# ADOPTION CHALLENGE

## Facilitating the adoption of humanitarian WASH innovations

HIF | Humanitarian innovation fund | elrha

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# ABOUT ELRHA & THE HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION FUND (HIF)

We are Elrha. A global charity that finds solutions to complex humanitarian problems through research and innovation. Our Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) aims to improve outcomes for people affected by humanitarian crises by identifying, nurturing and sharing more effective and scalable solutions.

Our HIF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) area of focus aims to explore and grow the potential for innovation to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian WASH.

Our work is entirely problem-led. Since 2013, we have invested in a rich body of research around problems, been advised by sector experts on which problems to focus on, and designed Innovation Challenges specifically to address these problems. During the past six years, we have funded more than 50 WASH innovations, ranging from soap alternatives to surface water drainage guidance and rapid community engagement approaches. These projects cover a wide range of the innovation spectrum, from Recognition and Search through to Adaptation, Invention and Pilot. Our WASH Innovation Catalogue, now in its second edition, provides an overview of the projects we have funded.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# CHALLENGE BACKGROUND

Most of the innovations in our <u>WASH portfolio</u> are at the Pilot stage[1], and many have demonstrated potential to address key problems in the humanitarian sector. However, 'breaking through' this Pilot stage and gaining wider uptake is a core challenge innovators face. Our <u>Too tough to scale?</u> report identified five key barriers to scaling innovation in the humanitarian sector:

1. Too few humanitarian innovations are geared to scale from the outset.

2. The humanitarian sector has insufficient embedded knowledge and skills for supporting innovations to scale.

3. There is a lack of appropriate and adequate funding for scaling innovation in the sector.

4. There is insufficient evidence of the impact of humanitarian innovations.

5. The humanitarian ecosystem significantly frustrates efforts to scale humanitarian innovation.

Some of these barriers can be tackled directly by innovators. For example, our <u>Evidence Challenge</u> aims to support WASH innovators to define and gather the most relevant types of evidence needed to help scale their solutions. In parallel, our Journey to Scale programme also supports evidence building for promising innovations, and offers two years of training, mentorship and funding to innovators looking to develop their scaling strategies. Similarly, other funders, such as <u>Humanitarian Grand Challenge</u>, offer grants for humanitarian innovators ready to grow and scale.

**HIF INITIATIVES BY INNOVATION STAGES SUPPORTED**

Adoption Challenge

Journey to Scale

Evidence Challenge

*Innovation challenges*

Recognition    Search    Adaptation    Invention    Pilot    Scale
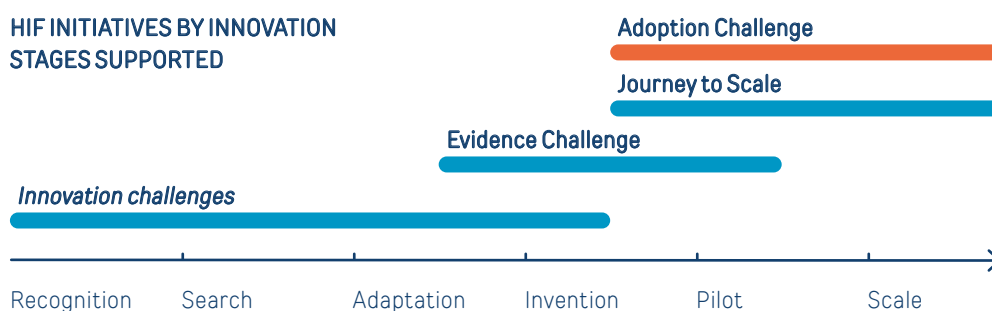
However, other barriers such as the lack of transparent, well-regulated markets and a functioning ecosystem for innovation in the humanitarian sector cannot be addressed by investing directly in individual innovators.[2] To achieve

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1 Pilot: Testing a potential solution to learn whether and how it works in a complex real-world environment. See more in the <u>Pilot section</u> of our Humanitarian Innovation Guide.

2 Elrha. (2018) '<u>Too Tough to Scale? Challenges to Scaling Innovation in the Humanitarian Sector.</u>' Elrha: London. p.47

transformative change in the humanitarian system, we need alternative, creative funding models and incentives.

**That is why we are now launching our new Adoption Challenge.** This will be a first-of-its-kind call aimed at tackling a specific set of complex barriers within the WASH ecosystem: those that prevent the sustainable adoption of humanitarian WASH innovations by actors outside the 'inventor' organisation. We recognise that both innovators and implementing organisations face significant challenges when it comes to adoption. These include the lack of evidence around innovations in the context of use of the 'adopter'; the uncertainty around additional time, skills and resources required to adopt the solution; and the amount of adaptation required across different settings.

