



7 steps to success with your water project application for innovation

Roadmap to VIA Water support

So there you are, with a brilliant idea to solve a serious water problem in African cities. But how do you turn that idea, that plan, into reality? Contact us! Through cultivating knowledge exchange, matching your idea to suitable projects, and co-funding, we can help you move to the next step of your plan toward bringing your idea to life!

Who are we?

VIA Water is a Dutch programme designed to identify and (financially) support innovative solutions for water problems in cities in Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and South Sudan.

VIA Water is not just about funding: knowledge sharing is key to the programme. The programme is a partnership between UNESCO-IHE, Aqua for All and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, designed to generate more knowledge about effective development tools. This means that the Programme Office (based at UNESCO-IHE) assists partners in their social innovation and maintains an (online) learning community. The funding is provided for by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the contracting and Fund Management is being handled by Aqua for All, who can also assist in connecting you to other funding programmes if necessary.

In this Roadmap we will guide you through the VIA Water process. You will read about:

- The complete 7 steps before a project is eligible for funding
- Our criteria
- A teaser guide to guide you through writing your two pager
- A full proposal guide, to be used once you have been invited to submit a full proposal
- A note on budgets

VIA Water focuses on 7 countries:

Benin - Mali - Ghana - Kenya - Rwanda - South Sudan- Mozambique

and on 12 pressing needs:

sanitation - groundwater - urban agriculture - water quality - floods & droughts
financial arrangements - data - rainwater harvesting - water allocation
urban planning - drinking water - institutional strengthening

VIA Water

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info@viawater.nl

Twitter: @viawater

Facebook: VIA Water

LinkedIn Group: VIA Water

Aqua for All

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When can you apply?

Do you have a brilliant solution to one of the urban water issues troubling your country?

Check whether you meet the requirements and send us your idea which:

- Needs to focus on one of the 7 VIA Water countries
- Needs to focus on one of the 12 'pressing needs' VIA Water works on
- Has to be innovative for your country
- Needs to make use of an integrated approach.
We are looking for breakthroughs, never-been-thought-of, brilliant solutions with a solid base
- Is widely applicable
- Is in between research and proven concept

When you apply, make sure you meet the full criteria for applying for the VIA Water Fund and state you do so in your application

How do you obtain support?

If your proposal does not meet all of the VIA Water criteria, but is still very good and contributes to the aims of the programme, it might be eligible for a wild card.

STEP 1: Send us your project idea

The first step is simple: email us your project idea. You can do this in the form of a one- or two-page teaser (see attachment 1), and send it to teasers@viawater.nl so we can check whether your idea fits within our programme. Your initial idea may be submitted in English, French or Portuguese (the full proposal and the rest of the programme will be in English). Do not forget to make a statement on the fulfilment of the Entry Criteria.

See attachment 1: Teaser Guide, and check out video 1 to 4 at [viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0](https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0)

STEP 2: We respond

Our programme team will study the teaser and (usually) issue a reaction within two weeks. If we see potential in it we will try to help you improve your idea and make it more feasible for funding. Or we might refer you to options that will suit you better.

STEP 3: Elaborate on your idea

If we think there is enough potential to proceed we will ask you to create a feasible and fundable project proposal. We advise you to consult the members of the online Community at this stage. In this stage you need to invest in partnerships

and preliminary research to make the proposal as real as possible.

See attachment 2: Guide for a Project Proposal Document, and check out video and documents 5 to 10 at [viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0](https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0)

STEP 4: Apply for funds

You submit your final funding application to one of the VIA Water's fund managers. We might ask you for more information. See attachment 3: budget

STEP 5: We study your full application

If you apply for an amount of less than € 25.000, the Aqua for All fund managers will handle the approval procedure. If your application is for more than € 25.000 external and independent advisors will also be asked to assess it. The response is usually within 4 weeks

STEP 6: Process our feedback

Reserve some time to process suggestions: recommendations need to be incorporated into the plan before a final decision is taken or will be integrated in the funding contract as a condition. Aqua for All makes the final decision regarding funding.

