REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

RISE Syria Project

Climate-Smart Irrigation Innovation Challenge

Funded by: Innovation Norway – Humanitarian Innovation Programme (HIP)

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS
Up to USD 200,000	6–8 months	Southern Aleppo Governorate

IMPLEMENTED BY

Engineers Without Borders Norway (EWB-N)
Field Ready for Humanitarian Innovation – Syria
World Vision Syria Response (WVSR)
Response Innovation Lab (RIL)

Resilient Irrigation for Smallholder Empowerment

Publication of RFP: 29 June 2026

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1. Executive Summary

The RISE Syria Project (Resilient Irrigation for Smallholder Empowerment) invites private-sector innovators, technology providers, manufacturers, engineering firms, startups, research institutions, and consortia to submit innovative solutions addressing critical irrigation challenges affecting wheat farmers in Northwest Syria.

Water scarcity, prolonged drought, declining groundwater resources, increasing irrigation costs, and climate variability continue to threaten agricultural production and rural livelihoods across the region. Through this Innovation Challenge, RISE Syria aims to identify, support, test, and scale practical, climate-smart irrigation solutions that improve water-use efficiency, strengthen agricultural resilience, and contribute to long-term food security.

Selected innovators may receive grants of up to USD 200,000 and will work closely with the RISE Syria consortium to co-design, pilot, validate, and prepare their solutions for future scale-up.

2. About the RISE Syria Project

RISE Syria is a humanitarian innovation initiative designed to improve irrigation efficiency and strengthen climate resilience among wheat farmers in Northwest Syria.

The project combines humanitarian expertise, local knowledge, agricultural experience, and private-sector innovation to identify sustainable and scalable solutions that respond to real challenges faced by farmers.

The project focuses primarily on Southern Aleppo Governorate and surrounding areas of Northwest Syria, where water scarcity has become one of the most significant constraints to agricultural productivity, livelihoods, and food security.

3. Background and Challenge

Through extensive needs assessments, stakeholder consultations, challenge mapping workshops, farmer interviews, and market dialogue activities, the RISE Syria consortium identified several interconnected challenges affecting irrigation systems and agricultural production. (*Appendices 1–2)

Water Scarcity

- Reduced rainfall patterns
- Increasing drought frequency
- Declining groundwater levels
- Limited water availability during critical growing periods

Inefficient Irrigation Practices

- Over-irrigation and water wastage
- Poor irrigation scheduling
- Limited adoption of precision irrigation technologies
- High water losses

Rising Irrigation Costs

- Increased fuel and energy costs
- High operational costs of pumping systems
- Limited access to affordable irrigation technologies

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Limited Access to Information

- Lack of localized weather information
- Limited irrigation advisory services
- Limited use of data-driven decision-making

Climate Change Impacts

- Increasing weather variability
- More frequent drought events
- Reduced agricultural resilience

The project seeks innovative solutions capable of addressing one or more of these challenges.

The Market Dialogue held on 25 July 2026, with broad participation from private-sector actors, academia, government representatives, INGOs, NGOs, researchers, technical experts, and other relevant stakeholders, further emphasized that irrigation challenges in Northwest Syria are not only technical, but also economic, behavioral, operational, and service-related. Participants highlighted that solutions should consider farmers' ability to adopt, operate, maintain, and afford the proposed approach over time.

The project therefore encourages applicants to think beyond technology alone and consider integrated solutions that may combine hardware, software, advisory support, service delivery models, local maintenance, farmer training, and practical business models.

4. Objective of the Innovation Challenge

The overall objective is to identify and support innovative solutions that improve irrigation efficiency and climate resilience among wheat farmers in Northwest Syria.

Specific objectives include:

- Improving irrigation decision-making
- Increasing water-use efficiency
- Reducing water losses
- Optimizing groundwater use
- Lowering irrigation costs
- Supporting climate-smart agriculture
- Increasing productivity per unit of water
- Strengthening resilience to climate shocks
- Improving farmer livelihoods and food security.

4.1 Solutions

The project is not seeking predefined approaches, applicants are encouraged to propose context-appropriate solutions informed by farmer realities, operational conditions, and local challenges in Northwest Syria.

The project aims to identify, co-design, pilot, and validate one or more innovative solution(s) contributing to improved irrigation management and climate resilience.

Description of the solution(s):

- Solution(s) should guide the farmers on When to Irrigate and How much to irrigate.
- Solution(s) should provide tailored guidance on irrigation and agriculture practices
- Solution(s) should contribute to Increase the productivity per unit of water
- Solution(s) should prioritize local manufacturing with compliance to quality standard.

