

Terms of Reference

for the Endline Evaluation of
Sustainable Water Quality Management Supporting Uganda's development Ambitions
(SWAQ-Uganda)

Brief project description

Project title: Sustainable Water Quality Management Supporting Uganda's development Ambitions (SWAQ-Uganda)

Project budget: 1,760,000 Euro

Implementation period: 1 November 2021 – 31 October 2026

Project Location: The SWAQ-Uganda project has been implemented across Uganda at the national level, with a case study focused on the Mpanga catchment.

Implementing partners:

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU)

Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE)

Context and background

Uganda's economy is highly dependent on its environmental and natural resources, with the environment and natural resources sector contributing significantly to livelihoods, employment and national economic development. Freshwater resources are essential for domestic water supply, agriculture, fisheries, hydropower, industry and ecosystem services. However, increasing population growth, urbanisation, agricultural intensification, industrial development, environmental degradation and climate change have placed growing pressure on water resources, resulting in declining water quality and increased risks to human health, biodiversity, food security and sustainable economic development. Water pollution, inadequate monitoring systems, limited data availability and institutional capacity constraints have reduced the country's ability to effectively manage water resources and achieve national development objectives.

The SWAQ-Uganda project aims to contribute to the sustainable management of water resources in Uganda, with the expected outcome of "improved knowledge and enhanced capacity in water quality management in support of policymaking and effective water resources management".

The project proposes to:

- 1) bring together the physical, chemical and biological aspects of water quality and water resources,
- 2) integrate existing data, monitoring and modelling approaches,
- 3) provide a unique national assessment of water quality status, underlying stressors, dominant pollutants and management measures, which are currently missing and much needed in Uganda,
- 4) and enhance the institutional capacity through a three-level capacity enhancement strategy, including tailor-made training of MWE staff members and other persons of high relevance; improvement in institutional structure (e.g., operationalising the unit for biomonitoring at MWE); and strong dissemination and outreach through stakeholder engagement and co-design, international high-level exposure and support for national policymaking and SDG reporting.

The overarching objective of the SWAQ-Uganda project is closely aligned with Uganda's national development priorities and policy framework, including Uganda Vision 2040, the National Development Plans, the National Environment Management Policy, the National Strategy for Water Quality Management and the National Framework for Drinking Water Quality Management. It also supports Uganda's commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 6), regional initiatives such as the Nile Basin Initiative and the East African Community, and the Austrian Development Cooperation's Country Strategy for Uganda, which identifies water and sanitation as a priority sector.

From a social perspective, inadequate water quality disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly women, children and rural communities, who bear a greater burden of water collection, water-borne diseases and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. The project therefore incorporates gender considerations and capacity development to strengthen equitable and sustainable water quality management for improved public health, environmental protection and livelihoods.

To achieve this, the SWAQ-Uganda project activities were structured in the following three output areas (OPs):

- OP1. Improving water quality monitoring and information sharing, through existing data collation and additional comprehensive physico-chemical monitoring and biomonitoring.
- OP2. Developing a water quality modelling framework for Uganda, covering a nationwide baseline setup and a case study, including scenario analysis for climate change and management options.
- OP3. Enhancing institutional capacity for water quality management to inform policy and practice.

The project is primarily targeted towards directly supporting the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) of Uganda. Moreover, at least 60 persons (practitioners, policymakers and researchers from Ugandan governments and universities) working in the water sector will directly benefit from the trainings on water quality related aspects. The Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM) of MWE, with an overall mandate for water resources management in Uganda, is our main target institution for the tailored institutional capacity enhancement. Other direct beneficiaries include the national and regional development

partners, investors, civil society organisations and scientists. They can make use of the data and assessment report on water quality, which are main outputs of this project. Due to the impact of water quality on human health and ecosystem services, a much larger group of indirect beneficiaries is envisioned at the impact level, namely the Ugandans who directly or indirectly suffer from water pollution.

The project is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and is implemented jointly by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the lead partner; the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU); and the Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM) of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), the local project partner. IIASA provides overall scientific leadership and project management, systems analysis expertise, water quality and integrated forward-looking modelling capabilities, and hands-on capacity development services. BOKU complements these strengths with extensive expertise in freshwater ecosystem management, biomonitoring, water quality modelling and institutional capacity development through its long-standing collaboration with Ugandan institutions. As the national implementing partner, the Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM) is responsible for integrated water resources management in Uganda and leads field monitoring, laboratory analysis, stakeholder engagement and the uptake of project outputs into national policies and water management practices. Together, the partners combine international scientific expertise with national institutional leadership to strengthen Uganda's long-term capacity for water quality monitoring, modelling and evidence-based decision-making.

