

The Sub-Saharan Africa Innovation Platform



The Innovation Platform (IP) for Sub-Saharan Africa is delivered by Isle with support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Global Innovation Fund (GIF). The key objective of this platform will be to demonstrate how technology transfer and innovation can improve, enhance and upgrade the water utility asset base. Through the Innovation Platform our aim is to introduce novel technologies and solutions to enhance the existing infrastructure, reduce cost, improve efficiency, increase revenue and provide sustainable services for the future.

Introduction

The Innovation Platform (IP) has been designed to help Water Utilities across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) meet the new Sustainable Development Goals with a focus around clean water and improved sanitation.

Working with the Africa Water Association (AfWA) and funded by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Global Innovation Fund (GIF), the Innovation Platform will help address some of the key challenges and issues currently facing Water Utilities in SSA.

The Challenge

The provision of safe and affordable drinking water, as well as solutions for sanitation, are basic needs for improved hygiene and a better quality of life, or more critically to prevent loss of life.

New technologies and practices to enhance operations, service and efficiency, cut costs, and reduce emissions of GHG to mitigate impacts of climate change are constantly being brought to market, but utility sector clients typically lack the internal capacity or knowledge to accurately assess these new offers.

The Innovation Platform has been established to address the above challenges. It will enable African utilities to engage with new but resilient technologies and processes that have been proven and adopted outside of Africa but that now align with the local market conditions, and with the potential to gain access to funding for projects where there is a credible financial return.

Benefits of Innovation Platform

- Supports the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on clean water and sanitation;
- Allows IP members access to a high quality portfolio of new and proven technologies aligned with their needs;
- Identifies solutions to improve service, increase efficiency, reduce cost, mitigate climate change impact;
- Facilitates collaboration with key water sector players across Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond;
- Shortens the time-to-market for technologies;
- Brings external investment into Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Creates sustainable projects for the future.

What is the Innovation Platform?

The Innovation Platform will consist of a continuous, on-going programme of activities initiated by the IP meetings, which will take place every 4 – 6 months.

The Innovation Platform will review and recommend technologies for the SSA water sector; in particular looking at technologies that have been proven and adopted in other geographies, with not only the appetite but the commercial standing to commit the necessary level of resource to address the market in SSA.

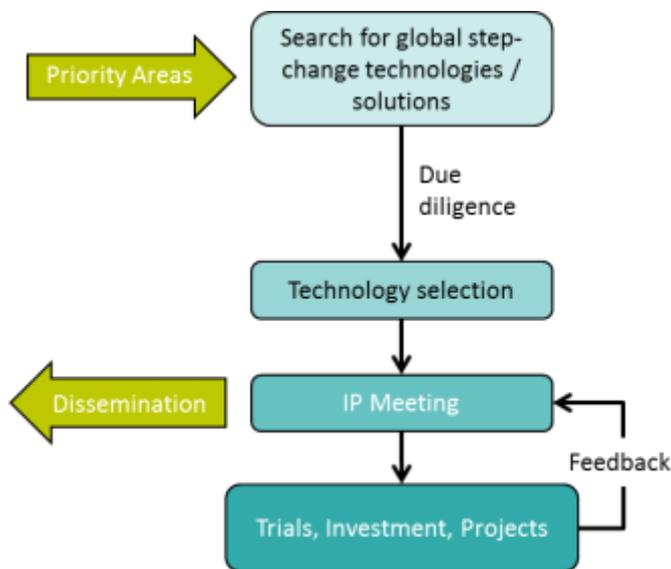
Numerous technologies will be screened and prioritised on an ongoing basis. This due diligence process will also map technologies against the water utility or IP “member” needs. Only the best solutions will be put forward for the IP meetings. IP member participants will receive a long list of 10 – 12 “Proposed Technologies” 8 weeks prior to each IP meeting. Detailed information will have been captured from the technology companies in order that the IP

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participants can then make an informed decision on their technology preferences.

Once each IP participant has reviewed the long list they will have the opportunity to “vote” for their top 5 technologies at least 5 weeks before the IP meeting. Final selection of the top technologies will be made (technologies receiving the most votes) so they can be invited to attend the IP meeting.



Isle will circulate a final agenda with further supporting information for the 5 technology companies selected to present.

During the meeting, each technology company will deliver a clear and concise presentation to introduce their technology to the IP participants. This will be followed by discussion, questions and feedback, which will be captured in a concise manner and reported back to the IP member participants via the meeting minutes.

The objective of the IP meetings will be to understand and define the “next steps” for the technology companies and how these align with the needs of the IP participants, as well as other relevant programmes or work. Opportunities for trials, demonstrations and projects will be clearly defined in order that they can be taken forward with the appropriate support infrastructure in place.

How to get Involved

If you would like to participate in the Innovation Platform initiative for SSA you will need to commit to attending at least two IP Meetings annually and for this you will get:

Two IP Meetings per year: A place at the exclusive SSA IP meetings, at which five selected technologies will present.

IP Pack: The IP Pack for each IP meeting, which includes leaflets about the presenting technologies, a list of attendees, and feedback forms;

Dedicated Follow-Up: Facilitation of follow-up meetings with the relevant contacts within each water utility;

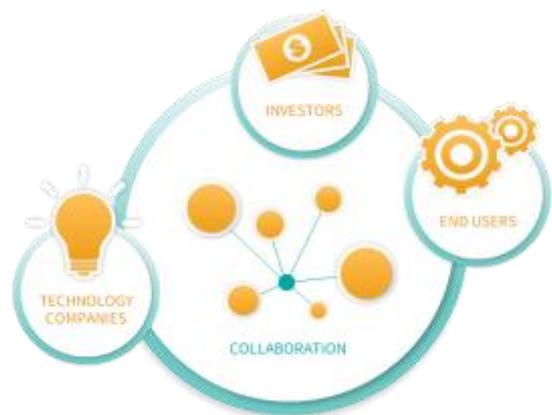
Project Opportunities: The technologies receiving most interest will be taken forward through trial, demonstration and ultimate implementation;

Database Tracker: Access to an online Technology Portal with over 1,800 technologies.

Our Track Record

Isle have delivered similar Innovation platforms in various regions across the globe, resulting in the following:

- **150+** water utilities members
- Over **400** technologies have been carefully selected to present to our members since 2005
- More than **75%** of these technologies have been taken forward by our members through trials or pilots
- Over **50%** are now commercially successful
- More than **\$600m** of external investment has been facilitated through the forum



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