



WATER INNOVATION ENGINE

CONTEXT

In 2016, leaders from eleven nations came together under the United Nations High-Level Panel on Water. The UN Secretary General and the President of the World Bank Group convened this panel to draw attention and energy to water and sanitation challenges and opportunities.

The Panel's mission is to provide global leadership to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", Sustainable Development Goal 6, as well as to contribute to the achievement of the other Global Goals that rely on the development and management of water resources. Water is vital to the health and economic success of communities and the achievement of many Global Goals. Growth in population, agriculture, and industry creates new demands for water new challenges to quality and reliability.

The High Level Panel recommends an increased focus on innovation as a critical means of achieving our goals for water access, quality, and reliability. Creative breakthroughs are urgently needed in service delivery, data collection, and improving policies and regulations.

The Water Innovation Engine has been established by the High Level Panel, with leadership from the Government of Australia, to encourage coordination and investment in water sector innovation. The Engine brings together entrepreneurs, new ideas, and flexible financing to accelerate innovation to achieve the vision of the High-Level Panel and the global goals. Through the Water Innovation Engine, we will find, test, and scale the most promising innovations and improve the lives of millions of the world's poorest people.



OVERVIEW

The Water Innovation Engine supports evidence-based innovation to tackle pressing challenges in the water sector for households, cities, and watersheds. The Implementing Partners of the Engine are the Global Innovation Fund, a non-profit hybrid investment fund headquartered in London and Grand Challenges Canada, a challenge fund facility based in Toronto. Both partners have a successful track record of finding, funding, and graduating innovations to investors and governments. They measure impact rigorously and consistently, allowing their donors to measure the social return on investment.

The Implementing Partners will bring this approach to the Water Innovation Engine, taking smart risks, finding promising entrepreneurs, and making grant, debt, and equity investments to drive change. The Global Innovation Fund will host the secretariat of the Water Innovation Engine Steering Committee.

The Water Innovation Engine's anchor funder, the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and its partners seek financial and technical support from governments, the private sector, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organisations, all critical stakeholders in the water innovation agenda.

The Engine begins its work with challenges of improved data for decision-making in the water sector, and sustainable, equitable urban sanitation. These are critical challenges that the High-Level Panel identified. Further challenges will be taken on by implementing partners in the future.

HOW IT WORKS

The Water Innovation Engine welcomes proposals from innovators, covering a range of areas that include urban water and sanitation, water data, and water resource management. The focus is on developing countries, but we welcome applications from all sectors and organizations. Innovators may request grant, debt, or equity funding.

Two implementing partners are working on initial urban sanitation and water data challenges:

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact®. Funded by the Government of Canada and other partners, Grand Challenges Canada funds innovators in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. The bold ideas Grand Challenges Canada support integrate science and technology, social and business innovation – known as Integrated Innovation®. One of the largest impact-first investors in Canada, and with a feminist investment approach, Grand Challenges Canada has supported a pipeline of over 800 innovations in more than 80 countries. Grand Challenges Canada estimates that these innovations have the potential to save up to 1 million lives and improve up to 28 million lives by 2030.

Grand Challenges Canada invests in non-profits and for-profits and employs a range of financial instruments including grants, term loans, revenue-based loans, and convertible debt.

Grand Challenges Canada will lead on the urban sanitation challenge.



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The Global Innovation Fund (GIF) finds and finances evidence-backed innovations that will transform the lives of millions of the world's poorest people. GIF plays a distinct role alongside existing development assistance, by making debt, equity, and blended investments, that we can do at an early stage, with small-ticket investment sizes. GIF was founded to invest in innovations that will inspire fresh thinking and create better solutions in developing countries. Recognising the need to invest in countries and communities where other investors aren't yet ready to, GIF invests in cost-effective, evidence-backed innovations and promising social entrepreneurs that will transform the lives of millions of the world's poorest people.

GIF makes grant, debt, and equity investments, depending on the profile of the partner and the innovation.

The Global Innovation Fund will lead on the water data challenge.



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