Purpose and objectives of this tender

Mandate and Purpose:

The SWAQ-Uganda project includes an independent evaluation as a planned activity to be conducted towards the end of the project implementation period. The evaluation is commissioned by IIASA on behalf of the project partners and in accordance with the ADA grant agreement, to provide an independent assessment of project performance and results, in line with the agreed project framework and evaluation requirements.

The core objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the project's performance and results by evaluating its relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, including the extent to which the project achieved its intended outputs and contributed to the expected outcomes under OP1–OP3.
2. Assess the quality, uptake, and sustainability of the project's key results, including the extent to which the project has strengthened institutional technical capacities, enhanced water quality monitoring and hydrological modelling, and supported the use of project outputs, knowledge products and evidence for water resources management and policy development.
3. Generate evidence-based lessons and recommendations by identifying the key enabling and constraining factors that influenced project implementation and results, documenting good practices, and providing

practical recommendations to inform future programming, institutional capacity development, and water quality management initiatives in Uganda.

The evaluation findings will be primarily used by:

- ADA, the funding agency, to assess the project's performance and results, ensure accountability for the use of funding, identify lessons learned and good practices, and inform decisions regarding future programming and investments in the water sector.
- The implementing project partners (IIASA, BOKU and DWRM / MWE) to reflect on project implementation, assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the approaches used, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and incorporate lessons learned into the design and implementation of future projects and partnerships.
- DWRM / MWE to assess the extent to which the project has strengthened institutional capacity, enhanced water quality monitoring and management systems, and generated knowledge, tools and data that can support evidence-based planning, policy development and long-term water resources management.

The evaluation findings will also be of value to a wider group of stakeholders, including practitioners, policymakers and researchers from Ugandan government institutions and universities, national and regional development partners, the private sector, civil society organisations and the scientific community. These stakeholders may use the findings to inform policy dialogue, support research and capacity development, new project design, promote the uptake of good practices, and strengthen future water quality management initiatives in Uganda and comparable contexts.

Scope

The evaluation will cover the implementation period of the SWAQ-Uganda project from November 2021 until the end of the evaluation on 15 October 2026. It will assess the project's contribution to sustainable water quality management in Uganda in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. Where feasible, the evaluation may also consider potential longer-term effects of the project, recognising that these may not yet be fully observable at the time of the evaluation.

Time scope

The evaluation will assess project implementation, outputs and achieved outcomes over the implementation period, taking into account the project extension and activities completed up to the time of the evaluation.

Geographic scope

The evaluation will cover project activities implemented in Uganda and Austria, reflecting the project's integrated implementation across both countries. In Uganda, the evaluation will consider activities undertaken at the national level, with particular attention to the Mpanga Catchment as the project's case study area.

These include water quality monitoring, stakeholder engagement, , capacity development, and uptake of project results.

The evaluation will also cover activities implemented in Austria, at IIASA and BOKU University, where a substantial component of the project was carried out. This includes the development and application of hydrological and water quality modelling approaches, the development of biomonitoring methods, river typologies, standard operating procedures, technical guidance and technical analyses, knowledge generation, scientific collaboration, and specialised training and capacity-building activities. These activities formed an integral part of the project's implementation and contributed directly to the achievement of its outputs, outcomes and institutional capacity development.

Thematic scope

The evaluation will examine all major components of the project, including:

- strengthening national water quality monitoring systems and information management;
- development and application of hydrological and water quality modelling tools;
- institutional capacity development through training, technical assistance and knowledge exchange;
- stakeholder engagement and collaboration;
- generation and use of scientific evidence, datasets and knowledge products for water resources management and policy development; and
- measures that support the sustainability and institutional uptake of project results.

The evaluation will assess progress across the project's three technical Outputs (OP1–OP3) and consider the extent to which activities were implemented in an integrated manner to achieve the intended project outcomes.

Stakeholder scope

The evaluation will consider the perspectives of the principal project stakeholders, including the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the implementing partners (IIASA, BOKU and the DWRM of MWE), as well as representatives of participating government institutions, universities, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders involved in or benefiting from the project, as appropriate.

