



WEF Thinks Grant Program Call for Proposals

The WEF Thinks Grant Program (formerly *Workshop in a Box*) was developed to create space for WEF members, member associations, and technical communities to discuss and find solutions to issues currently challenging the water and wastewater industry. This initiative is intended to provide a framework that can be deployed more quickly than traditional Conferences while also incorporating more interaction than a webinar or traditional technical session by using an in-person workshop format.

To facilitate this effort, WEF is seeking proposals for 1- or 2-day interactive events for 50-150 attendees focused on timely issues and hot topics. Timelines for putting on an event may vary, but the target is anywhere from 3 to 9 months from the date of proposal acceptance. Proposals will be evaluated by the Specialty Conference Advisory Panel and WEF staff team (see page 4 for review criteria). Accepted proposals will be provided with financial and logistical support from WEF if need be, in collaboration with volunteer efforts, to ensure a successful convening that fosters work towards actionable solutions.

Typically, the workshops can fall into two broad categories. The first is **Industry Advancement** type workshops. These will focus on developing solutions, coming together to discuss a problem, or pushing the state of knowledge forward.

The second type is a **Training-Based** workshop, which should educate attendees on a specific subject matter. These need to be highly interactive, hands-on, and immersive educational experiences.

These workshops are intended to comprise new content rather than repeating WEFTEC or specialty conference workshops. If this workshop was accepted to the WEFTEC program or to any specialty conference program, an explanation for why it is worthwhile to hold it again and what improvements have been made since it was last presented, will be required.

Eligibility Criteria and Requirements

WEF Membership is required in order to submit a proposal. Application requirements can be found on the following page.

What Makes a Workshop a Workshop

Interaction is what makes a workshop a workshop. Your proposal should not be for a lecture or technical session-style set of presentations back-to-back. The interactive activities need to be well-integrated throughout the day and comprise at a minimum 50% of the workshop time. Facilitators are encouraged to brainstorm and incorporate interactive activities to deliver their subject matter expertise and content in a meaningful way to the participants. Examples of interactive activities are:

- Case study analysis & discussion

- Interactive demonstration
- Role play
- Tabletop exercises

WEF's Role

WEF is offering support in the following ways, including but not limited to:

- Funding up to \$10,000 per proposal at WEF's discretion with demonstrated need, to be spent on logistics such as event location rentals, AV equipment and staffing, food and beverage, printing, supplies, and more.
- Hosting online registration, determining registration pricing, and collecting registration fees.
- Promoting the event to WEF members and social media followers.
- Providing WEF branding to the event to increase recognition that the event is of high quality and relevance to water and wastewater industry professionals.
- Post-event support including surveying attendees and providing feedback to organizers.

Submitter/Organizer Role

The volunteer organizers are responsible for:

- Finding and securing the event location.
- Producing a workbook for event attendees that contains guidance for participation on the day of the workshop. Workbooks must include speaker bios and photos, an agenda, and a participant agreement/code of conduct. They can also include interactive worksheets, instructions for activities, contact information, resources for continuing learning, and more. These should NOT contain all PPT slides. Further instruction will be provided upon acceptance.
- Marketing the event to your networks.
- If applicable, creating a product afterwards (examples include a fact sheet or other publication, a report, a toolkit, etc.)

Application and Submission Information

Interested parties must first complete and submit a pre-proposal. Pre-Proposals are due November 25 and April 27. A pre-proposal that is accepted will then need to be followed by a complete proposal form, submitted within 1 month of notification. If a full proposal is not received, the pre-proposal will go no further.

Pre-proposal Information

Pre-proposals will be evaluated by WEF staff and the Specialty Conference Advisory Panel. Applicants will then be asked to either submit a full proposal or to revisit their idea. Please email your pre-proposal form to speakers@wef.org. Pre-proposal forms should include:

- **Title**
- **Audience and Need**
Identify the target audience and need for the workshop.

- **Workshop Description and Learning Objectives**
- **WEF Strategic Plan Alignment**
Explain how the proposal is relevant to the [WEF strategic plan](#).
- **Identify WEF Community or Member Association partners** (not required, only if applicable)

Proposal Information

The proposal will ask for more details, including a plan of action, full agenda, and estimated budget. Upon review, all applicants will receive feedback on the submittal and if reviewed favorably, more information about the proposed workshop and next steps will be provided. Please email your completed proposal along with additional support documents to speakers@wef.org. A competitive application will include the following items in addition to the materials from the pre-proposal:

- **Program Agenda**
Provide a draft workshop agenda and detail any interactive program elements.
- **Marketing Description**
- **Project Action Plan/Next Steps**
List the proposed action plan, outcome(s), deliverables if applicable, and/or next steps of the workshop.
- **Budget and Budget Justification**
Provide an itemized, detailed budget with justification of the costs that explains why each expense for the workshop is needed. Expected costs could include but are not limited to:
 - Meeting room rental
 - Audio-Visual equipment rental (projector, screen, microphones, audio mixer, laptop, internet connectivity, etc.)
 - Audio-Visual technician/support
 - Food and beverage
 - Materials/Resources produced (e.g. copies, printing, etc.)
 - Workshop supplies (e.g. flipcharts, markers, pens, paper, etc.)
 - WEF may be able to provide travel assistance for speakers and facilitators, but no honorariums will be paid.
- **Sponsorship**
Identify companies and/or contacts who may be interested in sponsoring.

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed biannually after the April 27 and November 25 submission deadlines by the Specialty Conference Advisory Panel and WEF Staff and rated on the following criteria:

- *Creativity*: How creative is the proposal? Does the proposal describe engaging interactive elements? How does this proposal differ from/stand out from traditional WEF conference workshops or technical sessions?
- *Feasibility*: How feasible is the project in terms of time, budget, and available resources?
- *Significance*: Is the program relevant and timely? How well do the goals address water/wastewater industry trending topics, concerns, shortfalls, etc.? How well do the goals of this proposal tie into WEF's strategic plan goals?
- *Action Plan*: How well defined is the action plan? Is the action plan linked to the stated goals? Are the actions in the plan designed to change behavior? Are other stakeholders involved in the development of goals, objectives, and plans of action? Will there be a deliverable produced by this workshop?
- *Overall Proposal Quality*: Is the proposal well written? Do the answers to each question demonstrate thoughtfulness? Is the writing clear and concise?

Please note: Reviewers may offer feedback or request edits, including suggestions for speakers, topics, or partners, or to combine with other submittals, etc.

Timeline and Next Steps

You should expect to hear back about your proposal in 4- 6 weeks. At that time, we will provide a timeline including deadlines for submitting final speaker lists, items for printing by WEF, food and beverage orders, audio/visual equipment needs, and any other support you may have requested.

WEF Contacts

If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact Maggie Siddle at msiddle@wef.org.