Frequently Asked Questions:

Technical and Design Requirements

- **What is the minimum capacity expected for proposed household sanitation units?**

  Solutions should serve a typical household of six residents, with a minimum capacity of 350 litres per person per day.

- **What is the acceptable level of energy consumption for these systems?**

  While there's no explicit energy consumption limit, energy efficiency is crucial for reducing operational costs and ensuring sustainability. Solutions should aim for minimal energy consumption while maintaining performance and comply with relevant environmental regulations.

- **Is there a reason for just focusing on non-biological household sanitation technologies?**

  Yes. This call targets non-biological technologies due to its potential attributes - operational simplicity, faster start-up times, and ease of maintenance. It also aims to expand the diversity of sanitation solutions in the market.

- **Are biological or nature-based sanitation technologies eligible?**

  No. Biological or plant-based systems are not eligible.

- **Can a system include a biological component as a subsystem?**

  Biological subsystems cannot be considered. However, if your technology includes a non-biological component, such as a membrane or filtration system, you may submit that part for consideration.

- **Are both gray water and black water treatment required in a single solution?**

  No, not strictly. Integrated solutions are encouraged, but proposals can address either black water or gray water, or both, as long as the relevance is clearly stated.

- **Can one applicant submit separate proposals for toilet and greywater solutions?**

  Yes. Each submission will be evaluated individually for its integration potential.

- **Is source separation of waste streams allowed?**

  Yes, source separation is allowed. Applicants can choose to treat different waste streams separately, such as black water, gray water, or yellow water

(urine), or they may opt for integrated treatment, provided the solution meets the non-biological criteria.

- **Can the system support multiple bathrooms or households?**

  Yes. Flexibility in design is encouraged. The system can be designed to serve a single household, multiple bathrooms within one household, or even small communities, as long as it remains decentralized and cost-effective.

- **Does the system have to be installed underground like a septic tank?**

  Not necessarily. Above-ground or below-ground installations are acceptable if they are practical, depending on the local conditions and design requirements.

- **Is there a minimum threshold for water reuse or recycling?**

  There is no mandated minimum volume for water reuse or recycling. However, solutions must comply with local water reuse regulations, and applicants should demonstrate how their systems will contribute to effective water management and sustainability.

- **Would sludge/solids treatment solutions be considered integrated or standalone?**

  They may be submitted as standalone components but must demonstrate relevance to the NGSS objectives.

- **Is it possible to assist with a copy or outline of the ISO30500 criteria?**

  ISO 30500 outlines the criteria for non-sewered sanitation systems. The call is focused on technologies that are aligned with global sanitation standards, which might include compliance with ISO 30500 or similar federal or state standards. You may access ISO 30500 criteria here: https://sanitation.ansi.org/Standard/ISO30500

- **Are you considering only full system solutions, or will you address strategic gaps in existing systems?**

  While full system solutions are preferred, strategic gaps within existing systems can be addressed. For example, if your technology fills a critical gap in an existing decentralized system, it may be considered as long as it meets the criteria for scalability and long-term sustainability.

Cost and Affordability

- **What is the target cost for each household unit?**

  Target cost: $10,000 to $20,000 per household (excluding installation). Long-term goal is cost reduction for LMICs. For example, if your solution is at the higher end of this cost range, consider how it can be optimized for

affordability, either through scaling or leveraging local materials or manufacturing techniques.

- **How important is energy consumption in the cost equation?**

  It's a major factor in operating cost. Energy-efficient designs are preferred. Reducing grid energy usage is critical for ensuring long-term affordability. For instance, solutions with low energy requirements, such as those powered by renewable energy sources like solar or gravity, can be more cost-efficient and sustainable, particularly in regions with high energy costs or unreliable power grids.

- **Will applicants need to submit a detailed budget?**

  No detailed budget is required at this stage. If your solution is selected for further review, you will be asked to provide a more detailed budget that outlines production, installation, and operational costs. This allows for an evaluation of the financial viability of your technology and its scalability.

- **What types of activities will the grant support?**

  The grant can support a variety of activities, including technology development, prototyping, testing, and integration into larger systems. For example, if your technology is in the prototype phase, the grant could assist in scaling it to a full working model. The specific expenses eligible for support will be discussed once the selection process is complete.

- **Should the proposal include budget and its break-up?**

  Not at this stage. However, describing cost drivers and potential affordability improvements is helpful.

Technology Readiness, Manufacturing Readiness and Performance

- **What Technology Readiness Level (TRL) is expected?**

  TRL 6+ preferred. However, technologies at a lower TRL with strong potential for rapid development and scalability can still be considered, provided there is a clear path to full deployment.

- **Are standalone subsystems eligible for submission?**

  Yes. Modular components like membranes or solid separators can be submitted independently. These subsystems will be evaluated on their ability to integrate into larger, decentralized sanitation systems in the future.

- **How will the performance of solutions be evaluated?**

  Performance will be evaluated based on credible evidence, such as lab test results, pilot data, or video demonstrations. For instance, if your solution

includes a filtration technology, you should provide test results showing its effectiveness in removing contaminants. The expert panel may also request additional validation, such as a live demonstration, depending on the specifics of your solution.

