

Breakthrough 3 Launch Webinar Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Catherine Thompson, Nesta Challenges, Elettra Pellanda, Challenge Works, Caroline Wadsworth, Isle Utilities, Sophie England, Arup

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Elettra Pellanda, Challenge Works 00:03

Welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining, I can see we are getting more and more attendees coming in. So just while we wait, while everybody is joining the call. Thanks for joining, for your time, and today we're talking about the Water Breakthrough Challenge, Round 3. We have launched for, opened for entries on Monday this week. So today we're going to look at what the process involves in more detail. Just as people are joining us, a reminder that today, we're just focusing on Round 3 of the Water Breakthrough Challenge, also known as Breakthrough 3. And we are recording the session, so the recording, transcript and slides will be available on the website in a few days' time. As I said, today, we're focusing on Water Breakthrough Challenge. We're not going to look at the Water Discovery Challenge in this session. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the Water Discovery Challenge, which is launching in January 2023, I highly recommend that you go and have a look on our website. We've published fresh information on Monday on this new competition, so you can find more information there, and email us if you would like to know more. So in this session, we're looking at Breakthrough 3. I'm just going to walk you through what we're going to cover in this session today: so, an overview of the Ofwat Innovation Fund for those of you who might not be familiar with our work so far, and then we're going to deep dive into the Water Breakthrough Challenge: What's changed from the past rounds (we are now in round 3) and the timeline for this round; what we're looking for, including assessment categories and the process and who can enter, and the requirements that we will be expecting from successful entries. We're also going to walk you through how you can enter this competition and the support that is available to entrants. And then we're going to head on to a q&a session where you're going to be able to ask your own questions and get an answer live. So without further ado, I'm going to hand over to Caroline from Isle Utilities, one of the delivery partners for Breakthrough 3.

C

Caroline Wadsworth, Isle Utilities 02:43

Fantastic, thank you, Elettra. So as Elettra says it's really great to be here today. The launch week of the third Water Breakthrough Challenge. Since the Fund was launched in October 2020, we've

already run three competitions with the fourth having opened this week on Monday. And the those first two competitions were run through a pilot period which really allowed us to gather learnings and develop the delivery and the mechanisms for delivering the Innovation Fund. So all of those have been taken on board. And along that journey, we've been implementing changes in response to the feedback that we've had, and the learnings that we've received from the sector and other stakeholders. So we're really pleased to be here today and really look forward to receiving a range of ambitious entries as we move forward into this round. Next slide, please. So as you can see from this slide, just to give you a little bit of background, for those of you that aren't overly familiar with the Innovation Fund, the Innovation Fund is a pot of funding. So it's £200 million pounds in total. So going back to the very beginning of this process, and that has been created by Ofwat in order to really unleash a wave of innovation within the water sector, and to tackle some of those grand challenges that we're facing and bring those transformative benefits to society, customers and the environment. And as I said, we've already run three different innovation competitions across those two rounds of funding. And from that we've had 41 projects successfully been funded. And between those 41 projects, they've received £63.6 million pounds, which is amazing for the water sector. And across those 41 projects, we've had approximately 300 different organisations and partners involved. So it's been fantastic to see that range of partnerships that have been formed. And that has meant that 92% of all water companies in England and Wales have been involved in one of those projects entries in one way or another. And we look forward to seeing how that develops into the next round. Next slide please. So for those of you that are already reasonably familiar with the Ofwat Innovation Fund, you may recognise here that the number of themes being presented has reduced. And this is because following feedback during the pilot period, Ofwat decided to reduce the number of themes so that they're more closely aligned with the 2050 water innovation strategy, and the UK and Welsh Government's updated priorities for Ofwat. And while no longer explicitly referenced in the themes, enabling activities are still very important to drive innovation in the sector, and have a key role in helping the Fund to achieve its overarching outcomes. And we really do invite entries in this important area, as they will support the Fund's ambition to embed innovation practices, and knowledge within the water companies and the sector for the long term. And you'll also notice, for those of you that have been involved previously, that we no longer explicitly reference open data or vulnerability within the themes. However, both of these would be implicit within theme 4 and some of the other themes presented here and both would easily be means of fulfilling the needs of this theme. So we have also published more detail on the policy statements from Ofwat position around both open data and customer vulnerability. These can be found on the Ofwat website. And we believe that the breadth of the broader themes presented here gives greater freedom in proposing improved ways of working and could deliver greater benefits in the longer term. So we hope that that comes through clearly in the intentions of this slide. And at that point, I'm going to hand over to Catherine and she will take you on from here.