The ambition of this Challenge is to enable humanitarian organisations to adopt promising new solutions, adapt them to new settings and evaluate their effectiveness. Ultimately, with this support, we aim to enable the sustained use, at scale, of innovations that can improve outcomes for people affected by crisis.

This Challenge will be open to humanitarian organisations interested in adopting innovations featured in our WASH Innovation Catalogue (second edition, 2020) and on the WASH Innovation Marketplace page. Through this focus, we aim to help our strongest WASH innovations adapt, improve and begin their journey to scale, ensuring the priority WASH problems we have identified are addressed at scale. Our ambition is to learn from this first Adoption Challenge and understand what works and what doesn't in driving the adoption of humanitarian innovation.

# THE PROBLEM

Humanitarian emergencies are increasingly protracted and complex, with a growing number of people affected by crisis lacking access to sanitation, safe water and hygiene provision.[3, 4] The WASH sector, meanwhile, is facing pressing challenges on how to deliver these services at sufficient quality and quantity. Innovations developed by and for the humanitarian sector to address these challenges have steadily emerged in the past decade, with increasing support from a range of funders. Our own WASH innovation portfolio is the oldest and largest of its kind. However, the sustainable adoption of these innovations within the humanitarian system remains a pressing barrier to overcome in order for them to meet their full potential. While innovators are working to build relevant evidence around the effectiveness, efficiency or usability of their innovations, this in itself is often not sufficient to enable uptake.

Adopting an innovation within a humanitarian organisation, whether large or small, will have its own challenges. Even if there is an interest and the innovation addresses a genuine recognised need, the time and capacity constraints of an emergency can represent a significant barrier to adoption. This is especially the case where the adoption is perceived as disruptive or introducing potential risks that need to be carefully managed. Another barrier is the perceived lack of evidence around innovations[5], in particular evidence in the specific settings where a potential adopter might operate. Other important concerns are the additional time, skills and resources required to adopt the solution (eg, the price of innovation, any staff training required, the cost of implementing new monitoring and evaluation systems), and the amount of adaptation required across different settings.[6]

While these are legitimate concerns, the rapidly evolving needs and dimensions of humanitarian crises require humanitarian practitioners to adapt and explore innovative tools and approaches to provide effective life-saving response. By trialling emerging innovations and adopting those that prove valuable, humanitarian organisations can also help inform further innovation funding decisions in the sector by signalling where innovation is addressing problems and where additional funding is needed.

3   Obrecht, A. and Warner, A.T. (2016) 'More than just luck: Innovation in humanitarian action'. HIF/ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.

4   Bastable, A. and Russell, L. (2013). 'Gap Analysis in Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion'.

5   Many innovations in our WASH Innovation Catalogue (2020) already have an evidence base which may be sufficient in some settings. However, the level of potential risk to users will determine the type of evidence required in each setting.

6   McClure, D., Bourns, L. and Obrecht, A. (2018) 'Humanitarian Innovation: Untangling the many paths to scale'. Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI).

# THE CHALLENGE

We are looking for humanitarian organisations interested in adopting innovations from our WASH Innovation Catalogue into their programmes. Funding will be made available to cover the adoption costs. If evidence gathered throughout the grant shows that the innovation is effective, then adopting organisations will be expected to commit to sustained adoption.

For additional information about the innovations available for adoption see our Innovation Marketplace page.

## WHAT WE MEAN BY *ADOPTION COSTS*

— **The additional costs of the innovation.** This means that the HIF will only fund implementation and material costs *additional* to what is already spent on the existing solution that the innovation would replace or complement in existing implementation locations (ie, the cost of adopting the innovation minus the cost of the existing solution being implemented). **Where relevant and necessary, we would expect adopters to manage the risk of adoption by having another solution to 'fall back on'** *if* **the innovation does not work. People affected by crisis should never be left without access to safe and dignified WASH if an innovation proves ineffective.**

— **The costs associated with adopting the innovation internally** (eg, one-off costs for staff training, adaptations of the innovation to the chosen setting, adaptation of management systems, including risk monitoring or management).

— **The costs associated with generating sufficient evidence** of the innovation's impact on the humanitarian organisation's operations for an informed decision to be made on its sustained adoption.

### EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ADOPTION COSTS

**Example 1:** If an organisation wanted to adopt a tool for improved community consultation to get feedback on WASH infrastructure, the HIF would cover the cost of training, staff time carrying out the additional consultation beyond what the adopter is already doing, and any other associated costs. However, we would not cover the cost of building any new or adapted infrastructure, as these should and would be built irrespective of the adoption of the innovation.

