while Brazil’s 2020 framework targets universal access by 2033 via a structured pipeline. Globally, the share of countries reporting sufficient sanitation funding doubled from 7% to 14% between 2018 and 2024 (GLAAS, 2025).

Yet progress has limits. Budget increases often secure basic access but fall short of safely managed services, as upstream systems (collection, conveyance, treatment) remain capital- and operations-intensive. Gains frequently depend on political will, regulation, or donor finance rather than budget lines alone, and inflation-adjusted WASH budgets remain flat.

The solution? Not another target, but the mechanics: ring-fencing funds, tracking expenditure, ensuring absorption, and targeting resources through a human-rights-based approach. This is how commitments become spent, equitable, and lasting services.

Target group

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

The primary beneficiaries are underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable populations in LMICs who lack basic or safely managed sanitation, particularly poor rural communities and informal urban settlements typically overlooked when budgets concentrate on better-served areas. The action targets contexts where the estimated $105 billion annual cost of meeting

SDG 6.2 remains unmet, prioritizing those furthest behind, including women and girls, children, and persons with disabilities who are most strongly affected by poor sanitation.
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)*
This action embeds human rights to water and sanitation across the AAAQ framework. Ring-fenced, equity-weighted budgets prioritize the unserved, while targeted subsidies ensure affordability. Sustained O&M financing guarantees quality and continuity. Acceptability is advanced through dignity, privacy, safety and menstrual health protections. A mandatory pro-poor allocation and disaggregated data prevent urban bias, ensuring no one is left behind. Transparent budget reviews, published expenditure data, and local grievance mechanisms foster participation, transparency, and accountability, turning budget lines into practical tools for progressive realization using maximum available resources.
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)*
By 2030: 1. At least 30–50 Member States formally adopt and track a dedicated sanitation budget line (minimum 0.5% of GDP), measured through GLAAS cycles against a 2025 baseline. 2. A measurable narrowing of the 46% national WASH funding gap through consistent, inflation-adjusted annual increases. 3. Progress toward the higher expenditure levels required for universal access ($131–141 billion annually). 4. Strengthened national mechanisms for the disbursement and absorption of sanitation budgets, applying a human-rights-based approach, with higher budget-execution rates. 5. Improved capacity of local governments to deliver HRBA water and sanitation services. 6. Improved policy and regulatory frameworks that embed the budget line within National Development Plans and HRBA delivery.
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)*
Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Water/Sanitation and local governments lead implementation, supported by regional ministerial bodies — AMCOW (Africa), the Arab Ministerial Water Council, CODIA/IDB (Latin America) and ASEAN/SACOSAN (Asia) — and coordinated globally through Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). Technical support is provided by SuSanA members and partner organisations. SuSanA's own deliverables are a standardised budget-tracking methodology, a peer-learning platform and a public sanitation-expenditure dashboard, all designed for government use. • **Years 1‑2:** embed costed sanitation needs in National Development Plans; legislate to ring-fence budget lines; establish GLAAS-based baselines.

- **Years 3‑5:** strengthen disbursement and absorption mechanisms; build local-government capacity to deliver the HRBA; scale resource-recovery sanitation where viable; report annually against targets.

The SuSanA Secretariat (hosted by GIZ) will leverage the SuSanA Platform to bridge policy, research, and implementation, encouraging cross-regional knowledge exchange. This ensures lessons from early adopters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America can be adapted and scaled globally.

Financing modalities

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

The primary source is domestic public finance: dedicated budget lines of 0.5–2% of GDP, embedded in National Development Plans to ensure Ministries of Finance treat sanitation as a costed priority. Building on the public sector's 91% share of sector spending, the action crowds-in additional finance from multilateral and regional banks (AfDB, IDB, ADB, World Bank) and donor agencies, using national investment cases like those pioneered by the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund.

Resource-recovery sanitation offers a complementary revenue stream and a pathway for greater private participation (currently under 2%). However, its scalability in LMICs remains limited due to the capital- and operations-intensive nature of upstream systems. Thus, it is positioned as emerging rather than core.

Scalability and replication potential

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

This model builds on the African Union's eThekwini/Ngor frameworks and the AIP investment program and is replicable wherever sanitation budget lines can be embedded in fiscal policy and tracked via GLAAS. Regional platforms, such as SACOSAN (South Asia), LatinoSan/CODIA (Latin America), the Arab Ministerial Water Council, and ASEAN, provide entry points, with SWA enabling cross-regional adoption. As only Africa currently sets a quantified target, the action supports other regions in defining context-appropriate baselines.

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)

Existing champions in Africa: Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe, have already met the 0.5% GDP target. In South Asia, India's Swachh Bharat Mission demonstrates how budget-led approaches drive access, while Peru and Brazil highlight sustained, structured investment in Latin America.

Regional backing is provided by the African Union and AMCOW, with potential anchors in the Arab Ministerial Water Council, CODIA/IDB, and SACOSAN. Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) serves as the global platform.

Key implementing partners include SuSanA, the World Bank, WaterAid, and UNICEF, with formal Member State endorsement pursued through ministerial channels.

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)
The action integrates Interactive Dialogue (a) workstreams 4 (Accountability), 5 (Financing) and 6 (decentralized capacity, resources and accountability for local delivery). It drives ID(f) Investments, links to ID(b) Prosperity and ID(c) Planet via pollution reduction and resource recovery, and accelerates ID(e) by institutionalizing SDG 6.2 commitments.