



# Water Discovery Challenge

Launch Webinar  
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## Q&A

Ask your questions on Slido  
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**What we'll cover today**

**1**

**Our Mission**

**2**

**The Water  
Discovery Challenge**

**3**

**What we're looking for and  
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**How to enter and  
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**How to enter and  
the support available**





Water  
Discovery  
Challenge

# Our Mission Introducing the Ofwat Innovation Fund





## Ofwat Innovation Fund at a glance



# £200 million

of funding has been unlocked by the Ofwat Innovation Fund to unleash a wave of innovation in the water sector and tackle some of the major challenges of our time – delivering transformative benefits for customers, society and the environment.

**Three** different innovation competitions, currently on the **third** funding round



41 initiatives have been funded in the first two rounds



# £63.5 million

has been awarded



Approximately **300** different organisations and partners have been involved in entries



Could you be next?



## Why Discovery?

We created a new challenge because:

- We need a water system that **works for everyone**
- We are looking for **fresh solutions** to **urgent challenges**
- We want to draw on the **knowledge and ingenuity** from other sectors







## Aims of the Challenge

Accelerate the discovery, development and adoption of promising innovations by the water sector in England and Wales.

Deliver benefits to customers, society and the environment

Directly support organisations with innovative propositions and facilitate their engagement with water companies in England and Wales





## Our Innovation Themes



**1. Responding and adapting to climate change** including achieving the sector ambitions of net zero carbon, zero waste and zero leakage



**2. Protecting and enhancing the environment and natural systems**

to protect current and future customers from the impacts of extreme weather and pollution



**3. Delivering long-term operational resilience** and understanding infrastructure risks to customers and the environment, finding solutions to mitigate these in sustainable and efficient ways



**4. Testing new ways of conducting core activities to deliver the services customers and society need,** expect and value both now and in the future





## Innovator Journey

18-month Challenge

**Entry Period**  
25 January 2023 to 5 April 2023

Entries will be open for ten weeks, with a range of webinars available to support you to learn about the water sector and enter.

**Finalist Selection**  
April to June 2023

**Finalists Stage**  
July to November 2023

Up to 20 Finalists will be announced by the end of June 2023. Finalists are awarded with funding of up to £50,000 and a 5-month package of support, including mentoring from water companies.

Finalists should expect to receive payment of funds in July 2023.

**Winner Selection**  
December 2023 to January 2024

**Winners Stage**  
February 2024 to August 2024

Up to 10 Winners will be announced in end of February 2024. Winners are awarded funding of up to £450,000 and a 7-month package of support, including mentoring from water companies.

Winners should expect to receive their first payment of funds in February 2024.



Why enter?  
What we're looking for and what you can win



## What we're looking for



Innovations of any kind – process, people, technology or digital that are ready for concept proofing, testing, early feasibility studies, development and verification in the water sector.

Specifically, Innovation Maturity Level 2–3 equivalent to technology readiness level (TRL) 3–6.



Innovation that will benefit customers, society and the environment across England and Wales in alignment with the four innovation themes.



Initiatives from all sectors and all types of organisations, domestic or international\*

\* must be a UK-incorporated entity and hold a UK business bank account.  
E&W Regional Water Companies are not eligible.



## We're particularly looking for 'outside sector' innovations

We are looking for bold and innovative innovation from any sector, including but not limited to those working in industries such as: energy, cities and transport, construction, agriculture and farming and digital, data and internet of things.

Drawing on the knowledge and ingenuity from other sectors will help transform the water system and help meet and overcome the challenges faces to meet the needs of future generations.

Across the globe, water and energy sectors share common characteristics and the power of digital transforming industries just like the water sector.



## What We're Looking For – The Assessment Criteria

**1**

Positive impact for water customers, society, and the environment

**2**

Innovation enablers and innovative solutions

**3**

Capacity, capability, and commitment to deliver

**4**

Ability to succeed, to be sustainable and/or gain wide adoption across the water sector



## What you can win

Up to 20 teams of the most promising innovators will be awarded £50,000 to develop their innovation, with a range of expert support and access to mentoring from water companies.

**Finalist Award**  
up to  
**£50,000**

**Winners Award**  
up to  
**£450,000**

Up to 10 teams will go on to win £450,000 to further grow their innovation, receiving more support to further accelerate their progress.



## What you can win

Finalists and Winners will receive support to strengthen and accelerate the development of their innovation.


**A key part of this will be the water sector-led mentoring programme and the allocation of a mentor** from a regional water or wastewater company in England and Wales

**Mentors will work directly with Finalist and Winning teams, providing bespoke support and guidance, insights into the water sector as well as feedback on Finalist's innovation and its demand within the wider sector while also signposting to other stakeholders or useful resources.**

In the Finalist stage, mentors will be allocated randomly, but at the Winner Stage mentors will be matched to teams.

At the end of the Challenge, successful entrants will have worked directly with the water companies for ~ 12 months, **accelerating the development of their innovation and increasing the potential for adoption.**





Next steps  
How to enter and the support available



- ✓ Entries must be submitted using the online entry form in Submittable
- ✓ There are three types of entry questions in the entry form:
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Unassessed questions
  - Assessed questions
- ✓ The entry form can be saved as a draft before submitting
- ✓ All entries must be submitted by 5 April 2023 at 12 noon (GMT)



## Support for entrants



### Discovery webinar series

From an introduction to the water sector and opportunities for innovation, to water and sewage treatment and distribution, reusing resources, delivering for customers and climate change challenge.



### Online and downloadable materials

Entrant Handbook, Entry templates, FAQs...



### Entry clinic

Support on your entry, the entry process and innovator journey

### Further Questions?

[waterinnovation@challengeworks.org](mailto:waterinnovation@challengeworks.org)





**Opened 25 January 2023**



**~£4 million available**



**Up to £50k seed funding for Finalists**



**Up to £450k development funding for Winners**



**Entry period closes 5 April 2023 at 12 noon (BST)**



# Thank you!



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# Thank you!