- **What kind of quality assurance documentation is needed?**

  You should include any existing certifications, test results, or compliance documentation that demonstrates the safety and effectiveness of your technology. For example, if your technology complies with ISO standards (e.g., ISO 30500), include that certification. This helps validate that your solution meets relevant regulatory and safety standards.

- **Is ISO 30500 certification required? How does this apply to sub-systems, such as membrane or incineration modules?**

  No, ISO 30500 certification is not mandatory for eligibility, though it can strengthen your proposal. Other relevant international, regional, or national standards may also be applicable depending on the technology and market. For sub-systems, certification is not expected, but it must be demonstrated that their integration would not prevent the overall system from complying with applicable sanitation standards. Submissions should show compatibility with certified or certifiable system configurations.

- **Can solutions at low TRL/MRL levels be submitted?**

  Yes, if they show promise to potentially advance rapidly through the development pipeline.

- **Any guidance on expected sludge output (quantity per day/use)?**

  No fixed quantity. It should align with ISO and local standards. Describing sludge management is advised.

- **What level of Manufacturing Readiness (MRL) is expected for proposed solutions?**

  While there is no strict minimum MRL requirement, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate a clear pathway toward scalable, reliable, and cost-effective manufacturing. Solutions with higher MRLs—indicating progress beyond prototyping and toward pilot production or deployment—are preferred, especially if they align with near-term implementation goals. However, lower MRL solutions with strong potential and credible plans to advance manufacturing readiness will also be considered.

IP and Confidentiality

- **Will there be a review of background IP rights, and are there any disclosure requirements?**

Yes. The IWA and applicants will collaborate on a due diligence process to review background IP. Third-party ownership, royalties, and restrictions must be disclosed.

- **What are the expectations around commercialization and publication of NGSS technologies and intellectual property?**

  Commercial exploitation is allowed in high-income countries. In LMICs, a not-for-profit pricing model must be followed. Open-access publication is encouraged but may be delayed for IP protection.

- **How should applicants handle intellectual property (IP) concerns, and what support is available during the application process?**

  Applicants must disclose relevant background IP and any constraints. The IWA will appoint IP advisors to assist throughout the process, including guidance on the Gates Foundation's Global Access Policy.

- **How about the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) if the technology is a patented one from an organization?**

  If the technology is patented, you must clearly disclose the patent status and ensure that the IP rights allow for global access and affordability. This should align with the goal of ensuring that the sanitation technology is accessible and scalable.

- **How should confidentiality be managed in the application?**

  Only share key details essential for evaluation. Full proprietary or sensitive documents are not needed at this stage. Ensure your IP disclosures do not conflict with the global access policy.

- **Can co-developers apply together?**

  Yes, but one organization must be the lead applicant. Clear disclosure of IP ownership and roles is required.

Eligibility and Application Scope

- **Who is eligible to apply?**

  Startups, accelerators, technology developers, or consortia. Accelerators must manage IP effectively.

- **Can an incubator or accelerator submit a proposal alone?**

  Yes, as long as IP and technical capabilities are managed and disclosed clearly.

- **Can an organization take part in multiple proposals with different partners?**

  Yes. Each submission must handle legal/IP issues independently.

- **Does the solution have to serve developed markets only?**

  No. Initial deployment is targeted at developed countries (US and France), but scalability to LMICs is expected.

- **Will community or public toilet systems be considered?**

  No. Only decentralized household-level sanitation systems are within scope.

- **Are partial or component innovations eligible?**

  Yes, innovations targeting specific components are encouraged. Integration opportunities will be explored during expert panel reviews.

- **Should proposals focus only on households or can they target neighbourhoods/buildings?**

  Household-level is preferred, but solutions for small clusters may be acceptable.

- **Is a live demo required for the competition?**

  Not mandatory, but proof of functionality (e.g., video, test data) is essential. The expert panel may request a demonstration later.

Workshop Details

- **How will the $3 million be distributed?**

  Divided among selected proposals. Exact amounts depend on the number and nature of winning entries.

- **When and where will the workshop be held?**

  Planned for late June or early July 2025, likely in Bangkok, Thailand, for 5-7 days.

- **How many participants per organization can attend the workshop?**

  Two attendees per organization are allowed. Additional members may be considered upon request.

- **Will a recording or transcript of the meeting be shared?**

Yes. Meeting materials will be made available afterward.

- **Will there be a teaming portal for participants?**

  No teaming platform will be provided. Collaboration will occur during the workshop phase.

Proposal Content and Evaluation

- **What information should be included in the proposal?**

  Technology description, development timeline, cost and scalability pathway, IP status and freedom to operate, regulatory and quality compliance.

- **How descriptive should the proposal content be?**

  Sufficient detail to evaluate feasibility and innovation. Full proprietary details are not required at this stage.

- **How comprehensive should the IP and legal disclosures be?**

  Include enough to assess IP risks and compliance with Global Access Policy. More detail can be deferred.

- **How will the consortium capabilities be assessed?**

  Inclusion of market/manufacturing partners strengthens submissions. Mentioning collaborating stakeholders is also acceptable.

- **Is there a competitive advantage in applying with a subsystem versus a full solution?**

  Both are considered. Innovation, scalability, and integration potential are key evaluation criteria.