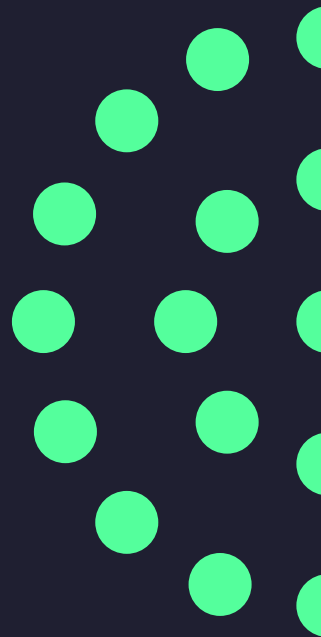
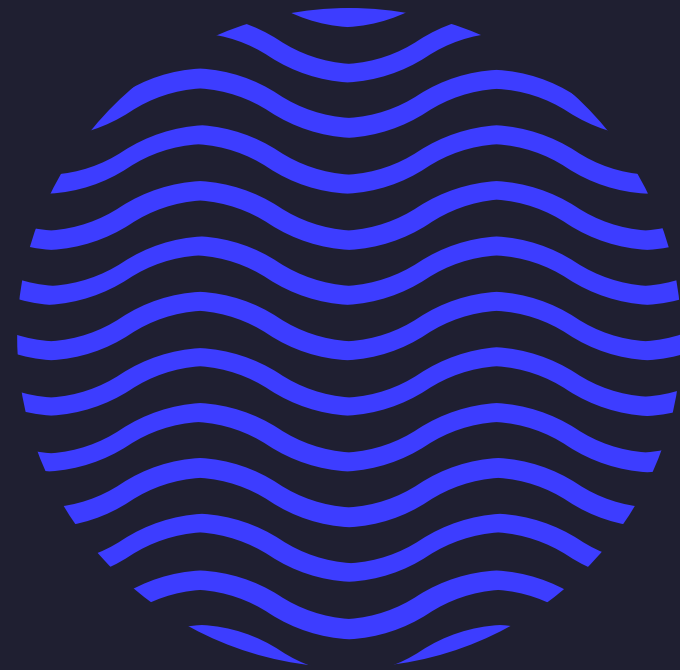


Innovator Guidelines

Spring Accelerator 4



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1. Introduction

1.1 About this handbook

This document, along with the terms and conditions, will provide you with the information you need to enter any of the upcoming Spring challenges.

All entrants should read this handbook as well as the terms and conditions before taking part in the challenge process. If you have read the handbook and have more questions, please contact the team at admin@spring-innovation.co.uk

1.2 Spring overview

We're dedicated to accelerating UK & Ireland water sector transformation through innovation and collaboration.

We connect, integrate and augment existing excellence within and outside the water sector, actively involving other companies and continuously injecting innovation into the industry through

learnings and best practices.

Since late 2021, we've been working with a wide range of people to ensure Spring meets stakeholders' needs, starts demystifying the sector and bridges barriers to innovation.

It's essential we continue to engage with the sector so we can adapt, develop and iterate our processes to ensure we deliver as much value as possible. Please get in touch.

Our vision & mission

We want the water sector to become a global leader in open innovation. Spring's role is to attract, connect and support innovators across the industry to accelerate transformation.

Our values

Our values help define who we are and how we'll achieve our goals.

- We are Collaborative – We will connect, integrate and augment existing excellence across the entire water sector, break silos and actively share learnings.
- We are Transparent – We are impartial and carefully balance the dissemination of knowledge to drive progress with the protection of individual IP.
- We are Sustainable – We ensure all innovation activity is advancing environmental, social and economic wellbeing.
- We are Focused explorers – We will relentlessly test, learn and optimise to find and scale the best solutions to achieve the industry's goals.