Evaluation boundaries

The evaluation will focus on the project's direct results and contributions that can reasonably be attributed to the SWAQ-Uganda project. It is not expected to assess broader sector-wide impacts that extend beyond the project's scope or implementation period. While recognising that institutional and environmental change occurs over longer timeframes, the evaluation should assess the likelihood that project results, capacities and institutional arrangements will be sustained beyond project completion.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation applies the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability). Key questions of the evaluation shall include the following:

RELEVANCE

1. To what extent was the design of the SWAQ-Uganda project relevant to Uganda's water quality management priorities, institutional needs and development objectives, and to the broader needs of the target beneficiaries identified in the project's problem analysis?
2. To what extent did the project design appropriately integrate ADA's cross-cutting principles, including gender equality, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, inclusive stakeholders' participation, and other relevant human rights-based principles?
3. To what extent did the project adapt to changes in the operating context, stakeholder needs and emerging opportunities during implementation to maintain its relevance, including responding to cross-cutting issues and contextual changes where relevant?

EFFECTIVENESS

1. To what extent did the SWAQ-Uganda project achieve its intended outputs and outcomes under OP1, OP2 and OP3, particularly in strengthening the knowledge base and enhancing technical and institutional capacities for water quality management?
2. To what extent have the project's knowledge, monitoring data, modelling tools, biomonitoring approaches, technical guidance and strengthened capacities contributed, or are likely to contribute, to evidence-based planning, decision-making, institutional practices and, where applicable, policies related to water quality management within DWRM and other relevant stakeholders?
3. What were the main internal and external factors that enabled or constrained the achievement of the project's intended outputs and outcomes and the use of project-generated knowledge, tools and capacities by DWRM and other relevant stakeholders?

SUSTAINABILITY

1. To what extent are the project's key results—including water quality datasets, modelling tools, biomonitoring approaches, technical guidance, strengthened capacities, and improved water quality monitoring and information-sharing procedures—likely to be sustained and further developed beyond the project period?
2. To what extent are the institutional, technical and financial conditions in place to support the continued use, maintenance and further development of the project's knowledge, tools and capacities by DWRM and other relevant stakeholders?

3. To what extent have DWRM and other relevant stakeholders demonstrated ownership of the project's outputs and outcomes, and established the institutional arrangements, resource commitments, partnerships and operational practices needed to sustain and further apply them beyond the project period?

Design and approach

The evaluation shall employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to provide an evidence-based assessment of the project. Findings shall be triangulated using multiple sources of evidence to enhance the validity and credibility of the evaluation. The evaluation shall assess both the achievement of planned outputs and outcomes and the quality of changes resulting from the project's interventions, including changes in institutional capacities, practices, knowledge use and evidence-based water quality management. Where appropriate, the evaluator is encouraged to apply an Outcome Harvesting approach to identify and verify evidence of how project-generated knowledge, data, tools and capacities have contributed, or are likely to contribute, to institutional practices, planning processes, decision-making and, where applicable, policy development.

The evaluation design, methodology and data collection methods shall integrate the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), ADA's cross-cutting issues, and the basic principles and quality standards of the Austrian Development Cooperation, as appropriate to the scope of the evaluation. In particular, the evaluation shall ensure that gender equality, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, stakeholder participation, inclusion, and other relevant human rights-based principles are reflected throughout the evaluation design, including the evaluation matrix, sampling strategy, data collection tools, analysis and reporting.

Evaluation Standards and Ethics

The evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and quality standards, the ADA Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations (2020), and the Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). The evaluator(s) shall adhere to internationally recognised ethical principles for evaluation, including independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, confidentiality, informed consent, respect for participants, and the principle of "do no harm". All findings, conclusions and recommendations shall be evidence-based and supported through appropriate triangulation of data.

Data collection should include, but not necessarily be limited to the following methods:

- **Project materials review:** Review of the project document (including the logframe matrix), and progress reports, including annexes, monitoring data, training reports and handbooks, and other relevant deliverables and project documentation.
- **Key informant interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with representatives of DWRM of MWE, project partners, participating institutions, ADA, and other relevant stakeholders to validate findings,

understand project implementation and results, and assess institutional uptake, ownership and sustainability.

- **On-site observation and field visits:** Visits to the MWE Entebbe National Water Quality Reference Laboratory and selected water quality monitoring sites to directly observe project-supported infrastructure, equipment, biomonitoring activities, monitoring procedures and operational practices. These observations should complement the project materials review and interviews and contribute to the verification of evaluation findings.

The evaluator may propose additional data collection and analytical methods, such as focus group discussions, surveys or other participatory approaches, where these are considered appropriate to answer the evaluation questions. The proposed methodology, including the evaluation matrix, indicators, sampling strategy and data collection tools, shall be further elaborated in the Inception Report.

The evaluation should include consultations with a representative range of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the following stakeholder groups:

- Project management and technical team members from each implementing partner, ensuring representation across the project's main output areas (OP1–OP3);
- Representatives of MWE-DWRM, including staff involved in national water quality monitoring, the Mpanga catchment activities, biomonitoring and the National Water Quality Reference Laboratory;
- Representatives of stakeholder institutions that participated in project workshops, training activities and other project-supported interventions.