**Example 2:** If an organisation wanted to adopt a sanitation technology, it would need to demonstrate a) how much it is currently spending on building and maintenance of the existing technology in use and b) what additional costs are incurred when the new technology is used instead. The difference between the two would be covered by the HIF; this might also include initial training and technical guidance.

**Example 3:** If an organisation wanted to adopt a product to complement and add to the existing provision of safe water, the full cost of the product and its transport and distribution may be eligible, as the product would always be implemented as an addition to existing safe water provision, not a replacement.

What we **can't fund:**

— Retrospective costs
— Loan repayments
— Running costs that are not related to the project
— Non-project-related materials or activities
— Standard humanitarian programming that is not related to the chosen innovation
— Construction of permanent structures.

Further information will be shared in our Eligible Costs Guidance during the later stages of application.

## WHAT WE MEAN BY *SUSTAINED ADOPTION*

When applying to the Challenge, potential adopters will be asked to define the **evidence threshold** for determining if an innovation is effective and suitable for sustained adoption by the organisation. This threshold is expected to vary on a project-by-project basis depending on the context of the operational environment as well as other factors, determined by the adopter. These could include, but are not limited to, user satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, degree of potential risk involved or environmental impact. Adopters are advised to discuss the setting of the evidence threshold with relevant stakeholders, including the innovator.

**Applicants will also be asked to commit in principle to a minimum level of sustained adoption, should the innovation meet the evidence threshold.** This sustained adoption should happen after the HIF grant ends and should be integrated into, and covered through, standard emergency programming funding. In this case, we would expect adopters to continue the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the innovation as part of their existing WASH programming M&E activities.

**EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINED ADOPTION COMMITMENTS**

**For product innovations**[7]**:** purchasing (at least) a pre-agreed number of units and ensuring uptake in a pre-agreed number of new locations if the evidence threshold is met. This could be through the original innovator, through an industrial partner or via procurement from local markets where possible and relevant.

**For process innovations**[8]**:** training and incentivising staff in (at least) a pre-agreed number of locations to deliver the process innovation and integrate it into standard practice, ensuring that it is adequately resourced and monitored.

7    **Product/service innovation** implies a change in what is offered (eg, developing culturally-appropriate menstrual hygiene management kits). See Innovation Basics in our Humanitarian Innovation Guide.

8    **Process innovation** implies a change in how a product or service is created or delivered (eg, developing a user-centred design approach to delivering sanitation services in emergencies). See Innovation Basics in our Humanitarian Innovation Guide.

# FUNDING

Our total budget for this Adoption Challenge is 650,000 GBP. Humanitarian organisations interested in adopting innovations from our WASH Innovation Catalogue are invited to apply for grants between **50,000 GBP and 150,000 GBP**. Please note that budgets outside of this range are ineligible.

We expect that many organisations will apply for **relatively small amounts** as the additional costs for many innovations are limited. Please ensure that you only apply for *eligible adoption costs* (see definition on page 7 of this handbook), and that you integrate and cover the cost of the innovation through existing programming where possible. The funding range available is meant to ensure that innovations that need more detailed M&E may be able to cover this, for example by including an academic partner in their budget.

**The long-term objective of the Adoption Challenge is to see effective innovations integrated into standard humanitarian programming and budgets.** We are therefore looking to fund projects with a clear and realistic commitment to sustained adoption (see '6. Commitment to sustained adoption' in **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**), which can demonstrate a cost-effective budget where the funding provided is able to achieve the most extensive adoption possible (see '7. Value for money' in **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**).

We expect this commitment to sustained adoption to be evidenced in various ways, depending on the size and type of organisation. For example, applicants might want to demonstrate how they will integrate the innovation into existing programming and partnerships beyond the grant timeline, and how they will fundraise for sustained adoption if the innovation meets the evidence threshold.

Applicants might also consider, though it is not a requirement, providing initial match funding or in-kind contributions (eg, staff time; monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) expertise) to cover a proportion of the adoption costs, or reducing the amount of HIF funding used to support the innovation in relation to other funding sources over time. If the application is from a consortium of organisations, this can be a pooled contribution according to the size of the organisation and available resources.

### EXAMPLES OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS / INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING PROGRAMMING

**For product innovations:** HIF funding might cover the 'hardware,' the cost of the innovator providing remote training and advice on how to set up and maintain the innovation (minus the money adopters would have spent on hardware and staff training for existing infrastructure), and monitoring and evaluation. The adopting organisation(s) might then cover the 'software' side of the innovation (eg, behaviour change interventions) as this integrates smoothly into the organisation's ongoing, similar interventions.