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- Solution(s) should be dynamic and context driven.
- Solution(s) are encouraged to follow the Syrian Agriculture Strategy 2026–2030 published by the Syrian Ministry of Agriculture, particularly the Digital Transformation section. (*Appendix 3)
- Solution(s) should aim at increasing the profitability of farmers.

TARGET BENEFICIARIES
50 wheat farmers

5. Desired Impact

Through this Innovation Challenge, the RISE Syria Project aims to identify solutions that can contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Reduced irrigation water consumption
- Improved irrigation efficiency
- Increased wheat productivity
- Improved farmer decision-making
- Reduced irrigation-related costs
- Enhanced resilience to drought and climate variability
- Sustainable groundwater management
- Improved food security
- Increased adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices
- Strengthened agricultural livelihoods and value chains

6. Innovation Principles

Solutions supported under this challenge should demonstrate the following principles:

Principle	Description
User-Centred	Designed around the needs and realities of smallholder farmers.
Climate-Smart	Contributing to adaptation and resilience under changing climatic conditions.
Affordable	Economically viable and accessible to farmers.
Sustainable	Technically, financially, and environmentally sustainable beyond the project period.
Scalable	Capable of expansion within Syria and similar contexts.
Inclusive	Benefiting women, youth, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable households.
Locally Appropriate	Adapted to local infrastructure, capacities, and market conditions.

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Principle	Description
Farmer-Centred and Adoption-Oriented	Solutions should be designed primarily around the realities of smallholder farmers. Applicants should clearly explain how farmers will understand, trust, use, and benefit from the proposed solution.
Economically Practical	Solutions should demonstrate a clear value proposition for farmers, such as reducing irrigation costs, improving productivity, reducing input costs, improving water-use efficiency, or increasing profitability.
Locally Maintainable	Applicants should explain how the solution can be maintained locally, including availability of spare parts, technical support, repair capacity, and after-sales service.
Service-Oriented Models	Applicants are encouraged to consider models that reduce high upfront investment costs for farmers, including subscription models, shared services, irrigation-as-a-service, advisory services, or other approaches that improve affordability and adoption.

7. Illustrative Areas of Interest

The following examples are provided for illustrative purposes only. Applicants are encouraged to propose alternative approaches.

Potential solution areas may include:

- Precision irrigation systems
- Smart irrigation technologies
- Soil moisture monitoring solutions
- Weather-based irrigation advisory systems
- Digital decision-support tools
- Remote sensing applications
- AI-powered irrigation planning
- Solar-powered irrigation optimization
- Water harvesting innovations
- Water storage solutions
- Groundwater monitoring systems
- Irrigation service delivery models
- Farmer advisory platforms
- Water-use efficiency technologies
- Local manufacturing solutions
- Climate-smart agricultural technologies

Both technological and non-technological innovations are encouraged.

Applicants may also consider integrated approaches that combine more than one solution type, such as:

- Hardware combined with digital advisory tools.
- Soil or water monitoring combined with farmer guidance.
- Irrigation equipment combined with maintenance and service models.

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- Renewable energy systems combined with water-use optimization.
- Remote sensing or data tools combined with practical field-level advisory support.
- Local manufacturing or repair models that improve affordability and sustainability.

These examples are illustrative only. The RISE consortium remains open to different types of practical, innovative, and locally appropriate solutions.

8. Geographic Focus

Activities will primarily be implemented in:

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS
Southern Aleppo Governorate

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to safely and effectively operate within the target areas.

9. Eligible Applicants

Applications are welcome from:

- Private companies
- Agri-tech firms
- Engineering companies
- Technology providers
- Manufacturers
- Startups
- Social enterprises
- Private-sector consortia

The lead applicant must be a legally registered private-sector entity.

10. Consortiums and Partnerships

Applicants may apply individually or as part of a consortium.

The RISE consortium strongly encourages partnerships that combine complementary expertise, such as:

- Technology providers and manufacturers
- Startups and research institutions
- International companies and local Syrian partners
- Engineering firms and agricultural service providers
- Private-sector actors and universities

Consortium members must clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities.

The lead applicant will serve as the contractual counterpart and will be responsible for reporting and grant management.

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11. Grant Size and Duration

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
Up to USD 200,000	6–8 months

The RISE Syria consortium reserves the right to:

- Fund one or multiple solutions
- Partially fund proposals
- Negotiate project scope and budget
- Decline all submissions if no proposal sufficiently addresses the challenge

12. Innovation Maturity

Preference may be given to solutions that have demonstrated initial proof of concept and are ready for field testing and validation.

13. Co-Design and Pilot Approach

Selected innovators will work collaboratively with:

- Farmers
- Agricultural experts
- Engineers Without Borders Norway
- World Vision Syria Response
- Field Ready Syria
- Response Innovation Lab
- Relevant local stakeholders

Implementation will typically follow four phases:

Phase 1 – Co-Design and Adaptation
Refinement of the solution based on user needs and local conditions.