The evaluator should propose an appropriate sampling strategy in the Inception Report, ensuring that the selected interviewees provide sufficient coverage of the project's key stakeholder groups and perspectives. The evaluation should also ensure appropriate consideration of gender balance and other relevant cross-cutting principles in the selection of interviewees.

Suggested Workplan

The timeline below is indicative and may be refined during the inception phase in consultation with ADA and the project partners. However, the evaluator shall ensure that adequate time is allocated for the preparation of the Inception Report (IR), data collection, analysis, report writing, and the incorporation of consolidated comments from ADA and the project partners. The suggested timeline is for 33–35 working days.

Evaluation Phase	Main Activities	Working Days (WD)	Indicative Timeline
1. Inception Phase	Desk review; preliminary consultations with ADA and project partners; refinement of the evaluation design; development of the evaluation matrix, sampling strategy and draft data collection tools; preparation and submission of the Inception Report	8 days	Weeks 1 - 1.5
Review of the Inception Report	ADA and project partners review the Inception Report and provide consolidated comments (no consultancy days)	—	Weeks 2–3 (2-week review period)
2. Data Collection Phase	Key informant interviews, field visits, on-site observations, validation of documentary evidence and completion of data collection.	10 days	Weeks 4–5
3. Analysis and Synthesis Phase	Data analysis, triangulation of evidence, assessment against the evaluation criteria, formulation of findings, conclusions and recommendations.	6 days	Week 6
4. Reporting Phase	Preparation and submission of the draft evaluation report.	6 days	Weeks 7–8
Review of Draft Report	ADA and project partners review the draft report and provide consolidated comments (no consultancy days).	—	Weeks 9 (approximately 2 weeks)
5. Finalization Phase	Revision of the report based on comments and submission of the final evaluation report and annexes.	3 days	Week 10

The timeline is indicative and will be adapted to ensure completion within the project implementation period. The evaluator may propose adjustments to the indicative work plan in the Inception Report, provided that all deliverables are completed within the contractual timeframe.

Expected Deliverables

1. Inception Report

The evaluator shall prepare an Inception Report presenting the proposed evaluation design and methodology.

The report shall include, at a minimum:

- refined evaluation questions;
- the evaluation matrix linking evaluation questions, indicators, sources of evidence and data collection methods;
- the proposed sampling strategy and stakeholder consultation plan;
- draft data collection tools;
- the analytical approach;
- quality assurance measures;

- identified limitations, risks and mitigation measures;
- a detailed work plan and timeline for the evaluation.

The Inception Report shall be submitted for review by ADA and the project partners. Fieldwork may commence only after the Inception Report has been reviewed and approved.

2. Draft Evaluation Report

The evaluator shall submit a draft evaluation report presenting the evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The report shall address all evaluation questions and OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and be supported by evidence obtained through the evaluation.

The draft report shall be reviewed by ADA and the project partners, who will provide consolidated comments for consideration by the evaluator.

3. Final Evaluation Report

The evaluator shall submit a final evaluation report incorporating the agreed comments received on the draft report. The final report should clearly explain how comments have been addressed and shall comply with the structure and quality standards set out in the ADA Evaluation Guidelines.

The final report shall include an executive summary and all annexes, including the evaluation matrix, list of people consulted, list of documents reviewed and other relevant supporting material.

4. Meeting to present the Findings

The evaluator shall present the main evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations to ADA and the project partners in an online debriefing session.

5. ADA Results Assessment Form (RAF)

In addition to the Final Evaluation Report, the evaluator(s) shall complete and submit the [ADA Results Assessment Form \(RAF\)](#).

Evaluation management arrangements

IIASA has overall responsibility for managing the evaluation in consultation with BOKU, DWRM of MWE and ADA. The primary contact points are the SWAQ-Uganda Project lead Dr. Taher Kahil (kahil@iiasa.ac.at) and Project Officer - Paula Abarca Del Rio (abarca@iiasa.ac.at). All necessary background information and relevant documents will be provided by IIASA in consultation with BOKU and the DWRM of MWE.

All interview arrangements will be coordinated by IIASA, after consultation with the DWRM of MWE and BOKU, and the awarded evaluators.

The evaluation shall be managed in accordance with the ethical standards and guiding principles for evaluation, including independence, impartiality, transparency, integrity and respect for confidentiality. The

roles of IIASA, BOKU, the DWRM of MWE and ADA are limited to facilitating the evaluation process, providing factual comments on draft deliverables, and supporting access to relevant information and stakeholders.