**For process innovations:** HIF funding might cover the cost of training in key locations on how to use the new guidance/approach and the staff costs of delivering and evaluating the innovation. The adopting organisation(s) might cover any costs associated with adapting the guidance/approach to their specific humanitarian contexts.

**Projects are expected to start in September 2021 and last for up to 15 months. All project-related activities must complete by 30 November 2022.** Please see the CHALLENGE TIMELINE for further details.

The total duration of projects should cover all project activities, including any development or adaptation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, sharing of lessons learned and reaching a decision on sustained adoption. We are unable to offer any project extensions, so applicants should be conservative in their planning and leave space to allow for flexibility should changes or delays occur, where possible.

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**Please note that the funding amount requested at Expression of Interest (EoI) stage can be indicative. Detailed budget plans will be requested at the Full Proposal stage. Please see the APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS section in this handbook for details on the two assessment stages.**

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to apply for the Challenge, your application must meet the following requirements:

— The lead applicant organisation must be a **legally-registered entity** (ie, international non-governmental organisation, national non-governmental organisation, private company, Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, United Nations agency or programme, civil society organisation, academic/research institution, government). Applicants are expected to provide relevant evidence (eg, registration document) at the EoI stage.

— Your application must propose the adoption of **one** innovation from our WASH Innovation Catalogue (second edition, 2020) for the duration of the grant. One organisation cannot apply to adopt multiple innovations within the same application, but you can submit as many applications as you want.

— Your application must propose one or more **humanitarian setting(s)**[9] in which you will adopt and implement your chosen innovation. Please note that for this Challenge you cannot apply with an undefined, potential future humanitarian crisis – you must apply with one or more settings in which you are already operating.

— All adopting organisations part of the application must be **new to the innovation.** This means that adopting organisations are only eligible if they have not been part of developing the innovation. Any organisation that has been a partner on a previous or current HIF grant for the selected innovation is ineligible as an adopting organisation for this Challenge.

— Your application must consist of **at least one operational humanitarian organisation,** and **at least one adopter must be a local organisation operating in the chosen humanitarian setting(s).** The operational humanitarian organisation and the local organisation can be the same (ie, no further partners are mandatory if the lead applicant is a local humanitarian organisation operating in the chosen humanitarian setting(s)).

By 'local organisation' we mean civil society organisations or NGOs who are a registered entity in the country of implementation, and who have an organisational leadership team from that country. This means that we would expect the organisation's headquarters to be in the country of implementation. **Eligible countries are those currently affected by humanitarian crises (see 'humanitarian setting' in GLOSSARY).**

You are encouraged to partner with any other relevant organisations and institutions as you see fit. Applicants can add innovators as partners receiving a part of the budget, but their involvement should be minimal and limited to essential training and/or advice.

9   See our definition of 'humanitarian setting' in the **GLOSSARY**.

Our portfolio of funded innovations reflects the wider bias in the humanitarian sector where funding is mainly allocated to larger, international organisations, likely to be based in places not usually affected by emergencies. To address this imbalance, we are working to increase the number of grants we award to organisations with headquarters in regions affected by crisis. With this in mind, we strongly encourage applicants from, and partnerships with, organisations based in regions affected by crisis to apply and to reach out to us with any questions.

We encourage a **'networked' application approach**. This means that organisations could apply together, each adopting an innovation in parts of their programming and then comparing their adoption experiences and learnings. **We would encourage organisations from countries affected by crisis and larger, international organisations to consider partnering to ensure the combination of contextual expertise and reach with global networks for future scaling.** All partners need to demonstrate how the innovation is useful for them and how this initial adoption support will have a long-term impact on how they operate.

You are not expected to have confirmed partnerships in place for the EoI stage, but you must provide the names of your suggested partners. You will then be expected to provide evidence to demonstrate the partnerships by the Full Proposal stage – such as a memorandum of understanding (MoU) or similar.[10]

— At EoI stage, you will be expected to provide a **letter of support from the organisation that developed your chosen innovation** as part of your application. All contact details for innovators can be found in the WASH Innovation Catalogue. The innovators should be able to advise you on how to plan for adoption, including the associated costs. Innovators can issue as many letters of support as they feel they have the capacity to support.

— At Full Proposal stage, all organisations applying to adopt an innovation in their chosen humanitarian setting(s) will be expected to provide a **formal written approval or a letter of support from director-level leadership of all adopting organisations in the partnership.** This is to showcase internal commitment to adoption if successful and highlight any match funding or contributions that can be made.