Phase 2 – Pilot Implementation
Deployment and testing under real field conditions.

Phase 3 – Validation and Learning
Collection of performance data, user feedback, and lessons learned.

Phase 4 – Scale-Up Planning
Development of sustainability and expansion strategies.

During the Market Dialogue, participants emphasized that farmer adoption is critical to the success of any irrigation solution. Therefore, applicants should explain how they will involve farmers during design, testing, feedback collection, and refinement.

Applicants should also describe how they will address possible adoption barriers, including trust, affordability, ease of use, maintenance, access to spare parts, technical support, and the time required for farmers to see results.

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14. Sustainability and Scale

Applicants must clearly explain:

- Long-term sustainability strategy
- Maintenance and support approach
- Revenue model (where applicable)
- Market adoption strategy
- Local ownership approach
- Potential for replication and scale-up

Applicants should clearly explain how the proposed solution can continue beyond the grant period. This should include:

- How farmers or service providers could afford the solution after the pilot.
- Whether the solution can be offered as a product, service, subscription, or shared model.
- How spare parts, maintenance, and technical support will be made available locally.
- How local manufacturers, suppliers, technicians, or service providers may be involved.
- How the solution could be scaled up or adapted to different farm sizes and contexts.
- How the solution can remain financially viable for both farmers and the private-sector provider.

16. Intellectual Property

Applicants retain ownership of all pre-existing intellectual property.

Any innovation developed during project implementation shall remain the property of the innovator.

The RISE Syria consortium shall retain a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use, document, replicate, and adapt project outputs for humanitarian, learning, and development purposes in Syria and similar contexts.

17. Proposal Requirements

Applicants shall submit (in English or Arabic):

Technical Proposal (Maximum 15 Pages)

Including:

- Problem statement
- Solution description
- Innovation approach
- Technical methodology
- Implementation plan
- Pilot strategy
- Risk assessment
- Sustainability strategy
- Scale-up vision
- For consortium applications, the roles, responsibilities, and added value of each partner should be clearly described, with a well-defined division of responsibilities and complementary expertise.

Applicants should also address the following in their technical proposal:

- The expected value proposition for farmers.
- Expected cost savings or productivity benefits, where possible.

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- The proposed maintenance and spare parts strategy, if applicable.
- The expected level of farmer training or technical support required, if applicable.
- Any assumptions related to farmer adoption and, if applicable, willingness to pay.
- How the solution can be adapted to smallholder farmers rather than only large-scale farms.
- How environmental risks, such as soil degradation, salinity, or unsustainable groundwater use, will be considered.

Budget Proposal

Detailed budget in USD, including narrative justification.

Organizational Documentation

- Registration certificate
- Short company profile, incl. any international offices/representation (as applicable):
- Key staff short CVs
- Relevant projects references
- Consortium agreements (if applicable)
- Quality assurance information (e.g. copy of latest ISO certification or equivalent as applicable)
- List any National or International trade or professional organisations of which the company is a member

18. Evaluation Criteria

Criterion
Challenge Relevance
Innovation Potential
Technical Feasibility
Team Capacity
Sustainability
Scalability
Cost Effectiveness
Inclusion & Safeguarding
Total

Minimum score required for funding consideration: 60/100

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19. Selection Process

Stage 1 – Eligibility Screening
Verification of eligibility and completeness.

Stage 2 – Technical Evaluation
Assessment against published criteria.

Stage 3 – Clarifications and Presentations
Shortlisted applicants may be invited to present their proposed solution and respond to questions from the evaluation committee.

Stage 4 – Final Selection
Funding recommendations based on technical merit, value for money, and strategic fit.

20. Indicative Timeline

Activity	Date
Market Dialogue	25 June 2026
Publication of RFP	29 June 2026
Submission Deadline	27 July 2026
Evaluation Period	July–August 2026
Award Notification	August 2026
Contracting	August 2026
Project Start	August/September 2026

22. Contact Information

CONTACT	EMAIL
Field Ready for Humanitarian Innovation – Syria	**info@fieldready.org.tr**

Subject Line:

RISE Syria Climate-Smart Irrigation Innovation Challenge – (Applicant Name)

The RISE Syria consortium looks forward to receiving innovative, practical, and scalable solutions that can help improve irrigation efficiency, strengthen climate resilience, and support sustainable agricultural livelihoods for wheat and barley farmers in Northwest Syria.

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Attachments / Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Needs Assessment Report.
- Appendix 2 – Challenge Mapping Workshop Report.
- Appendix 3 – Syrian Agriculture Strategy 2026–2030.