1.3 Our strategy

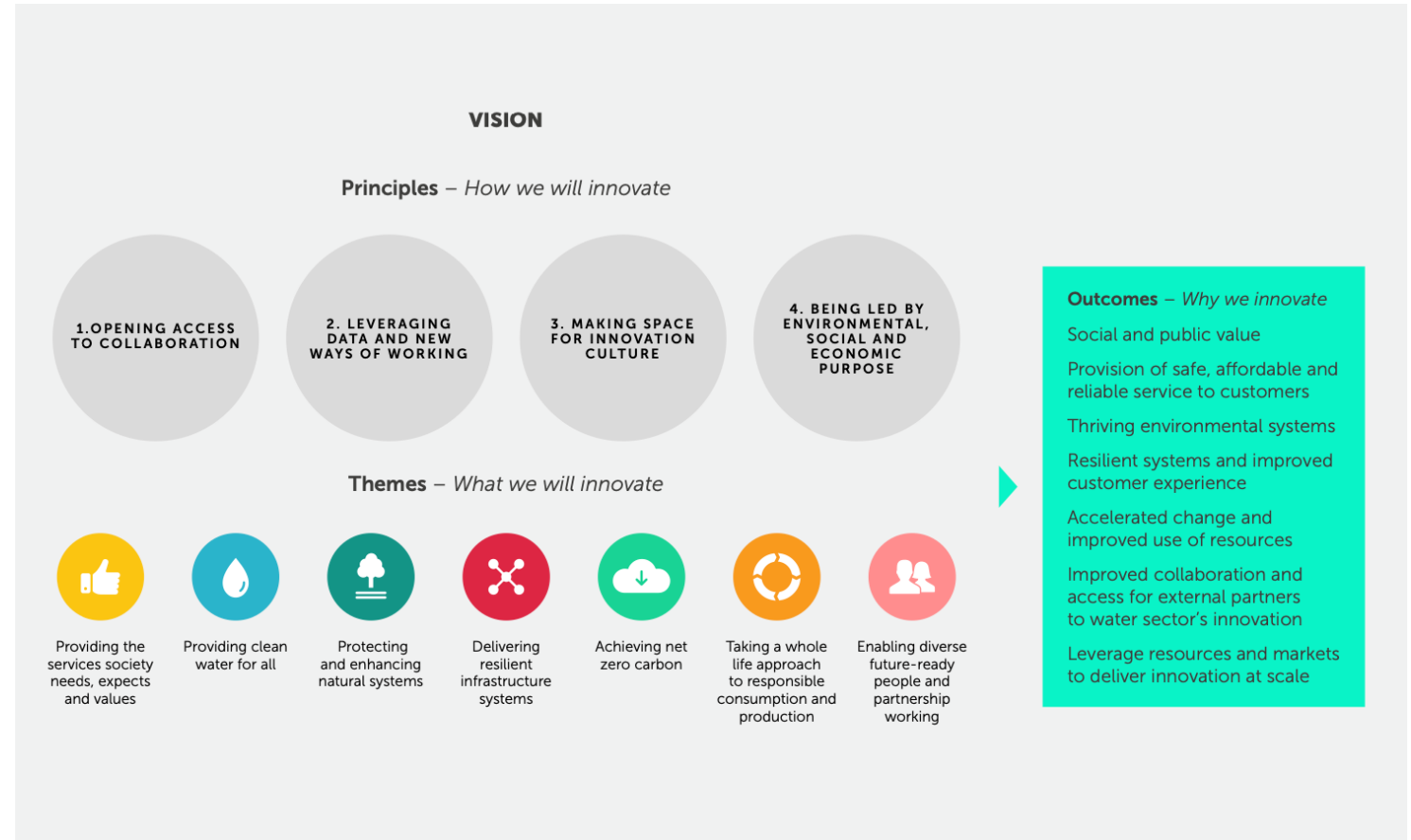
In 2020, all 18 UK & Ireland water and wastewater companies published the UK 2050 Water Innovation Strategy. This was the first time the sector had outlined its vision for collectively delivering transformative innovation.

One of the core ideas in the strategy was to create a Centre of Excellence. This idea became Spring in late 2021.

Spring will help deliver the strategy through its core services, focusing in on the themes which hold the most pressing needs or greatest opportunities.

This strategy was created with a common purpose of driving transformational change in our sector through collaborative innovation. This strategy was and is a call to action for you to join us on this journey.

In the strategy, the sector sets out how it will start to deliver transformative innovation through key principles which define how it will work together.



[Source: UK 2050 Water UK Innovation Strategy](#)

1.4 The innovation themes

The strategy also defines the ends; a number of key themes, which describe our environmental, social and economic ambitions, which we know are important to our customers. For each theme, it set ambitions that the sector will aspire to, and work towards, in the short, medium and long term, to 2050. These are the sectors ambitions, rather than targets, and will guide Spring collectively in delivering challenge-led innovation.