— The proposed duration of, and the requested funding for, your project must be within the parameters set out for the Challenge: projects should last up to 15 months and all project **activities should complete by 30 November 2022** (no extensions permitted). Project budgets must be **between 50,000 and 150,000 GBP** (maximum).

10  We know that good partnerships take time and investment and want you to get off to the best start for this project. While an MoU isn't legally binding, it can help agree common ground and we encourage you to use one as a foundation to build an equitable partnership from.

— If selected, it will be mandatory for at least one representative from each adopting organisation to **join a 2-day kick-off workshop and 3–5 HIF-facilitated learning sessions throughout the duration of the grant** to share progress, insights and challenges with other adopters part of the Challenge cohort (see 'Share ongoing findings with other grantees' in **EXPECTED ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES**). Applicants are welcome to include the staff time cost of this in their budget. If teams are required to travel, the HIF will cover any travel costs associated with these events/meetings.

— Successful grantees will also be expected to attend a learning event organised by the HIF at the end of the funding period, and share feedback and ongoing progress with the HIF's appointed Adoption Learning Partner (see 'Share learnings at a public event and with the HIF's Adoption Learning Partner' in **EXPECTED ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES**).

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Eligible applications will be assessed based on the following criteria to evaluate their potential for impact:

## 1. MATCH BETWEEN PROBLEM & CHOSEN INNOVATION

You should demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the WASH problem you face in your chosen humanitarian setting(s), as well as how your chosen innovation could address the problem. You should also include an outline of any practices/solutions you currently have in place to address the problem and explain how your chosen innovation would be an improvement on these. The Adoption Challenge is open to all phases of humanitarian crises and humanitarian settings. You will be expected to consult with the developer of your chosen innovation when selecting your humanitarian implementation setting(s) and provide a clear justification for your choice in your application.

## 2. HYPOTHESIS-LED

Your application should identify the key hypotheses for your adoption plan, with a clear vision of what you wish to learn or prove by the end of your grant period (see 'hypothesis' in **GLOSSARY**). By collecting learnings on the key hypotheses that you have about your chosen innovation, you should have a clear steer as to whether/how your chosen innovation could represent an improvement on existing practice. Either outcome will be valuable for the sector and you will be expected to share your findings.

## 3. AMBITIOUS & FEASIBLE ACTIVITY PLANS

You should have concrete and realistic plans in place to safely and ethically adopt your chosen innovation and integrate it into current programming within the duration of this grant (up to 15 months). We expect plans to reflect the fact that the adoption will likely be an iterative, non-linear process. The plans should take into account the internal resources available to support adoption, as well as how you plan to develop a sense of ownership and commitment to the innovation within your organisation. You will be expected to demonstrate support from director-level leadership (eg, formal written approval or a letter of support from leadership) to explore the potential of the innovation and commit to its sustained adoption if successful. You should work with the innovator of the solution to develop the adoption plan, and consider how you can involve other stakeholders, such as local organisations based in crisis-affected areas and communities affected by crisis, as well as other stakeholders with a strategic role in sustained adoption. By the end of the grant, you will be expected to be in a position to make an informed decision regarding a sustained adoption of your chosen innovation.

## 4. RELEVANT & RELIABLE EVALUATION PROCESS

Your application should propose a reliable way to gather relevant evidence on your chosen innovation in your chosen humanitarian setting(s). What evidence

is deemed relevant (eg, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, usability, accessibility, or a combination of these) will be open to each adopting organisation to define. Our assumption is that each organisation will have specific concerns regarding their chosen innovation. The aim of this Challenge is to support humanitarian organisations to clarify these concerns and gather the most relevant evidence to help them address these and make an informed decision regarding the innovation's sustained adoption. This evaluation could happen as part of your standard MEAL activity where relevant or possible. If additional M&E support is needed, applicants are encouraged to partner with relevant research institutes or academics. At the end of the grant period, you will be expected to present to a group of relevant stakeholders (convened by the HIF) the evidence you have collected on the innovation's performance and share your conclusions regarding its longer-term uptake.

## 5. CLEAR & ATTAINABLE EVIDENCE THRESHOLD

The evidence threshold for determining if an innovation is suitable for sustained adoption and does indeed improve outcomes will be defined by the adopter and the innovator at the application stage. This threshold is expected to vary on a project-by-project basis depending on the context of the operational environment as well as other factors, such as user satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, environmental impact. As part of your application, you will be expected to outline the key factors that will impact on your decision to adopt your chosen innovation in the longer-term.