C

Catherine Thompson, Nesta Challenges 06:49

Cool, fantastic. Thanks so much, Caroline. So just to quickly recap on some of the changes and significant changes in this round in comparison to the last round, in round 2. And we hope that you'll see we've done something in the Entrant Handbooks that's quite helpful: we've actually highlighted any of the kind of real material changes in the Handbook in a nice bright green for you, so you can kind of see any changes, if you haven't in the previous rounds. We hope you find that helpful. But there's kind of only really three major changes for this round. So firstly, following that kind of consultation Ofwat had out this year, and the background IPR

trial last year in Catalyst, the background IPR trial that was applied to Catalyst in the last round is now being applied to all streams as a default IPR, where background IP can be charged at a reasonable and non discriminatory rate. So please do see the Terms and Conditions for more details on that. But we hope that will be welcomed by you all. And secondly, we also kind of really heard that you'd be really keen to pitch live to judges and have opportunity to judges to ask questions and answers. And so we will be trialling that both in the Catalyst and Transform streams. And what that also means is that we're introducing pitch recordings into the Catalyst stream for the first time this round. So please make sure that you kind of plan for that and get those into your planning and book those in ahead of submitting your entry. And finally, Catalyst entries can be submitted by any partner so you can submit those entry forms by any partner. And what we will then do is just check in with the lead entry water company during the eligibility phase to ensure that there is a lead water company that is leading that entry. So looking at timelines, and key dates, you need to know right now real critical ones for now, are that Catalyst stream closes on the 8th of December. But crucially, if you are looking at the Transform stream, stage 1 closes on the 9th of November, so you just got just over a month to work out your stage 1 entry for Transform. So you get that 9th of November at 12 noon in your diary, and then the 8th of December and in for Catalyst. What you may notice here is that on that day that the Catalyst entries close, is the day we reopen stage 2 of Transform. So if you're entering both streams prepare to be busy. It's a bit of you've got that kind of stay at stage 1 nice and speedy for Transform, slightly longer for Catalyst, we've got longer than the last round as well with then a slightly longer period for stage 2 as well. And just like last time we have kind of catered in this 8th December to 2nd February, we've assumed everyone's going on holiday for two weeks during that period. So please do feel free to go on holiday for two weeks during that period and have a look a little longer than that first initial period as well to really build out those more detailed aspects. And then we've got winners announced for Catalyst in mid April and late May for Transform just pushing that a little bit back so that we can have judging days outside of the spring holidays. We are also for the first time introducing a new payment cutoff deadline for winners, where if you sign your contracts by a certain day, we're gonna be working to get those winners paid through the water companies by a certain date. So that's end of May for Catalyst stream and early July for Transform, we hope this also slight process change is really going to help projects get underway very quickly. That's hopefully an exciting change. So just a bit of a quick recap of what to expect in each of these streams. So, Catalyst as I mentioned before, opened earlier this week, around £8 million pounds is available. And you can request 1£00,000 to £2 million pounds in this stream. It's a one stage process, it closes on the 8th of December. So you can submit by then and then you find out mid April, in terms of when those winners are going to be announced. And then with Transform again opened earlier this week, we've got around £30 million pounds available with £2 to 10 million pounds per entry, two-stage entry process and that's stage one closing on the 9th of November. Please do note that some entries are invited direct stage 2, Ofwat has invited some entries to stage 2. But there is kind of more detail about that in their Entrant Handbook, just for your awareness. I'm now going to pass over to Sophie to talk a bit about the assessment criteria.