PROVIDING THE SERVICES SOCIETY NEEDS, EXPECTS AND VALUES

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

Customers have trust and confidence in the service that the water sector provides

Water services are accessible, affordable for all, protect vulnerable customers and lead to zero customers in water poverty by 2030

Service provision is transparent, and customers and communities work with water companies to improve service and decision making



PROVIDING CLEAN WATER FOR ALL

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

Drinking water supply is low impact and sustainable

UK water supply is reliable with zero interruptions

We provide enough water for all across the UK



PROTECTING AND ENHANCING NATURAL SYSTEMS

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

Wastewater services are environmentally sustainable

We work with customers to halve freshwater abstractions, leaving more water in the environment

Water companies work in collaboration with customers and communities to have zero uncontrolled discharges from sewers

Emerging contaminants and lead are dealt with effectively causing zero harm for people and the environment

We have developed, protected and enhanced our natural environment

We have used natural solutions to improve our resilience to current and future challenges



DELIVERING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

We work with customers to develop resilient human, physical and digital systems which can adapt to known and unknown future challenges

Our assets are maintained for the long term providing economic, social and environmental value



ACHIEVING NET ZERO CARBON

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

We have achieved operational and value chain carbon negativity
We have implemented carbon sequestration across the water sector

Customers, communities, water companies and the supply chain work together to achieve carbon neutrality across the value chain



TAKING A WHOLE LIFE APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

We have maximised the recovery and reuse of resources to support sufficient resource availability for nature and society and achieved zero waste

We have sustainably achieved zero leakage



ENABLING DIVERSE FUTURE-READY PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

AMBITIONS FOR 2050

We have a shared innovation culture which improves customer experience

Collaboration pathways are paved between water companies, regulators, supply chains, SMEs, start-ups, academia, customers and other innovators to allow innovation to work

The whole sector's workforce has the skills and diversity of thought to take an active approach to prepare for and address emerging challenges

The UK regulatory framework has evolved to incentivise innovation to benefit customers and the environment

1.5 Our challenge partners

Our partners are our backbone. Without their support, guidance and insight we wouldn't have been able to establish Spring so quickly and will not be able to achieve our goals.

We have an opportunity to shape the future of water in the UK, but this can only be done through collective action. Everyone involved in the sector has a role to play.

Mobilisation

Spring is backed by all UK and Irish water and wastewater companies. These companies represent the end-users of solutions we are seeking through the challenge process and as such, have a fundamental role to play in the mobilisation and collaboration action required to drive successful submissions forward.

Each company will be given the opportunity to opt-in to the challenges that we run through Spring and from there will select which submissions they would like to support the mobilisation of.