Requirements for the Evaluator(s)

Given the scope and multidisciplinary nature of the evaluation, proposals from small teams of up to two evaluators with complementary evaluation, technical and contextual expertise are encouraged.

Where a team is proposed, one evaluator shall be designated as Team Leader and shall have overall responsibility for the planning, implementation, coordination and quality assurance of the evaluation, as well as the timely delivery of all evaluation outputs. The Team Leader shall serve as the primary point of contact with ADA and the project partners.

The evaluator(s) shall be responsible for carrying out the evaluation in accordance with these Terms of Reference, including planning and conducting the evaluation, collecting and analysing evidence, and preparing all required evaluation deliverables. Where a team is proposed, its combined qualifications shall demonstrate the required evaluation, technical and contextual expertise described below. The proposed team shall be gender-balanced, diverse, and possess complementary skills and experience relevant to the assignment.

Eligibility

The evaluator(s) must be independent and must not have been involved in the design, implementation, or management of the project being evaluated.

Required qualifications and experience

The evaluator(s) shall demonstrate the following qualifications and experience necessary to conduct an independent evaluation of the SWAQ-Uganda project. Where a team is proposed, the combined qualifications of the team shall demonstrate the required evaluation, technical and contextual expertise.

The Team Leader shall demonstrate:

- Proven experience in leading independent evaluations of development cooperation projects or programs, including responsibility for evaluation design, stakeholder engagement, methodological oversight and report preparation.
- Demonstrated knowledge and application of internationally recognized evaluation standards and the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.
- At least 10 years of relevant professional experience, including substantial experience in water quality management, water resources management, hydrology, environmental monitoring, environmental sciences or a closely related field.
- Excellent analytical, facilitation, report writing and communication skills.

- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Evaluation Team

The evaluator(s) shall collectively demonstrate:

- Proven experience in conducting independent evaluations of development cooperation projects or programs.
- Demonstrated expertise in mixed-methods evaluations, including qualitative data collection and analysis, key informant interviews, triangulation of evidence and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings.
- Strong technical expertise in water quality management, water resources management, hydrological modelling, environmental monitoring or closely related disciplines.
- Long-term professional experience with research-for-development or international development projects, preferably in East Africa or comparable contexts.
- Experience working with government institutions and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- High standards of professional integrity, objectivity and the ability to work independently while delivering high-quality outputs within agreed timelines.

The following will be considered an advantage:

- Experience working with Ugandan institutions and stakeholders.
- Experience evaluating projects funded by bilateral or multilateral development partners.
- Familiarity with institutional capacity development, environmental governance and evidence-informed policy processes.

Details for the Financial Proposal

Tenderers shall submit a separate financial proposal as part of their offer.

The financial proposal shall include:

- the total consultancy fee (in EUR);
- a breakdown of professional fees by evaluator and level of effort (working days);
- any travel, accommodation, subsistence and other where applicable; and
- any other costs required to complete the assignment in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

The financial proposal shall be inclusive of all costs required to complete the assignment and shall clearly indicate whether the quoted prices are inclusive or exclusive of applicable taxes.

Tenderers are responsible for ensuring that their financial proposal reflects all applicable taxes and statutory obligations in accordance with the laws and regulations relevant to their place of taxation and the contractual arrangements.

For guidance purposes, the maximum budget allocation to this contract is fixed at € 46,000. (forty-six thousand Euro including all costs and taxes).

Specifications for the submissions of offers

Applicants need to submit:

- i) a technical proposal (methodology, work plan, team composition);
- ii) CV of the proposed evaluators;
- iii) examples of previous evaluation reports or references; and
- iv) a separate financial proposal.

The contract will be awarded in accordance with IIASA's procurement procedures, taking into account both the technical quality of the proposal and the financial offer. The weights given to the assessment are 60% for qualifications and 40% financial offer.

Proposals shall be submitted as soon as possible but no later than 21 August 2026.

Please send the proposal by email to IIASA's Project Lead (kahil@iiasa.ac.at), Project Officer (abarca@iiasa.ac.at) and Grant Management Department Manager Monica Manchanda (manchand@iiasa.ac.at).

Annexes

Relevant project documents will be shared with the selected consultant upon signature of the consultancy agreement and during the inception phase. The list below provides an indicative overview of the documents available for the desk review.

- [Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations ADA 2020](#).
- Results assessment form (Excel provided by ADA),
- Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation,
- Project Document (PD) and all annexes,
- Project progress reports and annexes.
- [ADA Results Assessment Form](#) (RAF)