

## World Bank Youth Innovation Challenge: Water Solutions for a New Climate Reality CALL FOR PROPOSAL

### Background

The Sustainable Development Goal for water and sanitation — “to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” is a lofty one. Worldwide, 2.4 billion people remain without access to improved sanitation, and nearly 0.7 billion remain without access to improved drinking water sources. Those who have access to water supply and sanitation (WSS) services often must cope with intermittent water supply, sewerage system overflows, and poor customer service. Poor service delivery frequently stems from a vicious cycle of dysfunctional political environments and inefficiencies in water and sanitation utilities. Global forces including climate change, water scarcity, abrupt changes in the environment, population growth, migrations, and rapid urbanization — exacerbate these challenges and threaten the provision of high-quality and sustainable WSS services, jeopardizing the possibility of providing “water and sanitation for all.” Therefore, water and sanitation utilities require new strategic management approach to provide WSS quality services that ensure continuity of operations, encourage continuous improvement, develop strategic capabilities, and create efficient and sustainable strategic business models.

- Water security forms the core of development and well-being as people on a livable planet. High-quality water that is accessible keeps us healthy, sustains our livelihoods, grows our economies, and protects our ecosystems.<sup>1</sup>
- Young people are facing many barriers to entrepreneurship, employment, and career progression in the water sector - limited opportunities for capacity development, lack of entry level jobs, and an overall lack of motivation and excitement towards the field.
- Urgent global response through coordination across sectors and institutions is needed,<sup>2</sup> by bringing the private sector, CSOs, multilateral institutions, and youth towards collective action.

### Objectives

- Youth have contextual, on-ground, innovative solutions to some of the most pressing global development challenges. They are driven by passion, energy, and the urgent desire to create positive change. However, they also need support for scale-up, access to capital, business incubation and mentorship, to unleash their full potential.
- Organized as an innovation challenge, this 6-month long challenge has three purposes:
  - First, it provides youth with an opportunity to gain exposure, visibility, training and build networks in the international community of technocrats, policymakers, private sector, and other youth entrepreneurs. It provides them access to support for scale-up, mentorship and business incubation. It also provides an opening to attract talented aquapreneurs to the industry to address water challenges.

- Second, it provides S4YE and the Water GP an opportunity to tap into youth innovation in addressing water challenges, by identifying and supporting shooting star entrepreneurs.
- Third, it provides the coalition of S4YE partners an opportunity to be *youth champions*. This would enable them to direct their resources (time, mentorship, funding) tangibly toward youth creating on-ground impact. It would also enable them to convene with youth, other private sector partners and World Bank representatives at regular intervals over the course of the challenge.

## Concept

The *World Bank Youth Innovation Challenge: Water Solutions for a New Climate Reality* is joint initiative of the World Bank's Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE), the Water Global Practice's Utility of the Future Center of Excellence, and twelve water technology companies.

The challenge is designed to accelerate innovation and unlock the potential of water practices of young innovators and entrepreneurs globally. We aim to identify and support young shooting stars. This includes building young entrepreneurs' knowledge and skills, exposure to World Bank's global programs and S4YE's extensive network of 200+ partners in the private sector, governments, and foundations, providing coaching and strategic advice from experts, including the CEOs of successful sustainability startups, as well as media exposure, so young people can test their ideas and gain feedback from experts to take their concepts from ideation to implementation to scale. At the end of the challenge, the selected winners will receive mentorship from private sector leaders through access to a group of top CEOs of successful Water tech startups, World Bank Water teams and Investors.

## Challenge

The Water challenge is currently taking place amid a global backdrop of growing employment precarity, socioeconomic inequalities and political instability. Together, we aim to support young leaders working to solve the problem of water and sanitation, while prioritizing environmentally sustainable practices to invest deeper in our people and the planet.

- **Track 1 - Too much water:** Flooding, sea level rise, coastal erosion, storms, ocean acidification.
- **Track 2 - Too little water:** Water scarcity, access, draught, food, agriculture issues.
- **Track 3 - Compromised water quality:** Contaminated drinking water, public health.
- **Track 4 - Mismanaged water utilities:** Resilient water & sanitation infrastructure; digital, preventative maintenance; mechanisms for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

All the tracks aim to address the water crisis and create a pipeline of aquapreneurs. Partners direct resources toward youth solving the most pressing water challenges of our time. Listed below are some of our partners:

- **World Bank:** S4YE, Water Global Practice, Youth Advisory Group
- **CEO Champions:** NS2, Cann Forecast, Oneka Technologies, Athina IR, Permulation, Kai Pono Solutions, 3R Water, Natrx, Xylem
- **Outreach partners:** Youth Business International (YBI), World YMCA
- **Learning partners:** Microsoft