2. The Spring Accelerator

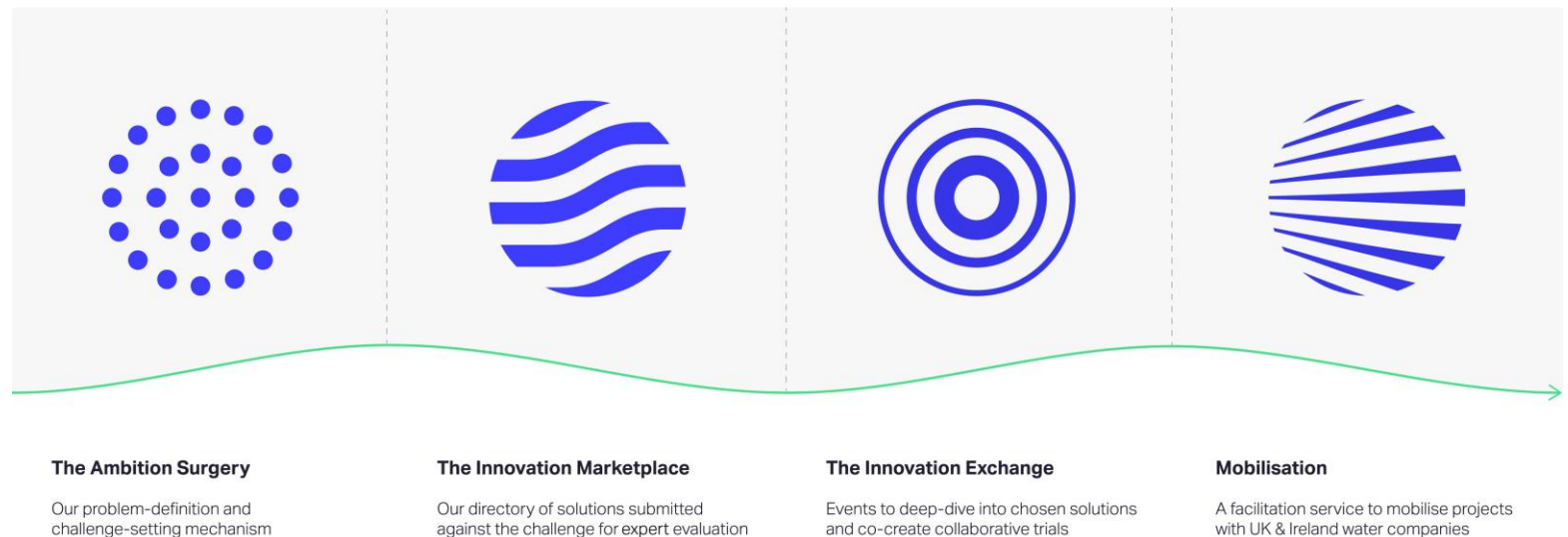
2.1 Overview

The Spring Accelerator is an end-to-end innovation challenge process that has been created to ensure cross-sector alignment, reduce the duplication of innovation efforts and provide a path to faster adoption.

Each challenge is designed to address a specific Ambition inside one of the seven Water Innovation Strategy 2050 themes.

Details about the challenges, including specific challenge statements, will be released through our website and other communication channels, so make sure you are registered and keeping an eye out for Spring notifications!

[Learn more about the Accelerator process.](#)



2.2 The challenge process

The Spring Accelerator aims to identify innovative solutions that help address a significant need in the UK & Ireland water sector.

What we are looking for

We hope to attract new thinking and innovative solutions that are new to the industry and accelerate their development and adoption to address pressing needs.

Please do not submit any confidential information with your application.

Eligibility criteria

The Accelerator is open to all innovators who have an idea or solution that addresses the challenge statement. Applicants may be individuals, businesses or a partnership between the two.

- You can submit more than one entry to the Challenge.
- Innovators can be UK-based or international.
- Priority will be given for solutions not previously trialled in the UK and Ireland.

How successful submissions will be selected

Submissions to the Innovation Marketplace first undergo a review from Spring's industry experts who will provide an initial assessment of the innovation based on the scoring criteria shared in Section 3.2.

Successful submissions will then be shared with subject matter experts who have been selected by each of the participating water companies. The subject matter experts will provide a second review of submissions and vote on the ones that they would like to be brought forward to the Innovation Exchange. Feedback is aggregated and sent to all applicants.

Applicants who are invited to the Innovation Exchange will have the opportunity to pitch their solutions to key water company stakeholders. These events go a lot deeper than a pitch, however; experts and decision makers from interested water companies will join applicants in a round-table like moment to start building a business case for mobilising the solution. Successful Exchange events end with commitment from multiple water companies to progress a solution.

What's in it for innovators

The Spring Accelerator focuses on bringing the right people together to drive forward the adoption of solutions. Innovators can expect to have their ideas seen and heard from the people in the UK & Ireland Water Industry who want and need solutions.

The Accelerator does not offer a direct financial reward. The goal of the challenge process is to facilitate collaboration in the sector, resulting in your solution being mobilised with one or more water companies. This could take the form of mentoring, a collaborative trial to test the solution in context, or anything in between

Spring is here to facilitate this collaboration and mobilisation. We will bring the entrant and water companies together. Delivering the project is at the discretion of the water companies involved.

Spring will also act as a knowledge transfer partner for projects to ensure learnings are shared across the sector.

2.3 The Accelerator timeline



*Dates are indicative and subject to change over the duration of this challenge period

3. Evaluation guidelines

3.1 Overview

A critical step in ensuring the robustness of the final outcomes is the development of a well thought through scoring mechanism. We have worked hard to ensure the scoring reflects the needs of the end users as well as being clear and transparent to applicants.

Scoring criteria will be applied to all solutions entering the challenge, however these criteria may differ slightly from challenge to challenge.

Not all of the questions on the submission form are used for scoring. Scoring will be between 1 and 5 for each of the criteria, with 5 being a score of excellent and 1 being poor. The assessed questions and scoring criteria is set out in Section 3.2

Scoring of submissions is only used during the review process in the Innovation Marketplace and will not be used in the Innovation Exchange to make a final decision on which submissions are supported.