## 6. COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINED ADOPTION

We are interested in organisations able to demonstrate both commitment to piloting the adoption of their chosen innovation, as well as supporting its sustained adoption if this meets the agreed-upon success threshold (see '5. Clear and attainable evidence threshold' criterion, above). We expect this commitment to be reflected in various ways, including financial and organisational. For example, applicants might consider providing initial match funding or in-kind contributions to cover a proportion of the adoption costs, or reducing the amount of HIF funding used to support the innovation over time. Another approach would be to reflect on the internal or local structures and capabilities needed to enable a sustained adoption and explain how you will build these within your organisation. You could also identify and engage with strategic stakeholders who will enable the sustained adoption of your chosen innovation through their ongoing engagement, buy-in and support. To demonstrate commitment, please provide details of any additional settings or locations where the innovation could be scaled up and its potential reach.

## 7. VALUE FOR MONEY

Your application should include a clear and detailed breakdown of the costs involved in adopting your chosen innovation (see eligible 'adoption costs' in **THE CHALLENGE**). It should also include details such as how many units of the innovation you plan to adopt (for product innovations) or how many sites you plan to roll out the innovation in. We are looking to fund projects with a clear

commitment to adopting the innovation, who can demonstrate a cost-effective budget where the HIF achieves the most extensive adoption possible. To support this, you will be expected to provide a clear breakdown and justification of the funding you are requesting from the HIF and any match funding or in-kind contributions you plan to make. **The HIF is not an emergency programming funder, and we can *only* fund the costs that are specific to the adoption of the innovation.**

## 8. SUITABLE TEAM & PARTNERS

We are looking for teams and partners that demonstrate the motivation and skills to meaningfully pilot the adoption of the chosen innovation, monitor its effectiveness and ensure its sustained adoption if it proves successful. Including partners with previous experience of adopting, implementing and scaling up innovations within humanitarian settings would be a strength. Partners could include private sector organisations that might help produce or deliver the innovation.

## 9. ETHICS & RISKS

Your project must robustly consider the ethical implications of your proposed adoption activities and methods and how to mitigate any potential risks. You will be expected to pay ongoing attention to potential ethical issues throughout the duration of your project and in relation to each additional setting.

For information on how to ensure the ethical viability of research studies as well as sample ethics reflection questions, please consult our R2HC Research Ethics Framework and Tool and the Principles and Ethics section in our Humanitarian Innovation Guide.

You must consider whether the adoption and monitoring of your chosen innovation would require formal ethical approval. Should this be the case, you will be expected to secure this from your organisation, institution or other approved ethical review body.

# EXPECTED ACTIVITIES & DELIVERABLES

If selected, you will be expected to complete the following activities and deliverables:

## DEVELOP ADOPTION PLAN

You will be expected to develop the adoption plan for your chosen innovation in collaboration with the innovator. You will also be expected to carry out a stakeholder mapping and consider involving any other relevant internal and external stakeholders and partners in the design of the adoption plan to ensure buy-in and long-term commitment. At this stage, you will also be expected to refine your hypotheses for the grant period and develop your evaluation plan for collecting relevant data on the performance of your chosen innovation.

## BEGIN ADOPTION ACTIVITIES IN THE CHOSEN HUMANITARIAN SETTING(S)/ WITH THE CHOSEN ORGANISATION(S)

This step is critical and should include engaging with relevant internal and external stakeholders to adapt the innovation to the respective organisational context(s) and chosen humanitarian setting(s). The expectation here is that the adoption process will be iterative and require an ongoing dialogue between adopters, the innovator(s) and other stakeholders actively involved in the process to ensure ownership of decision-making surrounding the innovation.

## MONITOR & EVALUATE THE ADOPTED INNOVATION

You will be expected to monitor and evaluate the performance of your chosen innovation in your selected humanitarian setting(s) over the duration of the HIF grant. If preferred, your application can include partnering with an independent evaluator (ie, academic or research institution) who could undertake relevant M&E activities.