## Rules

### 1. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to participate, you must be:

- In keeping with the World Bank's mission in the developing world, preference will be given to individuals and teams from low- and middle-income countries, listed [here](#). Please note that the team leader must be a citizen of a low- or middle-income country, listed in the link above.
- Between 18-34 years of age at the time of registration (i.e., as of December 8, 2023). The challenge is open to students, entrepreneurs, technologists, and other engaged citizens.
- Individuals may form teams and submit entries on behalf of the team. Each team can list between 1-5 members who will be available to participate in the events associated with the challenge. If the team is from an existing venture with more members, please select 1-5 to participate fully in this initiative. All team members need to fit the age criteria.
- Teams must be operating in/or aiming to address a problem in one of the low- and middle-income countries listed [here](#).
- The team must address one of the following four tracks and challenges:
  - Too much water: The challenge of too much water includes issues such as flooding, sea level rise, coastal erosion, and ocean acidification.
  - Too little water: The challenge of too little water refers to water scarcity, lack of access to water and sanitation services, drought and associated food and agriculture challenges.
  - Compromised water quality: The challenge of too polluted water entails issues such as contaminated drinking water with microplastics, forever chemicals or other toxins, and the public health challenges these pose.
  - Mismanaged water utilities: The challenge of mismanaged water includes poor service delivery, mismanaged water equipment and infrastructure, or operational inefficiencies in water and sanitation utilities.
- Each team may enter only once. Teams that enter more than once will not be considered.
- The 1-5 young innovators listed in the team should be willing and able to participate in virtual bootcamps, workshops, mentoring and networking sessions, led by industry experts. These sessions will be held online thus, participants must have access to a stable internet connection.
- All sessions will be held in English thus, participants must be able to participate in and pitch their idea in English.

The following are not eligible to join the Challenge: staff, contractors and vendors of the World Bank Group (The World Bank Group consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, the International Finance Corporation, the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes.), the members of the Evaluation and Finalist Judging Panel; or any company or individual involved with the design, production, execution or distribution of the Challenge and their immediate family members (spouse, parents and step-parents, siblings and step-siblings, children and step-children, aunt, uncle, niece and nephew).

Participants who are ineligible to receive Bank funds under the Bank's Anti-Corruption Guidelines, procurement rules, and other rules such as on anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism are ineligible to receive cash or any prize under this Challenge.

Staff, contractors and vendors of the World Bank Group (The World Bank Group consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, the International Finance Corporation, the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes.), the members of the Evaluation and Finalist Judging Panel or any

- company or individual involved with the design, production, execution, or distribution of
- the Challenge and their immediate family members (spouse, parents and stepparents, siblings and step-siblings, and children and step-children, aunt, uncle, niece and nephew) are not eligible to join the Challenge.

**2. Intellectual Property rights:** Intellectual property rights of Submissions will be owned by the Contestants but must be made available [via] public licenses that permit re-use without restrictions. All/select submissions might be made publicly available on the [Challenge platform](#), [the S4YE website](#) and social media and will be attributed to the individual or organization as its creator and intellectual property right owner.

## Timeline



## Challenge Official Rules

3.1 Intellectual property rights of Submissions are owned by the Contestants. By joining this Challenge, you grant the World Bank the right to publicly disclose the Submissions for public display, informational or awareness purposes. You acknowledge that any public disclosure of a new, inventive technology by the World Bank may affect its patentability under applicable law and agree to said public disclosure. The Bank may at its sole discretion, decide not to expose any Submission on its website.

3.2 Individual Contestant(s) declares, represents and warrants that Contestant(s) are the rightful owner of the Submission, and of all the patents, copyrights, and/or trademarks associated with the Submission. By entering this Challenge, Contestant(s) further declare, represents and warrants that Contestant(s) have not (a) infringed on any third party rights, including copyrights, trademarks, industrial property, trade secrets, confidentiality obligations and rights of privacy and publicity, and that Contestant(s) have obtained the necessary written release(s) or permission(s) to use any third party rights or intellectual property, including any trademarks appearing on Contestant's Entry, or (b) violated any applicable law(s) in any country. By entering this contest Contestant(s) further agree that the panel of judges has the right to verify the ownership and originality of any entry and that upon request. Contestant(s) shall submit a written copy of any release or permission Contestant(s) has received from a third party granting Contestant(s) the right to use such property. Contestant(s) understands that in the event a submission is selected as a winning entry, and Contestant's ownership rights and the originality of Contestant's entry cannot be verified to the satisfaction of the Judge Panel or is in any other way ineligible, the Judge Panel may select an alternate winner from the Shortlisted Submissions.