Feedback will be given against the assessment criteria and, where appropriate, Spring will provide guidance on areas for improvement against them. Our goal is that the provided feedback will enable innovators to improve the quality of their submissions for future challenge rounds.

Prescreening activities may filter out some submissions that are unsuitable for the challenge, in these instances the level of feedback provided will be less detailed than for those submissions that have been reviewed by the water company subject matter experts.

However, we do not expect perfection in every answer. The Accelerator process – specifically the Innovation Exchange – has been designed for both water companies and innovators to go deeper into submitted solutions & their potential fit for the accelerator challenge; answering more detailed questions and outlining the path to answer others. More information about evaluation at the Innovation Exchange can be found in Section 3.3

3.2 Evaluation on the Innovation Marketplace

Submissions for the Accelerator will be prescreened by Spring's team of industry experts. This initial filter focuses primarily on the quality of the application, not of the proposed solution.

Following the Spring internal review, successful submissions will then be reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) at the participating water companies for that challenge.

In the spirit of supporting innovators and providing a transparent and valuable challenge process we have provided the scoring criteria that will be used to assess submissions.

Scoring is awarded on a basis of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Excellent answers will demonstrate strong evidence against each bullet point listed alongside the criteria in the table opposite and on the following page.

Step 1: Prescreening		
Scoring criteria	Excellent answers will demonstrate strong evidence against:	Questions from the submission form considered
How relevant is the submission to the challenge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the submission aligns with the challenge's objectives and requirements. How the solution can deliver a high impact where outcomes directly address the challenge statement. How there is potential for the solution to be easily and rapidly scaled to address the needs of the UK water sector. Barriers to scaling up have been identified and considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of your proposal - What solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights are you intending to use? Is your solution already successfully trialed / deployed elsewhere? Please briefly explain other applications in the water sector and other industries and details of the trial (e.g. pilot scale, real or synthetic water streams etc.)
Does the proposed solution show novelty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the submission is unique and compelling in the marketplace. Where the solution has been trialed and/or tested before. How the innovation will result in transformative outcomes. How the submission will deliver added value beyond the challenge theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of your proposal - Please explain what problem (s) the entry proposes to solve and how your innovation will help water companies address the challenge statement? Description of your proposal - What will the innovation do and why it should be used? What is the current solution or practice for this problem?
How well is the application completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comprehensiveness and structure of the submission. Links or associated documentation to enable the completion of light due-diligence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is unique about your proposal? How are the solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights better than what has been developed/deployed in the past?

Step 2: Review from Subject Matter Experts		
Scoring criteria	Excellent answers will demonstrate strong evidence against:	Questions from the submission form considered
<p>Would the submission be of benefit to the water sector?</p> <p>Would the submission be of benefit in your water company?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the solution has been effectively trialed or demonstrated in a real-world environment that is relevant to the application described in the proposal. How there is potential for the solution to be easily and rapidly scaled to address the needs of the UK water sector. Any barriers to scaling up have been identified and fully considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights better than what has been developed/deployed in the past? What are the benefits to customers, society and the environment? Please refer to metrics/KPIs you are intending to measure (E.g. water quality markers, cost, carbon reduction, circularity etc.) What is the estimated financial and non-financial value created by your proposal, and who will benefit from it? How will this value be realised?
<p>Would the solution help the water sector achieve the challenge statement?</p> <p>Would the solution help your water company achieve the challenge statement?</p>		
<p>Does the proposed solution show novelty?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the current near-state of the art solutions and their limitations How the submission is unique and compelling in the marketplace. How the solution is new to the UK water sector. How the solution offers a significant improvement over competitor, supported with data and/or case studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is unique about your proposal? What is the current solution or practice for this problem? How are the solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights better than what has been developed/deployed in the past?
<p>Do you think the solution is realistic for the water sector? Is there a clear and feasible amount of investment be required to make this solution possible in the water sector?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the solution can deliver significant benefit to the industry, it's customers and the environment. Where the benefits are well understood and clearly defined. Benefits are direct and easily measured. How benefits can be easily measured and realised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the benefits to customers, society and the environment? Please refer to metrics/KPIs you are intending to measure (E.g. water quality markers, cost, carbon reduction, circularity etc.) Is your solution already successfully trialed / deployed elsewhere? Please briefly explain other applications in the water sector and other industries and details of the trial (E.g. pilot scale, real or synthetic water streams etc.) What are the next steps towards deploying your innovation at scale in the sector? Please provide details of how the proposal may be scaled and the requirements to do so, i.e. please provide details of what approvals/licenses your proposal has or is seeking to gain (if applicable) Are there any system interdependencies impacting on the ability to deploy this innovation? If so, please indicate those (E.g. security, ownership models, data, existing assets)

3.3 Evaluation at the Innovation Exchange

The Innovation Exchange is an event that brings together selected innovators from the previous phase and delegated committees from water companies to go deeper into the submitted solution, outline a business case, and scope next steps.