## SHARE ONGOING FINDINGS WITH OTHER GRANTEES

We would like to create an open and collaborative environment for you to share your progress with other adopting organisations, and discuss any challenges faced and lessons learned with each other. This will take the form of 4–5 HIF-facilitated engagements throughout the grant period – a more structured one at the beginning and one at the end of the programme, and a few other informal ones to share insights from the projects as they emerge. We expect successful grantees to allocate approximately 5–7 days of their budget to engage in and make the most of these sessions. **It will be mandatory for at least one representative from each adopting organisation to join these sessions.**

## DECIDE ON SUSTAINED ADOPTION

At the end of the grant, you will be expected to discuss the outcomes of your project with the innovator and the HIF team, as well as how you would like to proceed with the adoption of the innovation.
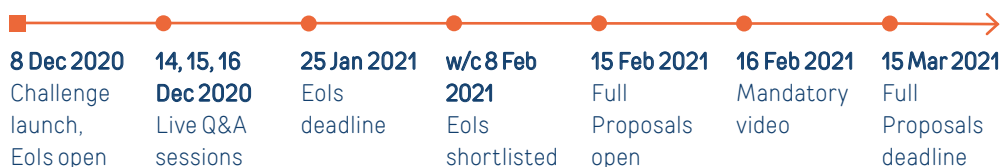
## SHARE LEARNINGS AT A PUBLIC EVENT & WITH THE HIF'S ADOPTION LEARNING PARTNER

The HIF will contract a Learning Partner for this Challenge to evaluate the success of the adoption support across all grantees. We ask that all Adoption Challenge grantees provide information and inputs where needed. We anticipate that this will be in the form of interviews, group discussions and review and feedback of case studies. Furthermore, we ask all grantees to provide the results from the adoption and testing of their chosen innovation (with no sensitive data shared and all data anonymised) to Elrha as requested, for this to feed into the Learning Partner's evaluation.
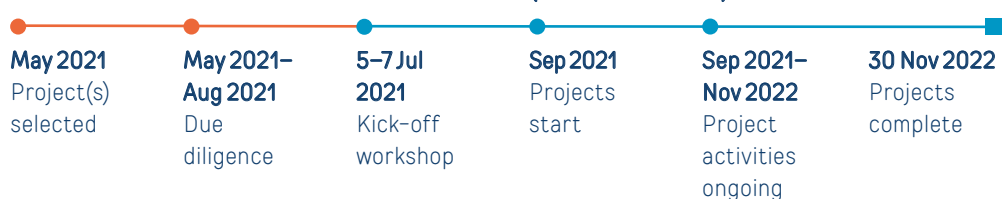
At the end of the funding period, we will organise a learning event for adopters to share their learning (both successful and unsuccessful outcomes) from the adoption process. This will be an opportunity for other interested humanitarian actors to learn about the adoption challenges you faced and explore whether they would be interested in implementing the different innovations.

# CHALLENGE TIMELINE

**APPLICATION PHASE**

| **8 Dec 2020** | **14, 15, 16 Dec 2020** | **25 Jan 2021** | **w/c 8 Feb 2021** | **15 Feb 2021** | **16 Feb 2021** | **15 Mar 2021** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Challenge launch, EoIs open | Live Q&A sessions | EoIs deadline | EoIs shortlisted | Full Proposals open | Mandatory video | Full Proposals deadline |

**PROJECT PHASE (UP TO 15 MONTHS)**

| **May 2021** | **May 2021– Aug 2021** | **5–7 Jul 2021** | **Sep 2021** | **Sep 2021– Nov 2022** | **30 Nov 2022** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project(s) selected | Due diligence | Kick-off workshop | Projects start | Project activities ongoing | Projects complete |

**8 December 2020**
Challenge launch, EoIs open

The Challenge launches on 8 December 2020. There will be a pre-recorded guidance video on the Challenge website for those interested in applying.

**14, 15, 16 December 2020**
Live Q&A sessions

Live Q&A sessions for interested adopters to ask questions about the innovations available for adoption. For more information, see our Innovation Marketplace page.

**25 January 2021**
EoIs deadline

The deadline for EoIs is 25 January 2021 at 23:59 GMT. Apply via the Common Grant Application platform.

**w/c 8 February 2021**
EoIs shortlisted

EoIs will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria outlined in this handbook. Shortlisted projects will be notified in the week commencing 8 February 2021.

**15 February 2021**
Full Proposals open

All shortlisted projects will be invited to submit Full Proposals from 15 February 2021.

**16 February 2021**
Mandatory video

Shortlisted projects will receive general feedback via a pre-recorded video on 16 February 2021. **Please ensure to watch the video before writing the Full Proposal.**

**15 March 2021**
Full Proposals deadline

The deadline for Full Proposals is 15 March 2021 at 23:59 GMT. Full Proposals will be reviewed by independent technical reviewers. The final project selection will be made by the HIF's independent Funding Committee.

