THE 24-HOUR IDEA MARATHON FOR WATER CONSERVATION

water
ideathon
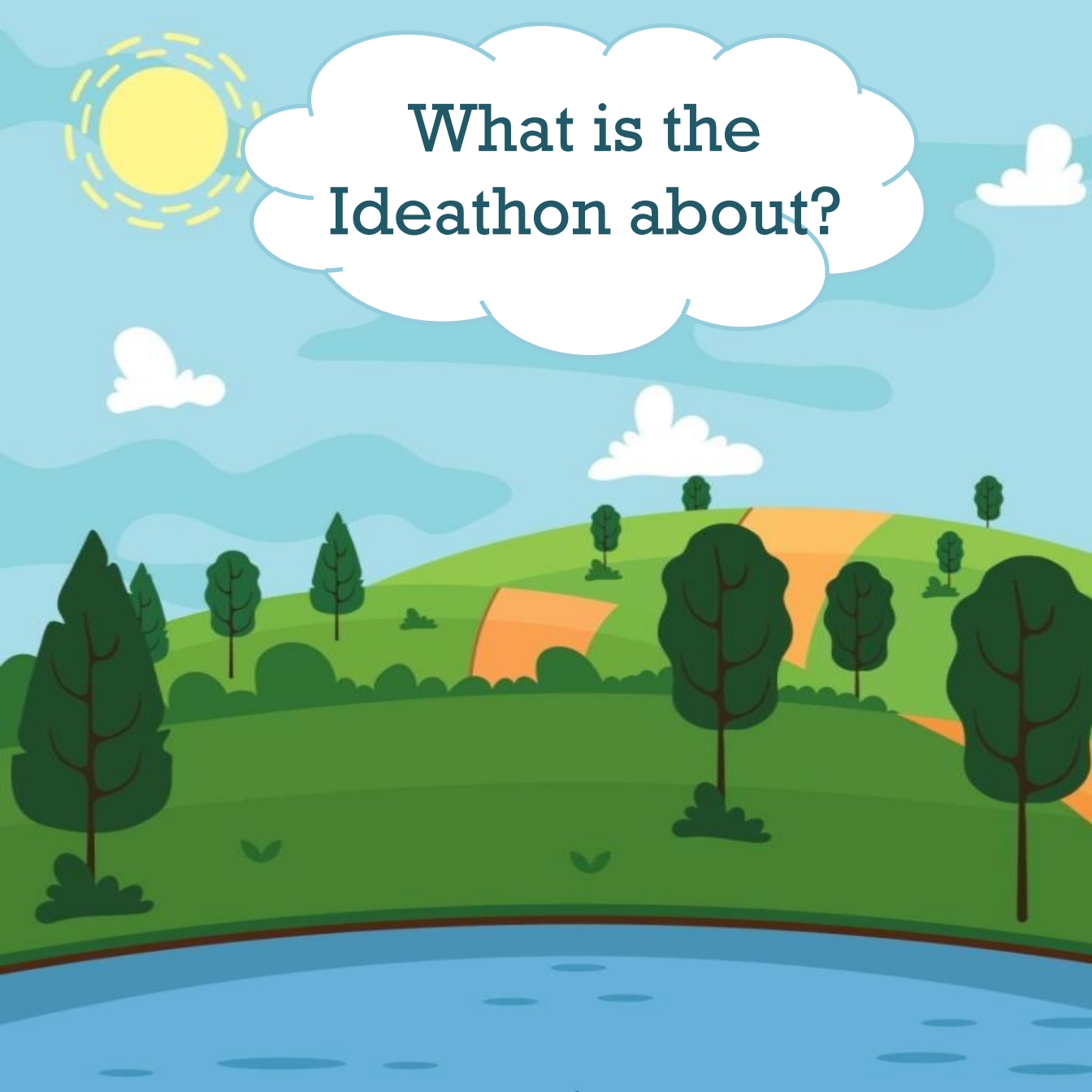
JUNE 11-12, 2016

Hello and welcome to the Water Ideathon!

This innovative, hackathon-style competition invites Armenia's creative minds to come together and find solutions to Armenia's challenges in the water sector!