STEP 7: We set up a contract with you

As soon as the project is approved we set up a contract with the applicant. The financial support is to be considered as a subsidy.

On our website we display all of the VIA Water projects. Progress for your project can be reported through the AKVO Really Simple Reporting Tool.

In your contract, we will add a section on the communication we require from you: in our online Community and elsewhere.

*Before you start we advise you to watch the videos and read the supporting articles on our website:
<https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0>*



Criteria for applying for the VIA Water Fund

We apply two levels of criteria:

- I. Entry criteria: requirements your idea must meet before we can start cooperating
- II. Project application criteria, to which your project must adhere once it starts to run.

>>>> We focus on the results, not how you got there: in case your idea does not meet all of them your application is not necessarily ineligible! <<<<<

We do need to know why you don't fit the criteria, so please explain this in your teaser. We might decide to give you a wild card.

I. Entry Criteria

The general entry criteria are as follows and are meant as a checklist before submission of your project idea. If you cannot meet them all let us know: we might be able to make an exception if reported before submission.

1. Applicants need to be registered organisations (companies, universities, government agencies etc.); not individuals.
2. Applicants promise to refrain from all forms of fraud and will monitor, report and counteract fraud by sub-contracted parties.
3. Applying companies with more than 20 employees adhere to, publish and practice CSR policy .
4. Applicants accept the open-source policy of VIA Water and are willing to share and participate in our learning/exchange community and in events.
5. Lead applicants are able to take full responsibility for implementation and have sufficient expertise in the project field.
6. Ownership of the project and its formulation are locally secured.
7. The application is project-specific, with defined beginning and end dates, milestones and measurable targets.
8. The project will clearly have a positive impact on the least privileged communities.
9. There is no religion-related component to the project.

* CSR policy functions as a self-regulatory mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards and national or international norms (Wikipedia)

II. Application criteria

The application criteria are divided between general criteria, criteria on content, on partners, and on budget. These form the standard we ask you to live up to once you start your project. Please check carefully beforehand whether you expect to be able to abide by these 'rules' and let us know in which areas you expect difficulties.

General

1. The application must be complete and consistent, the budget must be reported in Euros.
2. Long-term sustainability is at the heart of the project. This means getting in place the relevant measures on financial, institutional, environmental, technical and social sustainability, including the impacts on gender. For more information, check out the FIETS criteria at akvopedia.org/wiki/FIETS_sustainability_principles
3. The project is relevant and responds to identified pressing needs.
4. The project's aim and its anticipated impacts, outcomes, outputs and activities are logically related and risks are well addressed (a Logical Framework and a planning diagramme are recommended)
5. The project has a clear impact-oriented Theory of Change* or business perspective.
6. Project is set up efficiently and is cost-conscious.
7. Application and project design are gender-specific (e.g. show whether and how women are specifically involved in the project, as well as whether there are special benefits, adaptations or negative consequences for girls and women).
8. Proposals will stimulate local economy and local ownership.
9. Applicants apply a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning cycle

* A Theory of Change is here defined as an explicit vision (hypothesis) how change will be reached. The ToC is the basis for the project logic, assumptions and risk assessment. For more information: see video 5 at viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0

Content

1. Being innovative: The idea should be new to the water sector in Africa, or it should be a clear adaptation of an existing application.
2. The idea should focus on one or more of the 7 VIA Water countries: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and South Sudan.
3. It should address water problems in urban settings, fitting within at least one of the 12 pressing needs (see textbox on page 2)
4. The plan should follow an integrated approach (not purely technology, but rather covering governance, sustainable management, socio-cultural aspects, gender, social marketing, etc.).
5. The submission should be practical and results-oriented. It should not be pure research, but aimed at implementation in a real life situation or at prototyping/piloting as a Proof of Concept.
6. The idea should include or result in a follow-up plan for upscaling or continuation.
7. A project needs to have a clearly defined project period, goals and deliverables, including learning (we do not support isolated capital investments).

