



Economic Commission for
Africa (ECA)



Innovation Prize for Africa
(IPA)



African Innovation
Foundation (AIF)

Announcement

2013 Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA)

Deadline for Applications: ~~31 October 2012~~ **30 November 2012**

The [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa \(ECA\)](#) and the [African Innovation Foundation \(AIF\)](#) are delighted to announce the call for the 2013 [Innovation Prize for Africa \(IPA\)](#). As innovators/entrepreneurs are not highly profiled on development agenda, IPA acknowledges and encourages their endeavors. 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 aims are to:

- mobilize leaders from all sectors to fuel African innovation
- promote innovation across Africa in key sectors of interest through the competition
- promote science, technology and engineering as rewarding, exciting and noble career options among the youth in Africa by profiling successful applicants
- encourage entrepreneurs, innovators, funding bodies and business development service providers to exchange ideas and explore innovative business opportunities.

IPA anticipates contributing also 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 2013 PRIORITY AREAS

The 2013 IPA recognizes innovative breakthroughs that unlock new African potential in the following five priority areas¹:

- Agriculture/agribusiness

This priority recognizes innovations that have demonstrated a lead in the agricultural sector, particularly, value-added at specific points of the agricultural value-chain: production, distribution, marketing, branding, certification etc. This might include development and/or adoption of yield increasing technologies, promotion of high-value products (food staple crops, high-value crops, livestock, plant variety, fertilizers, breeds, pesticides); marketing practices (pre-production contracts, collective marketing), natural resource management techniques (conservation tillage, soil erosion controls, water harvesting), trial and introduction of new products or process production systems for non tradable and/or tradable food staples; diversification of the production systems etc. This might be applied to commercial and market oriented farmers as well as small-scale and, subsistence farmers etc.

- Environment, Energy and Water

This priority recognizes innovative applications that have demonstrated a lead in developing or applying cost-effective, smart renewable energy generation processes, cleaner water supply systems etc. Devices, particles, methods, filter systems that can bind, crack down, remove or mitigate pollutants and/or improve environmental pollution control would be highly appreciated. Other expected outcomes include: water desalination, gas emission control, reduced dependence on fossil fuels, eco-efficient processes that abate the impact of industrial processes and products, optimization of the use of resources while minimizing waste.

- Health and Wellbeing

This priority recognizes 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. This might include the development and use of traditional and modern medicines, improved sanitation, hygiene, treating or preventing TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Diabetes, Hepatitis, High blood-pressure, Diarrhea, Cholera, infirmity, depression or other physical and mental illnesses.

- Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)

This priority recognizes innovative ICTs applications that have demonstrated their potential in addressing key development challenges in African societies (e.g. in communities) or economy, including:

- **Software** (*application development, software design and development, enterprise application development, or platform development*) and may include new development, or any other activities that result in software products for addressing a key development challenge.
- **Mobile/Wireless Technologies** that demonstrate how underprivileged people can use devices for social and economic benefits with the possibility to spawn micro-enterprises and generate employment.

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.

- **Local Language Software** known as “*localisation*” requires definition and implementation of standards. These standards include character set encoding, keyboard (and keypad) layouts, collation/sorting sequence, locale and ICT terminology. In addition to definition of standards, applications also need to be developed for local language computing to support access and generation of local language content.

- Manufacturing and Service Industry

This priority calls for applications 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. Innovations that promote the adoption of cleaner, sustainable practices, changing from a resource-intensive to a knowledge-based approach, best ever turnaround times, smooth relationship with suppliers and customers, and which demonstrate greater potential for wider product range would be highly regarded.

2. CRITERIA FOR ENTRIES

Only innovations by Africans for Africa are eligible to enter. Africans in the Diaspora can also apply if their innovations are of significance for Africa.

Applicants are required to submit a full description of their innovation for the competition. In addition, a duly completed application form should accompany the entry. 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 French².

Applicants may 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.

3. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The 2013 IPA will consist of three Prizes, which will be given following the criteria outlined below:

A. The first Prize of USD100'000: This Prize will be awarded to the innovator with the overall best innovation that meets all the following five IPA criteria (listed in alphabetical order) with clear business potentials:

1. *Marketability:* Potential for commercialization and bankability
2. *Originality:* Innovativeness, demonstrated creativity and originality of idea

² Should you not be able to submit your application in English or French, please contact the IPA team at ipa@uneca.org or ipainfo@africaninnovation.org

3. *Scalability*: Scale and scope and whether a reasonable strategy for moving ahead has been made
4. *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.
5. *Utility/technical aspects*: The technological or scientific significance of the innovation in the particular field and beyond.

B. The runner-up Prize of USD25'000: This Prize will be given to the selected innovator with *Commercial 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 potentials.

C. The special Prize for Social Impact Innovation of USD25'000: 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.

D. Nominees: This is a group of the IPA finalists who will be invited to the final face-to-face interview and to the Award ceremony. All nominees will receive certificates, and the IPA team will work with them to mobilize in-kind support to facilitate next steps for their innovation.

4. GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

Conditions governing the Prizes

- a. By accepting IPA Awards, the winners will be requested to play an active role in promoting their awards and IPA in general.
- b. ECA and AIF have the right to cancel the awards 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.
- c. 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.
- d. The decision of the IPA *Selection Panel* shall be final.
- e. To avoid conflict of interest, IPA *Selection Panel* members, *Validation experts*, members of the sponsoring institutions and their family members shall not be eligible to submit an entry.

- f. The IPA team (AIF and UNECA) 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).

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 aforementioned five weighted criteria.

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

1. **Prescreening (August to November 2012)**: will be done as per the following two phases
 - a. **1st Phase** of prescreening will be undertaken by IPA team in order to assess that the received applications meet the minimum requirements.
 - b. **2nd phase** of prescreening will be supported by a reputable academic institution and supervised by the IPA team. This assessment will evaluate the applications against the aforementioned IPA criteria.
2. **Shortlisting (December 2012)**: will be undertaken by the selection panel composed of people from business, social change and academia background.
3. **Backgrounds check (Early January 2013)**: background checks on the ownership and authenticity of the shortlisted innovations will be carried out by the IPA team. If needed, site visits might be envisaged.
4. **Validation (Mid- January 2013 to Mid-February 2013)**: will be carried out by technical experts from reputable institutions and will evaluate the innovativeness of the shortlisted applications.
5. **Phone interviews (End February 2013)**: will be undertaken by the selection panel to determine the IPA nominees who would be invited to the face to face interviews.
6. **Face to face interviews (April 2013)**: the selection panel will conduct face-to-face interviews of the nominees who would be invited to the award ceremony. The winners would be chosen after the interviews and announced during the Award ceremony.
7. **Award Ceremony (April 2013)**: the 2013 IPA winners (first Prize, the runner-up, and the special Prize) will be announced and awarded at a special ceremony. Venue and exact date will be announced by the end of March 2013 and will be posted on IPA website.

Information about the IPA 2013 winners will be disseminated internationally and featured in several UN reports on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) from May 2013. Interviews with various media are also envisaged. Please check IPA websites for any updates: <http://www.innovationprizeforafrica.org/>

6. SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

- a. A fully 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.
- b. Please note that there is no fee to apply.
- c. Submission should be done online, however we also accept applications by mail. **Applicants sending their applications by mail are responsible for ensuring that their applications have been received by October 31st 2012, 24:00 GMT.**

Submit your application to:

Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA)
ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD)
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
5th Floor, ECA Building, P.O.Box 3001, Menelik II Avenue
Fax: +251-11-5510512
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Website: <http://innovationprizeforafrica.org/>

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

UNECA: Mrs Eskedar Nega, Program Officer
Email: ipa@uneca.org
Telephone: +251 11 544 53 15
AIF: Ms Pauline Mujawamariya, Program Manager
Email: ipainfo@africaninnovation.org
Telephone: +41 79 908 96 20

7. CLOSING DATE

The closing date for the 2013 Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) is ~~Wednesday, 31st October 2012~~ **Friday, 30th November 2012** at 24:00 GMT. **Any application received after the closing date will not be considered.**