**May 2021**
Project(s) selected

Successful projects will be informed in May 2021.

| | |
|---|---|
| **May 2021 – August 2021**<br>Due diligence | Due diligence and contracting are expected to take place between May 2021 and August 2021. Please see the FAQs on our website for more information. |
| **5–7 July 2021**<br>Kick-off workshop | Successful projects attend a mandatory, two-day kick-off workshop that will focus on ethics in adopting innovation. This will either be held virtually or in-person. |
| **September 2021**<br>Projects start | The projects are expected to start in September 2021. |
| **September 2021– November 2022**<br>Project activities ongoing | Grantees will have up to 15 months to carry out all the activities described in their projects. |
| **30 November 2022**<br>Projects complete | **All projects must be completed by 30 November 2022, without the possibility of extension.** |

# APPLICATION & EVALUATION PROCESS

To apply for this Challenge, register via our Common Grant Application platform. For more information and guidance on our grant application process, see our Application Guidance & Support page.

We know that the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted 'business as usual' operations in many humanitarian settings, and for many humanitarian organisations and responders. We encourage you to share any specific considerations or potential adaptations to your approach in response to the current global context in your application.

The application and evaluation process for this Challenge will include the two stages – **Application Screening stage** and **Full Proposal stage**.

At the **Application Screening stage**, you will be asked to submit brief details about your chosen innovation and adoption plans, and explain how your project meets a small selection of the criteria outlined in this handbook. Our ambition is to keep the Application Screening stage as succinct as possible while still ensuring we have sufficient information about your adoption plan and the extent to which it aligns with the Challenge criteria. Application Screening will include a review against the eligibility criteria outlined in this handbook (see **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**). To help you assess whether this funding opportunity is suitable for you, there will be a guidance video and a FAQ section available on our Challenge website.

**QUESTIONS?** We appreciate that this is a complex Challenge. We invite applicants to get in touch with our team to clarify any points not covered by this handbook or by our Application Guidance page by emailing us at hif@elrha.org.

If your application is eligible, you will be invited to submit a **Full Proposal**. This will request additional information about your adoption plans, internal capacity and partners. A pre-recorded video will also be sent to applicants on **16 February 2021**. This will give general feedback on the EoI stage and more information on the requirements for the Full Proposal. **Please ensure to watch the video before writing the Full Proposal.**

Full Proposals will first be reviewed by our HIF team to ensure they remain within the parameters of the Challenge. Full Proposals that are within the Challenge parameters will then be evaluated by at least two independent technical reviewers based on the assessment criteria (see **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**).

Our HIF team will shortlist the strongest ranked applications following the independent technical reviews. Guided by these technical reviews, our independent Funding Committee will assess the shortlist and make the final funding decisions.

# GLOSSARY

## ADOPTION

Implementation of a new solution (innovation) by an operational humanitarian organisation.

## ADOPTER

Operational humanitarian organisation committed to implementing a new solution (innovation) in one or more humanitarian settings.

## HUMANITARIAN SETTING

Humanitarian settings can include:

— Conflict-affected locations (eg, Yemen, Central African Republic, Mali)

— Natural hazard-driven disasters

— Complex emergencies (eg, eastern DRC, northeast Nigeria)

— Refugee or internally displaced person (IDP) camps/settlements including in protracted crises

— Refugees and IDPs in urban settings.

We exclude:

— Countries that are not included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of official development assistance (ODA) (eg, Greece, including refugee camps)

— General populations in low- or middle-income countries (LMICs), including those that have been affected by COVID-19 unless also qualifying as a humanitarian crisis setting as above

— Other vulnerable population groups such as migrants, slum dwellers, or rural communities that are not otherwise affected by a humanitarian crisis.

## HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is a statement to be tested, which helps the project team to better understand the assumptions made about a given innovation. Innovations are almost always based on assumptions as there is an inherent level of uncertainty associated with trying something novel or different to achieve better results. Knowing this, hypotheses should be set in order to test the assumptions for an innovation and generate evidence on how and whether it achieves the desired result.

## INNOVATION

Humanitarian innovation can be defined as an iterative process that identifies, adjusts and diffuses ideas for improving humanitarian action. See the Innovation basics section in our Humanitarian Innovation Guide for details.

An intervention is considered innovative (and therefore, an innovation) if it is a new intervention that improves on current practice, or an intervention that introduces new elements that offer an improvement on an existing intervention.

## INNOVATOR

Organisation/Individual responsible for developing an innovation.

We refer to our previous grantees whose innovations are included in our WASH Innovation Catalogue as innovators.

# WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR APPLICATIONS!

Apply to the Challenge via our Common Grant Application platform by 25 January 2021 at 23:59 GMT.

For any questions that are not covered by this handbook or our Application Guidance page, please email us at hif@elrha.org, referencing 'WASH Adoption Challenge' in the subject line.