



Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA)



African Innovation Foundation (AIF)

Announcement

2014 Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA)
Deadline for Applications: **31 October 2013, 24h00 GMT**

The [African Innovation Foundation \(AIF\)](#) is delighted to announce the call for the 2014 [Innovation Prize for Africa \(IPA\)](#). The prize honours and encourages innovative achievements that contribute toward developing new products, increasing efficiency or saving cost in Africa. The prize also promotes among young African men and women the pursuit of science, technology and engineering careers as well as business opportunities with potentials of contributing to sustainable development in Africa.

The IPA is focused on:

- Mobilizing leaders from all sectors to fuel African innovation
- Promoting innovation across Africa in key sectors through the competition
- Promoting science, technology and engineering as a rewarding career path among African youth.
- Encouraging entrepreneurs, innovators, funding bodies and business development service providers to exchange ideas and explore innovative business opportunities.

The IPA anticipates contributing to the following outcomes:

- Increased commercialization of research and development (R&D) outputs in Africa
- Increased funding of start-ups, adoption of new and emerging technologies and accelerated growth of an innovative and dynamic private sector; and
- Increased economic activity and African led development that results in lasting impact.

1. IPA 2014 PRIORITY AREAS

The 2014 IPA recognizes innovative breakthroughs that unlock new African potential in the following five priority areas¹: agriculture and agribusiness; environment, energy and water; health and well-being; ICTs and manufacturing and service industry. Details are provided below:

¹ If you have an innovation in a different thematic area and you feel you would like to submit your application, please indicate and contact the IPA Secretariat.

- **Agriculture/agribusiness**

Innovations that have demonstrated a lead in the agricultural sector, particularly, value-added at specific points of the agricultural value-chain. It is about providing new ways to ensure a food-secure future for the continent and the world. The innovation could be about commercial and market-oriented farming as well as small-scale and subsistence farming.

- **Environment, Energy and Water**

Innovations that have demonstrated a lead in developing or applying cost-effective, smart renewable energy generation processes, cleaner water supply systems etc. It is about the way we adapt to climate challenges and steward our natural resources to impact the inheritance we leave to the future generations of Africans.

- **Health and Wellbeing**

Innovations that have demonstrated high impact or potential in improving the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals or communities, through prevention, treatment etc. It is about finding new treatments, cures and approaches that ensure longer, happier and healthier lives. This might include the development and use of traditional and modern medicines, improved sanitation, hygiene and treating or preventing the major diseases faced by the continent.

- **Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)**

Innovative ICTs applications that have demonstrated their potential in addressing key development challenges in African societies (e.g. in communities) or economy, including: software, mobile/wireless technologies and local language software. It is about developing new solutions that address everyday challenges that help Africans live and work more successfully.

- **Manufacturing and Service Industry**

Innovations that have demonstrated a lead on addressing the key pillars of innovation in production technology/industry: creating high added-value, greener, more customer-focused and/or high quality products; manufacturing more with less input materials, using lowest energy and creating fewest or zero waste. It is about helping people across the continent literally build better lives.

2. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

You should consider submitting your application if you are an African entrepreneur, academic or inventor with an innovation that could potentially provide an African solution to some of the continent's every day challenges. Below are specific guidelines on who can apply and how to apply:

- Eligible innovations must be by Africans for Africa. Africans in the Diaspora can also apply if their innovations are of significance for Africa. The innovation or associated business must be registered in Africa.
- A fully completed application form with a full description of the innovation must accompany each submission; otherwise the entry will be disqualified.

- The innovation description should clearly illustrate the social and/or economic outcome and impact with regard to African development and the priority area chosen, and should be in line with the IPA assessment and selection criteria.
- Application forms and description of the innovation should be in English or French. While the innovations can be conducted in any language including local languages, the submissions should be translated into English or French.
- Applicants are required to attach a letter of support/endorsement from an institution or an authority with knowledge of their innovation. This will serve as a testimony of how important the innovation is in addressing development challenges faced by Africans.
- Each question on the application form must be answered or the application will be deemed incomplete and disqualified.
- There is no application fee.

3. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The winning innovations are determined based on the products' uniqueness and their potential contribution to socio-economic development in Africa through increased efficiency and cost savings.

The following are the five criteria to be considered:

- *Marketability:* Potential for commercialization and bankability
- *Originality:* Innovativeness, demonstrated creativity and originality of idea
- *Scalability:* Scale and scope and whether a reasonable strategy for moving ahead has been made
- *Social impact:* The socio-economic impacts of the proposed innovation, and how it addresses existing development challenges faced by a community/country or the continent as whole.
- *Utility/technical aspects:* The technological or scientific significance of the innovation in the particular field and beyond.

The 2014 IPA will consist of three Prizes, which will be given following the criteria outlined above:

- **First Prize (USD 100,000):** This prize will be awarded to the innovator with the overall best innovation that meets all the above mentioned IPA criteria with clear business potential.
- **Runner-up Prize (USD 25,000):** This prize will be given to the selected innovator with a commercially driven innovation. Beyond the aforementioned five criteria, this category of Award will be assessed on its marketability potentials and will be awarded to the innovation with the best commercial/business potential.
- **Special Prize for Social Impact Innovation (USD 25,000):** This category of award will be assessed on its particular social impact in the community/country and will be awarded to the innovation with the best social impact.

- **Finalists:** This is a group of IPA participants who will be invited to the face-to-face interview and to the award ceremony. All finalists will receive certificates, and the IPA secretariat will work with them to mobilize in kind support to facilitate next steps for their innovation.

4. GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The following are the terms and conditions governing the IPA:

- By accepting Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA), the winners will be requested to play an active role in promoting their awards and IPA in general. By accepting the Prize, the winners would also be accepting to dedicate some time to be an ambassador for IPA.
- AIF has the right to cancel the Prize at any time, if a selected applicant is found ineligible or does not fulfill the conditions laid down for the Prize. Any misrepresentation of any kind will lead to the removal from the competition.
- All applicants are required to declare who is the owner of the innovation and failure to disclose ownership may lead to disqualification. In case the innovation has been undertaken in collaboration with others, the names and contacts of the other collaborators need to be specified. Also, in this case, all collaborators need to specify in writing that they agree that the applicant will be the recipient of the prize in case their innovation is declared as the winner of either one of the three Prizes.
- The decision of the IPA selection panel shall be final.
- To avoid conflict of interest, IPA selection panel members, technical validation experts, members of the sponsoring institutions and their family members shall not be eligible to submit an entry.
- The IPA secretariat will ensure the strict protection of Intellectual Property rights, and everyone involved in the IPA selection process will be required to sign an IPA Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).
- The IPA secretariat might contact the applicants after the competition to propose various options including networking and business opportunities.

5. SELECTION PROCESS

IPA selection process follows specific guidelines associated with the IPA governance structure, which involves the following three groups with specific roles:

1. *Selection Panel:* this is a group of independent jury members responsible for the IPA shortlisting and selection of the nominees, winner and two runners-up.
2. *Validation Partner(s):* Technical experts from reputable institutions will evaluate and validate the innovativeness of the shortlisted innovations.

3. *Advisory Group*: This is a group of IPA champions and former selection panel members who support and advise the IPA team on matters related to IPA's operations as needed.

All received applications are subjected to a rigorous multi-tier assessment/evaluation process based on the IPA five weighted criteria.

Below is a summary of steps involved in the IPA selection process with the timeline:

1. **Prescreening (August - Nov 2013)**: Prescreening will be done as per the following three phases:

a) *First Phase*: The IPA secretariat assesses that the received applications meet the minimum requirements. This is done throughout the competition period.

b) *Second phase*: African PhD students from reputable institutions evaluate the applications to ensure that they qualify as innovation and assign a score to each entry based on IPA selection criteria.

c) *Third phase*: The IPA secretariat cross-check the scoring done in the second phase.

