

SMART CITIES & URBAN INNOVATION

Find and fix water leaks across city suburbs faster

Local authority • Bulawayo



Help the city find, report and fix water leaks faster across its suburbs.

POSTED BY	Local authority • Bulawayo	PILOT BUDGET	Pilot budget on request
LOCATION	Bulawayo (one pilot suburb)	APPLICATIONS CLOSE	20 Dec 2026
SUB-THEME	Smart Cities & Urban Innovation	TEAM SIZE	2–6 people

1 The problem

Background

The city loses a large share of its treated water to leaks and bursts in an ageing pipe network. Residents report leaks by phone or in person, and the reports are logged by hand.

What's going wrong

Many leaks go unreported, while others are reported several times by different people. Repair crews lack exact locations and priorities, so repairs take days and water rationing gets worse.

2 What we need

A strong solution will:

- ✓ Make it easy for residents to report a leak with a location and a photo.
- ✓ Merge duplicate reports and rank leaks by severity.
- ✓ Give crews a daily job list and track repair times.
- ✓ Show residents what has been fixed.

Constraints

- Reporting must work over WhatsApp or USSD as well as smartphones.
- Must run on the city's existing servers or a low-cost hosted plan.
- Residents' personal data must be protected.

3 Deliverables

By forum week, matched teams are expected to bring:

01 A working reporting and job-tracking prototype.

02 A test with one suburb and one repair crew.

03 Running costs and a rollout plan.

04 A seven-minute pitch for forum week.

4 How teams are evaluated

Applications and final pitches are scored by the challenge owner and the ZBIF secretariat.

CRITERION	WHAT WE LOOK AT	WEIGHT
Fit to the problem	Does it solve the problem as the challenge owner describes it?	30%
Technical feasibility	Can the team build and run it with the resources available?	25%
Cost and scalability	Is it affordable to pilot, and to roll out if the pilot works?	20%
Team capability	Does the team have the skills and time to deliver?	15%
Local impact	Jobs, skills or value it keeps in Zimbabwe.	10%

Who can apply

- ✓ A registered ZBIF innovator account: innovators, consultancies, technologists, university teams or freelancers.
- ✓ At least one team member based in Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Able to attend forum week in Bulawayo on 27–28 April 2027 if shortlisted.
- ✓ IP ownership and pilot terms are agreed between your team and the challenge owner in the Deal Room.

5 Timeline

25 Sep 2026	Challenge posted
20 Dec 2026	Applications close
Within 3 weeks	Matching results sent to teams and the challenge owner
Until mid-April 2027	Build phase, with mentor and challenge-owner check-ins
27–28 Apr 2027	Live pitch and Deal Rooms at forum week, Bulawayo

6 Data and resources

Shared with matched teams after signing a simple data-use agreement.

Water network maps (GIS) for pilot suburbs	Shapefiles
Past leak report logs	Spreadsheet
Engineering department contact	Fortnightly check-in

7 How to apply

- 01 Create a free innovator account at zbif.bulconsultancy.com, or sign in.
- 02 Open this challenge (ref ZB-107) and press **Apply**.
- 03 Tell us your team name, size and how you would solve the problem. Applications close on **20 Dec 2026**.

Questions about the brief can be asked from the challenge page. Answers are shared with every applicant.