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Sophie England, Arup 11:28

Great, thank you very much. So we have three assessment categories, which we're focusing our assessment on across both Catalyst and Transform, the first of which is positive impact for water customer society in the environment, the second on innovation enablers and innovative solutions, and the third on capacity, capability and commitment to deliver, which I'll run through in a bit more detail in the next slide. Next slide please. So for positive

impact water customers site in environment, we've set key things that strong entries will need to show, the first of which is that it addresses a significant need for customers society and the environment. The second is that it aligns with Ofwat strategic innovation themes that Caroline described earlier. The third is that it can be effective in addressing that need that you've set out. And the fourth that it sets out a realistic reflection of the external risks and potential benefits to customer society and environment that outweigh kind of some of these risks. Next slide please. And then innovative enablers and solutions. This category is around where strong entries will show the innovative approaches and solutions that was proposed that would not reasonably be expected to be funded as part of business as usual, or kind of develop some of these innovation enablers which accelerates practice beyond that business as usual. A strong entry would also set out the potential for adoption at scale across the water sector. And the third is that so strong entries will show for capability, capacity and commitment to deliver it will show senior commitment to the entry be delivered by delivery team with relevant skills and experience; will set out a realistic programme and set up realistic costings which are considered to provide efficient use of customer funds; and finally, demonstrate a clear proportionate approach to addressing risk. Next slide. Thank you. And there are four key stages. So after after the entry period closes and you've submitted your entries, these entries will be reviewed by technical assessors, the findings of which would be passed on to the judging panel and finally, the results on the judging panel would be passed on to Ofwat for final decision. Next slide please. And then, so who can enter: water companies or a NAV in England and Wales can enter plus any partners that they want to partner with. So for this round, Catalyst partners can submit the form so we will confirm that there is a water company or NAV part associated with the entry during element eligibility checks. However for Transform, the process remains the same as previous rounds so the form must be submitted by the water company. Lovely, thank you. So Terms and Conditions are largely consistent with previous rounds of the Challenge. So there is one exception and that there is changes to the default IPR terms. So within the Terms and Conditions there are requirements regarding the use of funding, open data by default, the 10% contribution, monitoring and reporting requirements, regulatory reporting, IPR, publicity, conflicts of interest and finally, settlement arrangements. Next slide, please. So, how to enter: for both streams there that should be submitted online via the platform that's accessible on our website. For Catalyst stream, as we mentioned, there's a one stage entry process, which closes on the 8th of December, as Catherine mentioned. So this time, you have to do a pitch. And the deadline to book your pitch for recordings is the 25th of November at 5pm. And yeah, so when you you as part of this entry, you need to complete the online entry form. The template is also downloadable from our website, and yeah, and do that pitch. For the Transform stream, there's still this to two-stage entry process. To kind of help the entrance, focus your time on the proposals with the greatest chance of being awarded funding. So entries to stage one, close on the 9th of November. So again, you'd have to complete the online entry form. And you will need to book a slot for this pitch so and the deadline to book your pitch recording for Transform is the 28th of October at 5pm. For projects that do progress on stage 2 for Transform, entry reopens on the 8th of December. If you're invited to stage 2, you'll need to complete the online entry form, the entry template on budget and risks and then resubmit your pitch video, which I think you can rerecord if you want to. But yeah, as you can see below the summary of this entry processes available on our website. So you can go and have a look at that. I think now I'm going to hand over to Elettra.

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Elettra Pellanda, Challenge Works 16:57

Thanks. Thanks, Sophie. Yes, so in terms of the support that is available to our entrants, we've

got a number of options available, like in previous in previous rounds. So for Breakthrough 3, first of all, of course, this webinar, as I mentioned at the beginning, is being recorded, so we will upload the webinar recording, slides and transcripts to the website as soon as possible. After the end of this webinar, your first point of reference should be the Entrant Handbook, one for each stream. These are available in PDF form to be downloaded from the website. The Entrant Handbooks contain all of the information you need to prepare an entry to the Transform and the Catalyst stream. So we encourage you to make good use of these documents and read through as soon as possible. Let us know if you have any questions of course. We will also be holding one to one surgeries like in Breakthrough 2. These are 15 minutes sessions, that you can book through our website to provide you with the opportunity to ask any questions about the process and clarify the guidance that is already publicly available. And finally, we're going to be working again with Science Practice, who has delivered entrance support in writing good quality entries in the last round. So Science Practice will be able to help you with that in one to one sessions and also with upcoming webinars. More information will be available very soon through the website. And we will also be sharing that information via email with you. You can also register your interest for this kind of support by emailing us at waterinnovation@challengeworks.org. Thanks very much for attending everybody and we'll see you shortly. Good luck to all entrants!