2. **Short Listing (Dec 2013)**: Short listing will be undertaken by the selection panel composed of jurors from private equity investors, seed funders, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, development leaders and academics.

3. **Backgrounds Check (Jan 2014)**: The IPA secretariat will carry out background checks on ownership and authenticity of the shortlisted innovations. If needed, site visits may also be carried out.

4. **Selection Panel meeting (Early Feb 2014)**: The IPA jurors meet to deliberate on the innovations to be forwarded to the technical validation experts.

5. **Technical Validation (Feb- March 2014)**: Technical experts from reputable institutions will carry out validation and will evaluate the innovativeness of the recommended applications.

6. **Phone Interviews (March 2014)**: The selection panel will conduct phone interviews to determine the IPA finalists who would be invited to the face to face interviews. The finalists will be announced early April.

7. **“Face to Face” Interviews (Early May and exact dates TBA)**: The selection panel will conduct face-to-face interviews of the finalists invited to the award ceremony. The winners would be chosen after the interviews and announced during the awards ceremony.

8. **Awards Ceremony (Early May and exact date TBA)**: IPA 2014 winners will be announced and awarded at a special ceremony. Venue and exact date will be announced by mid-March 2014 and will be posted on IPA website and other social media channels.

6. SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

- A duly completed form with a full description of the innovation must accompany each submission; otherwise the entry will be disqualified. Each question must be answered fully and making a reference to the attachments does not replace answering the question.

- Please note that there is no fee to apply.
- Options for submitting your application:

You can either:

1. Submit your application online by following these steps: (this is the option we highly recommend to use)

For Windows users:

- Download the **IPA Application installer**
- **Execute/run** the installer after download is completed.
- Choose the **language option** (French or English)
- Click on **Browse** to choose where to save it and click **OK**
- Click **Install** and the installation will start and will show “**Completed**” once done
- Click **Close** (once installation is completed)
- The application form will open and you can start filling it out
- From the application **Menu**, you will see **File** and once you click on it you have options to load, save, save as, submit and exit
- We suggest you **SAVE AS** and choose the location where to save your application.
- Click **Submit (see Menu-File)** once you finish completing your application
- Other: in case you can't finish completing your application, **Save** it and click **Close**. When you come back, go to **start Menu, open the IPA Application**, then a blank form will open. **Click on File** and then **Load. Select the right file you had saved (double-click on it)** and the content will load. **Complete** the application and **Click Submit** once done.

For Mac Users: *Please follow first the following steps to install the **IPA Application Installer** and then once installed, the process is the same as Windows users*

- open the DMG file by double-clicking
- drag-drop the contents to a directory
- double-click on the application in that chosen directory
- on running for the first time, there will be a prompt to choose language

For Linux Users: *Please follow first the following steps to install the **IPA Application Installer** and then once installed, the process is the same as Windows users*

- extract the contents of the tar.gz file to directory of choice
- run the IPA Application executable from the chosen directory
- on running for the first time, there will be a prompt to choose language

2. Download the application form in English or in French and send the completed form and all the required attachments by email at ipainfo@africaninnovation.org
3. Send your application by mail/post to the following mailing address:

African Innovation Foundation

Attn. Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA)

Strehlgasse 4
CH 8001 Zurich
Switzerland
Website: <http://www.innovationprizeforafrica.org/>

For any questions regarding the IPA application process, please check first the website and if you still have questions then contact the IPA Secretariat:

Ms. Pauline Mujawamariya, Program Director
Email: ipainfo@africaninnovation.org
Telephone: +41 44 515 54 66 or +41 44 515 54 60

Note: We highly recommend submitting your application online. However, we also accept applications by mail/post. Applicants sending their applications by mail/post are responsible for ensuring that their applications have been received by 31 October 2013 at 24:00 GMT.

7. CLOSING DATE

The closing date for the 2014 IPA competition is Thursday, 31st October 2013 at 24:00 GMT. **Applicants sending their applications by mail are responsible for ensuring that their applications have been received by October 31st 2013, 24:00 GMT. Any application received after the closing date will not be considered.**