Partners

1. At least one relevant partner needs to come from the programme country. Preferably, the project is developed in the focus country itself
2. Partners must be active members of the VIA Water Community and willing to share their ideas.
3. We prefer proposals that include 'unusual suspects': look for inspiration outside your own sector.
4. Involvement by the Dutch Water Sector and/or a knowledge organisation is also preferable.

* Time investment by the applicants could be seen as an in-kind contribution, as projects are in the interest of applicants.

Budget

1. We preferably fund projects between € 50.000 and € 100.000.
2. The maximum amount of funding is € 200.000.
3. The plan should specify salaries* and budget components and to whom these will be paid.
4. The level of required co-funding (in cash or in kind) varies between 0 and 50%, depending on the level of implementation, degree of commercial interest of the product and the degree of self-interest versus general interest.
5. We will *not* provide funding for:
 - Research projects
 - Isolated studies (i.e. feasibility studies) or isolated capital investments
 - Projects that have passed the development and pilot stage and could be seen as a profitable business introduction
 - PhD or MSc sponsorships.
 - General travel or general conference visits
 - Salaries and allowances of civil servants from primary government bodies (Ministries, National Government, Local Government).

More information in Attachment 3

* Time investment by the applicants is primarily seen as an in-kind contribution as projects are in the interest of applicants.

Attachments

1. Criteria for applying for the VIA Water Fund
2. Teaser template
3. Suggested template for a Project Proposal Document

Attachment 1

Attachment 2

Teaser guide (step 1/7)

To convince us your idea has potential, you describe your idea in a teaser.

At least it should include:

- A project title
- Country and location
- Involved organisation(s) and their roles
- Name applicant and email address
- Information on how you found out about VIA Water
- Short informative budget, and your subsidy request to the VIA Water Fund
- Background/Context
- The main idea
- A plan on how to implement the idea
- Explanation why this is 'new' (or innovative) and why this opportunity cannot be missed
- A statement on the fulfilment of the entry criteria and (if applicable) an explanation on the criteria you cannot fulfil.

Send your teaser to: teasers@viawater.nl

Proposal template (step 3/7)

We developed a guide for your full project proposal which you need to draft once we approve your initial teaser. If you have already written a plan you can use this as well.

>>>> If a point is not applicable to your project, please explain why! <<<<<<

Chapter 1. Background of the application

- Context. Describe and motivate:
 - o Location
 - o Problem area
 - o Institutional setup.
- Applying organisation(s) and current activities.
- Project idea. Describe shortly:
 - o Type of innovation
 - o Is it: an existing product/service/approach to be introduced in a new context; redirected toward a new purpose; modified for a new purpose or target group; or a completely new idea?
 - o Process from idea generation through to this proposal. Use SWOT (check out video 8)
 - o Parallel activities related to this proposal
 - o After project completion: consider potential for other cities/countries, upscaling, and/or the estimated costs up to the (possible) market launch.
 - o Magnitude of the final roll out and/or market potential
 - o Pressing needs: explain how the proposal addresses these
 - o Least privileged: define to which extent these will be reached
 - o References that support your assumptions. (Please substantiate with research)
 - o Distinction from existing technologies and business models. (Please substantiate with research)
- Funding opportunities. Answer:
 - o Did you already explore other opportunities for funding, and what options have you found?

Before you start we advise you to watch the videos and read the supporting articles on our website:
<https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0>

- o To which other funds or donors have you submitted or will you submit parallel applications involving this innovation?
- o If you have been rejected by other funding organisations, what were the reasons?
- Relation to the Dutch water sector (this is a preferential criterion). Describe:
 - o Level of cooperation with the Dutch water sector
 - o Level of promotion of Dutch technology/knowledge