3.3 Contestant(s) shall not do any of the following: -

- Defame, abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or otherwise violate the legal rights (such as rights of privacy and publicity) of others.
- Publish, post, distribute or disseminate any defamatory, infringing, obscene, indecent or unlawful material or information.
- Upload or attach files that contain software or other material protected by intellectual property laws (or by rights of privacy or publicity) unless Contestant owns or control the rights thereto or have received all necessary consents.
- Upload or attach files that contain viruses, corrupted files, or any other similar software or programs that may damage the operation of another's computer.
- Delete any author attributions, legal notices or proprietary designations or labels in any file that is uploaded.
- Falsify the origin or source of software or other material contained in a file that is uploaded.
- Advertise or offer to sell any goods or services, or conduct or forward surveys, contests, or chain letters. Download any file posted by another Contestant that Contestant knows, or reasonably should know, cannot be legally distributed in such manner.

3.4 The World Bank is not responsible for: (1) any false, incorrect or inaccurate information, whether caused by Contestants or the hosts; (2) unauthorized human intervention in any part of the submission process or the Competition; (3) technical or human error which may occur in the administration of the Competition or the processing of entries; or (5) any injury or damage to persons or property which may be caused, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, from Contestant's participation in the Competition or receipt or use or misuse of any prize. No more than the stated number of prizes will be awarded.

3.5 Except where prohibited, participation in the Challenge constitutes winners' consent to the World Bank's use of the winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions and/or hometown and state for promotional purposes in any media, worldwide, without payment or consideration.

3.6 Verification. If after announcing the winners the Judging Panel finds and/or determine that a winning Contestant has misrepresented, misstated, or mischaracterized Contestant's entry in any way or Contestant is not the rightful owner of the Submission, the Submission is automatically disqualified from the Challenge, and any privileges received by winning this Challenge shall be rescinded. Any determinations made by the Judging Panel in withdrawing and disqualifying any Submission is final and confidential. By entering this Challenge, Contestant(s) agree to keep any controversies between Contestant, the panel of Judging Panel and/or the World Bank, confidential.

3.7 Winners are responsible for all applicable taxes and fees associated with prize receipt and/or use. No transfer or substitution of a prize is permitted except by the World Bank or

its partners. If a team of individuals are selected as a prize winner, the prize will be awarded to the team and it will be up to them to split or appropriately allocate the prize.

3.8 No Recourse to Judicial Procedures. To the extent permitted by law, the rights to litigate, to seek injunctive relief or to any other recourse to judicial procedure in case of disputes or claims resulting from or in connection with this Challenge are hereby excluded, and Contestant expressly waives any and all such rights. The World Bank can cancel the Challenge at any time and for any reason.

3.9 Preservation of Immunities. Nothing herein shall constitute or be considered to be a limitation upon or a waiver of the privileges and immunities of the World Bank, or any other member of the World Bank Group, which are specifically reserved.

3.10. Privacy. The World Bank respects your concerns about your privacy and is committed to protecting it by establishing and complying with [the Personal Data Privacy Policy](#) of World Bank Group Institutions.

To participate in this competition, the World Bank will collect and process your personal data, including name, age, gender, email, image, audio, and video recording, as well as the project title associated to your name, and details associated with your venture or idea, for the purposes of reviewing and selecting the proposals as well as to create and manage your personal account for the World Bank Youth Innovation Challenge; send you email notifications about your registration and related updates on the World Bank Youth Innovation Challenge; to provide technical support; to publish participants' opinions and experiences on our website, our SNS accounts (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), our Annual Reports, our newsletters, World Bank Feature Stories, World Bank blogs, and other World Bank reports. The World Bank may share your personal data with partner organizations as indicated in this call for proposals for the purposes of adjudication and selecting semi-finalists and finalists for the Innovation Challenge.

Personal Data will be kept only as long as necessary for the purposes set out in this Call for Proposal and following applicable records retention and disposition schedules approximately one (1) year after the date on which the personal data was collected). Only the award-winning projects will be publicized, together with the winners' names, country of residence, Twitter and/or Instagram handle and region.

The World Bank maintains appropriate technical and organizational safeguards against unauthorized processing of personal data and against accidental loss, destruction, or damage according to the World Bank information security standards.

By entering this competition, you agree to World Bank's use of your proposal entry and processing of your personal data and give your consent to the World Bank, in case your proposal is selected, to use your name and summaries of your proposal in its media activities, publications (including the Internet/Web such as blogs), and social media channels and without expectation of compensation or other remuneration, now or in the future.

In the case of teams of Contestants, the member submitting the entry on behalf of the team should obtain their consent. As the Call for Proposals will be hosted in an external webpage managed by a third party (Open Social), some types of personal data may be collected by that third party according to its own Privacy Policy. For information on the Personal Data Privacy Request and Review Mechanisms of the World Bank and to submit a request, please visit: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/accountability/data-privacy>