The 24-hour Water Ideathon is
brought to you by:
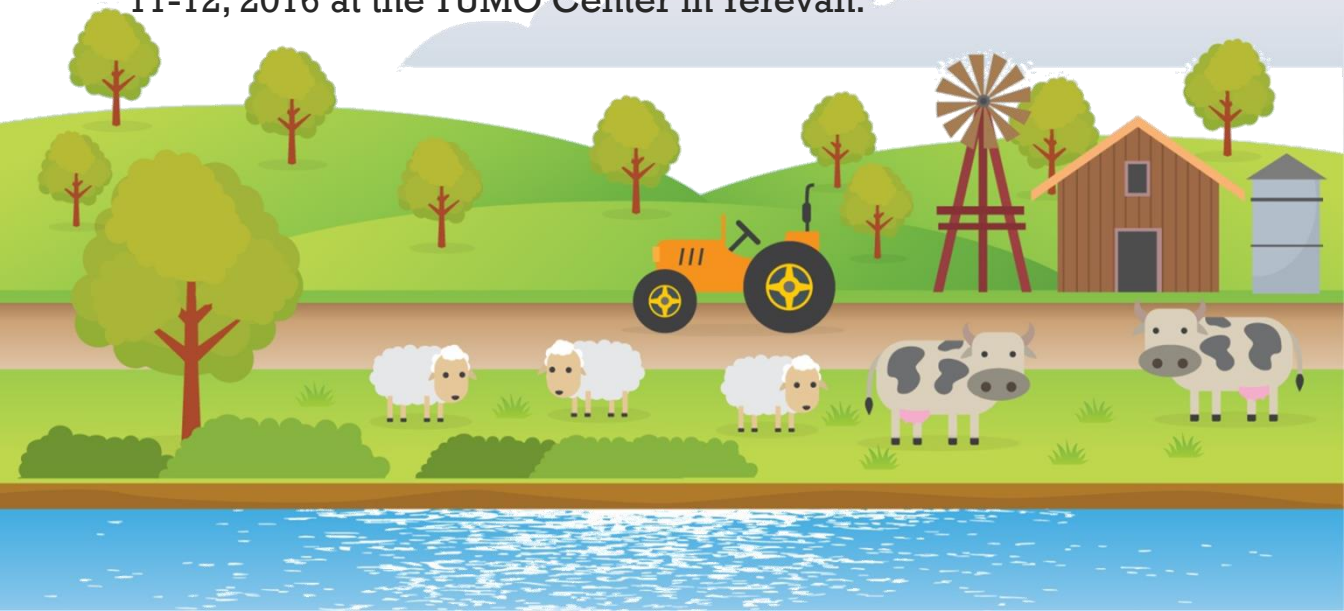

in partnership with:

Agriculture is important to the Armenian economy and 40% of the country's production comes from the Ararat Valley, which is home to 18% of the country's population. Over the last several years, water stressors that include the growing fish farm industry, and irrigation requirements of farms have lowered the water quantity to the point where 32 communities that had access to flowing water now pump it from the ground, which is an energy intensive process. Irrigation is the overall largest consumptive user of water, although fish farms have emerged as a major, inefficient natural water consumer.

Water shortages are worsened by an overall lack of water stewardship and a public perception that water is an infinite resource. Generally, not too many Armenians are aware that the country and the broader region are under heavy water stress, which, according to the World Resource Institute estimates, will increase two-fold by 2040.

The **Water Ideathon** will encourage local Armenians to join their efforts to solve challenges in the water sector. The **Ideathon** will also help raise the importance of sustainable water management among water consumers in Armenia.

The competition will last 24 hours and will take place on June 11-12, 2016 at the TUMO Center in Yerevan.

What to expect from the Ideathon?

The Water Ideathon will challenge your team to apply your knowledge and skills to come up with new ideas to help solve Armenia's water resource problems. These unique problems include:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

- Lack of data, including geospatial data, on water resources, users, and management.
- Lack of access to existing information and data.

POLICY, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE:

- Lack of water stewardship or public understanding that water is a finite resource.
- Prevalence of public viewpoints that undervalue water.

ENGINEERING:

- Lack of adoption of efficient or advanced water technologies and engineering applications.
- Inefficient, ageing infrastructure with considerable technical losses amounting to 40% or more.

CROSS-CUTTING:

- High level of pollution and contamination.
- High vulnerability to climate change and drought.
- Usage of sewage for irrigation due to lack of irrigation water.
- Overextraction of groundwater resources.
- Lack of adequate enforcement or penalties for resource abuse.
- Substantial commercial losses, including through illegal piping and non-payments.
- Lack of appropriate or effective water pricing.
- Lack of transparency in the water sector.
- Transboundary water issues.

