

Sanitation Innovation Fund

Innovate - Educate - Connect

FAQ for Pooptank Innovators.

Why should I apply to the Lake Victoria Pooptank?

You should apply because you meet the 3 eligibility criteria:

1. **PASSION:** You are passionate about improving water quality in Lake Victoria.
2. **EXPERIENCE:** You are already addressing the challenge in some form through your ongoing work. Therefore, you already have some relevant sanitation experience, and your work has a direct impact (i.e. on the Lake Victoria shoreline) or an indirect impact (i.e. in the Lake Victoria basin) upon water quality in Lake Victoria.
3. **IDEA:** You have a relevant innovation which needs financing.

You should apply because you can benefit from what the Pooptank is offering:

- Prize money in grant form.
- Expert mentoring over the Pooptank cycle.
- An opportunity to showcase your work and your innovation and make connections in Lake Victoria's Lakewide Inclusive Sanitation system.
- Experience in applying for grants, pitching, and defending your idea.

How much money is available, and when?

The Lake Victoria Pooptank 2022 is offering 2 rounds of grant financing to 3 innovators over an 8 month cycle, as described on the website.

What can I do with the money?

The money is for your innovation. i.e. it should not be used to cover ongoing costs which are not associated with your innovation.

How does the Pooptank define innovation?

An innovation is simply doing something a little bit (or a lot) differently, in response to a challenge. It doesn't have to be 'fancy' or 'hi-tech', it doesn't even have to be something that isn't already done elsewhere in the world or previously in history, but it should be new to your context and to your work in sanitation. It could be a technology, but it could also be in the realm of 'systems', 'communications', 'ICT', or anything else, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria.

The Sanitation Innovation Fund (SIF) definition of innovation allows a broad and diverse application cohort. We believe that innovation shouldn't be boxed in by strict definitions. Innovation is about stepping out into the unknown.

I think I have a great innovation, but how do I know if others will think so too?

Don't worry what others think, get your idea out there and test it! Some people will love it, some people won't. That's Life. Be bold! Take the first step!

What if my innovation 'doesn't work'?

Many innovations 'don't work'. Innovation is a journey of discovery best shared with partners and both 'success' and 'failure' are possible outcomes. But don't let this put you off: You are trying something new in an incredibly challenging sector – that alone is worthy of praise and reward. Also, by exposing your innovation to a supportive audience, you may find partners who can help you succeed.

But what if it really doesn't work and I want to back out of the Pooptank after the first round of funding?

Failures are more valuable if we share them and learn from them. If you apply for the Pooptank then you are committing to participate for the whole length of the Pooptank cycle, regardless as to whether your innovation is judged as a success, or a failure, or something in-between; all are valid outcomes. Stick with it! You will gain a reputation for integrity and tenacity which will last long after your Pooptank experience.

OK, I'm in! But am I really eligible to apply?

As described above, you must demonstrate PASSION, EXPERIENCE, and an IDEA, but also you must be over 18, and you must have a bank account which can receive a wire transfer from a US-based bank.

All sanitation innovators are welcome to apply: public or private organizations, NGOs, or individuals. Note that applicants who are; (1) early-stage innovators; (2) women; or (3) already providing a pro-poor sanitation service to households, are especially encouraged to apply.

How do I apply and participate?

The Pooptank application process has been designed for simplicity and inclusivity. See the website for the timeline. There is a 3-step application process:

Step 1: Complete the application form on the website.

Step 2: Submit a video IF you are shortlisted.

Shortlisted innovators will be contacted directly by email and by Whatsapp. They will be invited to submit a 3-minute video (the Pooptank pitch) using Whatsapp. The 3 winning pitches will be shown on the Pooptank.

Step 3: Join in regardless!

We will contact all applicants to announce the 3 Pooptank innovators, to thank all applicants, and to encourage everyone to participate with the Pooptank.

How will I be judged?

The application forms and the videos will be judged by the Pooptank leadership. The 3 winning innovators will be judged by 5 votes (3 panelist votes, 1 host vote, and 1 audience vote), cast at the end of each Pooptank.

The Pooptank pitch should include the following content:

- I. **Describe the problem.** Try and bridge the 'macro' (water quality in Lake Victoria) with the 'micro' (the specific sanitation situation in your area).
- II. **Describe your innovation.** Why do you think it will have an impact on the problem you just described?
- III. **Define your need.** How would you use the Pooptank prize? What do you need in terms of mentor support?

Innovators will most likely be judged on 3 things:

- I. **Style** (Can I be seen and heard? Am I speaking clearly and slowly? Is my pitch well organized to address the information required in 3-minutes? Am I answering the questions clearly?)
- II. **Content** (Do I address the required content? Do I have an interesting innovation which demonstrates thoughtfulness and creativity, yet is grounded in reality? Is my innovation likely to succeed?)
- III. **Passion** (Am I allowing my passion for my work and its effect upon water quality in Lake Victoria shine through?)

I struggle with internet access, how can I participate?

This is still the reality for many around Lake Victoria. However, you will need access to a good internet connection to participate in the Pooptank. Try and find an individual, a business, or an institution that can help you.

I don't like being on video!

Neither do most people, but being on a video call is now just part of life. This is especially true for innovators and entrepreneurs who need to 'hustle' to get their idea known and to raise money.

If successful, how do I get the prize money?

You will be sent the money immediately after the Pooptank. You will need a bank account that can receive a wire transfer from a US-based bank.

Is there reporting?

The 3 recorded Pooptanks will serve as reports. You will also commit to attend monthly 'check-in' meetings.

How does the mentoring program work?

The Pooptank mentor roster comprises experienced professionals who volunteer their time to provide monthly 1-on-1 calls over the 8-month Pooptank cycle. One mentor from the roster is available to each innovator. Matching will be guided by the mentor's specific experience relevant to the innovator's challenge.