Chapter 2. The proposal

- Aim, objectives, Theory of Change, outcomes and outputs, deliverables. For help on these matters, please see the video's on our website at [viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0](https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0)
- Beneficiaries/clients: describe who will ultimately benefit from your innovation. Take into account income level, gender, urban/rural.
- Activities and planning
- Enabling environment: list the main critical assumptions. A critical assumption is a boundary condition: you have little or no influence over it, but it is essential to the success of your project.
- Main risks, level of risks and risk mitigation. Check out point 8 on risks at [viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0](https://www.viawater.nl/proposal-writing-toolbox-0)
- Financial analysis (e.g. a draft business plan; a cost/benefit) etc
- Monitoring and evaluation: describe how you will monitor the outputs and outcomes and your intended impacts. See also our video on the results chain at [viawater.nl/how-to-build-your-results-chain](https://www.viawater.nl/how-to-build-your-results-chain)
- Communication and Learning

Chapter 3. Organisational set-up. Describe or list:

- Implementing parties, their roles, project team and responsibilities
- Other stakeholders involved. Explain how.
- Local entrepreneurship, describe in which way your project contributes

- Background of the applicants; registration; capacity; short track record; summary CSR policy and anti-corruption strategy. Explain why you are among the best positioned for this project
- Organisational, marketing or finance expertise within your organisation. Provide names and LinkedIn profiles or CVs
- External expertise needs. Describe possible gaps in expertise
- Communication. Describe the mechanisms for information sharing which will ensure knowledge sharing and learning take place

Chapter 4 Budget and other financial considerations.

- Budget and distribution among partners
- Co-funding
- Request to VIA Water

Budget

Budget teaser

The budget in the teaser is meant as an indication. In the final proposal the amounts may be different because estimates/assumptions will have to be sorted out. The budget should include an expense and an anticipated income part.

The expense part needs to show some of the main headings of the program. It can be a split in budget related to phases or main outcomes; or a budget related to activities (staff, capital/investment, third parties and other running costs).

The income part needs to be split in the amount requested from VIA Water and the amounts brought in by you and/or by others. If there is no co-funding this needs to be explained.

Budget final proposal

The budget in the final proposal should also include the two components: anticipated income and expense. On the expense side we prefer a cost based budget, mentioning units and unit prices (7 days of € 100 = € 700). If there are project phases they have to be split. If there is earmarking by certain parties you could add extra columns per 'funding party'. We would like to see the part which is contributed 'in kind'.

We prefer a budget in Euros. In case you provide it in other currency we will make our own conversion which is at your risk. Payments will be made in Euros. Just show the exchange rate you used in the budget, this might be used as a reference.

The 'income/coverage part can also be provided in a different way, in which there is no clear 'earmarking':

Budget in Euro	Total	Covered by		
		VIA Water	Applicant in kind*	Third party
Inception Phase				
Senior staff	3 people; 3 months; € 900	8.100	6.480	1.620
Costs Surveys	Base line and market study	9.000	9.000	
		17.100	15.480	1.620
Implementation				
Senior Staff	2 people; 12 months; € 900	21.600	17.280	4.320
Junior staff	5 people; 12 months; € 500	30.000	24.000	6.000
Capital investment		30.000	15.000	15.000
Transport cost	12 months a 100	1.200	1.200	
Office cost	included in salary tariff			
Consultancy	10 days a 600 + 3.000 costs	9.000	9.000	
External Mon&Eval		5.000	5.000	
		96.800	71.480	10.320
TOTAL		113.900	86.960	11.940
			76,3%	10,5%
				13,2%
* 20% of staff costs				

Budget in Euro	Total
Inception Phase	
Senior staff	3 people; 3 months; € 900
Costs Surveys	Base line and market study
	8.100
	9.000
	17.100
Implementation	
Senior Staff	2 people; 12 months; € 900
Junior staff	5 people; 12 months; € 500
Capital investment	
Transport cost	12 months a 100
Office cost	included in salary tariff
Consultancy	10 days a 600 + 3.000 costs
External Mon&Eval	
	21.600
	30.000
	30.000
	1.200
	9.000
	5.000
	96.800
TOTAL	113.900
Coverage	
Applicant in kind	11.940 (of which 1.620 in inception)
Third parties	15.000 (for capital costs)
Requested to VIA Water	86.960 76,3%
	113.900

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Aqua for All manages the VIA Water Fund.
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