Are you up for the challenge?

Learn more!

How can you participate?

Teams interested in participating in the Water Ideathon must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to USAID. Each team must have **at least 2** and **up to 4** members. The Ideathon is primarily aimed at adults. However, youth teams are also highly encouraged to apply. Participants must be **at least 14** years old. *If selected as a semifinalist, 14-17 year old participants will be asked to complete a Parental Permission Form by June 9, 2016.*

Teams must submit their EOIs to USAID by completing the application form in Google Forms at http://goo.gl/forms/uPbVQ1YcUO. **EOIs should be submitted in English by 23:59 on Monday, May 30, 2016.**

What should you tell us in your EOI?

You will need to answer the following questions on the EOI form regarding your **idea** and **team**:

IDEA:
- What is your idea and how will it address Armenia's water challenges? *(max. 2000 characters)*
- What communities, groups, organizations, and/or people will benefit from the implementation of your idea? *(max. 1000 characters)*

TEAM:
- What is the name of your team?
- What is the name, occupation, and age of each team member? Who is the team leader?
- What are the roles of each member?

Selection of Semifinalists

The EOIs will be reviewed by a panel composed of USAID and its partners, including the Microsoft Innovation Center (MIC), the Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF), the Yerevan Impact Hub, the IBM Innovative Solutions and Technologies Center (ISTC), the TUMO Center, National Instruments and the USAID ASPIRED project.

EOIs will be evaluated on a 100-point scale as follows:

- **Approach** (40 points)
- **Impact and sustainability** (40 points)
- **Team** (20 points)

A maximum of 100 people (or about 30 teams) with the highest scoring EOIs will be invited by USAID to participate in the Water Ideathon as **semifinalists**.

Optional Pre-selection Knowledge Seminar on the Water Sector

On May 24, USAID Armenia and Microsoft Innovation Center will host a knowledge presentation on **the social, economic, and technical challenges in Armenia's water sector and water resource management**.

The purpose is to educate groups that otherwise do not have experience in the water sector. While attendance is optional, all teams interested in applying for the Water Ideathon are highly encouraged to attend this pre-selection knowledge seminar.

MAY 24

Please RSVP to Patrick Meyer at pmeyer@usaid.gov by May 22.

What will you gain from the Knowledge Seminar on May 24?

USAID's Advanced Science and Partnerships for Integrated Resource Development project – or let's put it simply, the ASPIRED project – will deliver a 30-minute presentation, followed by a 30-minute Question & Answer session. The presentation will be in Armenian, with Armenian and English slides.

At the end of the seminar, teams will be able to sign up for one-on-one consultations with ASPIRED experts (May 26 and May 27) to discuss their concepts in greater detail.

Date:	Tuesday, May 24, 17:00-18:00
Venue:	Microsoft Innovation Center
	6th floor conference room
	105 Teryan Street, Yerevan
Presenters:	USAID/ASPIRED project experts

What will happen on the competition day?

At the Ideathon, your team will be given about 24 hours to develop a solution to a problem addressing water resource management in Armenia. At the end of the 24 hours, you will pitch your idea to the Ideathon judge panel. Winners will be selected in four categories:

1
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
A solution that is primarily driven by IT and data.

2
POLICY, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
A solution that primarily involves public stewardship, policy reform, use of media, and/or social engineering.

3
ENGINEERING
A solution that is primarily driven by mathematics, design, and empirical analysis.

4
YOUTH (AGES 14-19)*
A solution falling into any of the above three categories. All team members must be 14-19 years old to qualify for this award category.

*Youth participants are automatically eligible to compete in the other three categories.

Still have doubts?

shhhh

Then may we add a bit more **thrill** by revealing one little secret? Members of the 4 winning teams will receive unique award packages, that include:

- 12 weeks of incubation at the Microsoft Innovation Center, the Innovative Solutions & Technologies Center, or the Armenian National Engineering Laboratories, including desk space!

- Subscription to Microsoft BizSpark and/or IBM Bluemix cloud computing platform and services!

- Mentorship with Impact Hub management on social engineering and entrepreneurship; mentorship with CocaCola management on marketing, sustainability, and water sector; or mentorship with ISTC team on data analytics, cloud services (Bluemix), and IBM Watson Analytics!

- Software and/or hardware from partner organizations!

- Cash award in the amount of 300,000AMD per team.

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LET'S TURN ON THE LIGHT TOGETHER!

Looking forward to seeing you on June 11!