The Exchange is split into two moments, a pitch day where innovators will have the chance to present their solutions to interested parties, and a deeper roundtable discussion, where solutions are dissected, business cases are built & analysed, water company assumptions are challenged, and productive cross-sector partnerships are formed.

The Pitch Day

The first part of the Innovation Exchange is a pitch day. Innovators who made it through the previous phase will be invited to pitch their solutions to interested water companies, who will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

This is not a decision moment for the participating

water companies. Instead, it is an opportunity for them to be reintroduced to the solution and meet the team behind it, to better understand the solution, and to determine who may need to be present at the roundtable discussion.

Spring and / or our partners will offer light-touch support for successful innovators in developing their pitches.

The Exchange

Following the pitch day, we will host virtual exchange events for a deeper exploration of each solution and its relevance for our water company partners. This is the moment in which water companies will determine if they are going to take a specific innovator forward, and what specifically that looks like (a trial, mentoring, etc).

Discussions at the exchange will focus on the business rationale for mobilising a specific solution, asking questions such as:

- Scope, purpose & benefits of the solution.
- Proposed resource requirements for testing and implementation (direct & associated)
- Technical and financial: feasibility, merit, deployability.
- IP / Ownership / Distribution

The purpose of this framework is to stimulate and support a genuine conversation about the solution, water company needs, and the best path to connect the two. It is not exhaustive and should be thought of as a starting point for an eventual relationship with one or more water companies.

The Business Rationale Framework is to be completed by innovators ahead of the event to allow adequate preparation time for participating water companies.

Appendix 1: Spring Accelerator 3 Application Form Questions

Section 1: About You

- Your full name
- Your email address
- Your organisation's category (drop down)
- Your organisation name
- Your organisation website
- Your job role

Section 2: The Solution

- Which broad business area will benefit from your entry (drop down)
- Title or name of innovation/technology/concept 250-character limit
- Description of your proposal – Please explain what problem (s) the entry proposes to solve and how your innovation will help water companies address the challenge statement? – 2000-character limit
- Description of your proposal – What will the entry do and why it should be used? – 2000 characters
- Description of your proposal – What solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights are you intending to use? – 2000 characters
- What is unique about your proposal? – 2500 characters

Section 3: The Benefits

- How are the solutions/technologies/methodologies and/or insights better than what has been developed/deployed in the past? – 2500 characters
- What is the current solution or practice for this problem? – 2000 characters
- What are the benefits to customers, society and the environment? Please refer to metrics/KPIs you are intending to measure (E.g. water quality markers, cost, carbon reduction, circularity etc.) – 3200 characters
- Roughly how much will your proposal cost to implement? – 2000 characters
- What is the estimated financial and non-financial value created by your proposal, and who will benefit from it? How will this value be realised? – 3200 characters

Section 4: Mobilisation Requirements

- Is your solution already successfully trialled / deployed elsewhere? Please briefly explain other applications in the water sector and other industries and details of the trial (E.g. pilot scale, real or synthetic water streams etc.) – 2000 characters
- What are the next steps towards deploying your

innovation at scale in the sector? Please provide details of how the proposal may be scaled and the requirements to do so, i.e. please provide details of what approvals/licenses your proposal has or is seeking to gain (if applicable) – 3200 characters

- Please select the most relevant project stage that your entry will be at when submitting your entry – Dropdown List
- Are there any system interdependencies impacting on the ability to deploy this innovation? If so, please indicate those (E.g. security, ownership models, data, existing assets) – 1600 characters
- What support do you need from Spring stakeholders to progress your innovation? For example: identifying a pilot test site or visibility in the market – 1500 characters

Additional Information

Please upload here any supporting documents (for information only)

Tell us how you heard about submitting a proposal through Spring. (E.g. word of mouth, conference, social media etc.) – Dropdown List



Good Luck!

