

**Innovation Prize for Africa 2015**

Welcome to the Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) application portal. In order for you to commence with your application, we kindly request you to do the following:

1. Please read the call for proposals. This will enable you to understand our selection criteria and thus be able to submit an application that meets our requirements. Read and accept our terms and conditions available. You can access them both [here](http://innovationprizeforafrica.org/apply-now/).
2. Once you have duly complete this application form, please email it with the relevant attachments to [ipaapplications@africaninnovation.org](mailto:ipaapplications@africaninnovation.org).

**Creating the Profile:** Principal Applicant (*See explanatory note***[[1]](#endnote-1)***)*

Title:

First Name

Middle Name

Last Name

Job Title

Gender

Year of Birth

Address 1

Address 2

City

Country

Mobile Phone

Email

Country of Citizenship

Country of origin       (if different from country of citizenship) *see note***[[2]](#endnote-2)**

Highest level of education

How did you learn about the competition?

**Summary about the innovation**

Title of the innovation:

120 characters maximum

Which of the categories below best describes your innovation?

*See explanatory note***[[3]](#endnote-3)**.

Who is the target market for your innovation? *See explanatory note***[[4]](#endnote-4)**

500 characters maximum

What problem precisely does your innovation solve for the target market? *See explanatory note***[[5]](#endnote-5)**

500 characters maximum

In simple non-technical terms, please describe how your innovation works and how it solves the problem you have identified? *See explanatory note*.**[[6]](#endnote-6)**

1,000 characters maximum

Are you the originator of this idea? Select from dropdown

Are you the owner of the innovation? Select from dropdown

Yes, I am the sole registered owner of the innovation

Yes, I am a registered co-owner with others

Yes, I am the sole owner but I have NOT yet registered with a competent authority

No, I do NOT own it whether solely or jointly with others

If NOT, in what capacity are you submitting the innovation?

500 characters maximum

How long have you been working on the innovation? Select from dropdown

At what stage is your innovation? Select ONE option from below.

Just an idea I am currently exploring

Detailed idea backed by research

Developing a prototype

Prototype currently in use as a demonstration product/service

Product already in the market but just at the startup stage

Product already in the market and a part of venture seeking to expand

Explain briefly what exactly you are working on with regard to your current stage of your innovation described above? *See explanatory note***[[7]](#endnote-7)**

700 characters maximum

How best would you describe the **type** of organization through which you are managing your innovation? Select from dropdown. *See explanatory note***[[8]](#endnote-8)**

**Innovation Assessment against IPA Criteria**

**Criteria 1: Originality**

Under this criteria, we seek to understand the extent to which the innovation is different in an improved or better way from the same or similar solutions currently in the market tackling the same problem.

* How does your target market currently solve the problem that you now seek to address? *See explanatory note***[[9]](#endnote-9)**

500 characters maximum

* Name at least three dominant suppliers of similar or alternative solutions that are currently in the market (and where possible provide web links)? *See explanatory note***[[10]](#endnote-10)**

500 characters maximum

* Name and explain the specific characteristics that you think make your innovation better than existing market solutions such as those you have described above? *See explanatory note***[[11]](#endnote-11)**

1,500 characters maximum

* Why do you believe your innovation should be considered a breakthrough or transformative? *See explanatory note***[[12]](#endnote-12)**

2,000 characters maximum

**Criteria 2: Marketability**

By this criteria, we seeks to understand whether an innovation will appeal to its target users. This is usually achieved by ensuring that the innovation is able to solve the problem that the user has and is able to solve it at a price that is affordable to the user.

* What are the key characteristics of the type of user that forms your market? *See explanatory note***[[13]](#endnote-13)**

500 characters maximum

* What is your estimate of the size of this market? Number of users, people, companies etc.

70 characters maximum. Figures only

* How did you arrive at this estimate? *See explanatory note* **[[14]](#endnote-14)**

500 characters maximum

* Roughly, how do you think your target customers would describe their need for the solution you are offering? *Tick ONLY one below*.

It solves an important problem with very few alternative solutions

It solves an important problem with many but inferior alternative solutions

It solves an important problem but there are many other competitive solutions

It solves a problem but is not necessarily that important

* What is the unit selling price (**in US Dollars**) for your product or offering? *See explanatory note.***[[15]](#endnote-15)**

7 characters maximum. Figures only

* What is your unit cost of production (**in US Dollars**) for your innovation or offering? *See explanatory note*.**[[16]](#endnote-16)**

7 characters maximum. Figures only

* How does your unit pricing compare with those of similar or alternative products?

500 characters maximum

* Does your product require regulatory approval or industry certification before you can introduce it to the market?

* If yes, have you already met these conditions?
* If not, please describe the timeframe and the kind of regulations that you must satisfy and your current status towards meeting these requirements?

2,000 characters maximum

* Does your innovation pertain to health and well-being?

**Please answer the questions below only if you answered YES above.**

* Is your innovation currently in the market and available for use or purchase by target users?
* Does your innovation still require some form of regulatory or industry certification or approval before it is allowed to enter your target market(s)?
* If yes, please state the type of each pending formality and explain what is required of you going forward? *See explanatory note***[[17]](#endnote-17)**

2,000 characters maximum

* How long will each of the formalities take to complete?

500 characters maximum

* How much money do you estimate you may need to complete these formalities?

10 characters maximum. Figures only in US$

**Criteria 3: Scalability**

Under this criteria, we seek to understand: firstly, whether this innovation can be easily replicated or expanded elsewhere beyond the Applicant’s home market. Secondly, we seek to understand whether this can be done without requiring huge investment for each unit or level of expansion.

* Besides your native country or immediate local community, list other countries in Africa that you feel are affected by the problem your innovation seeks to solve?

500 characters maximum

* Can you list some of the ways in which the problem is being solved in some of the countries you have mentioned?

1,000 characters maximum

* To what extent do you think the solution that you have prescribed can be applicable to these countries? *Select ONLY one from below*

It can be applied to these countries in the same way it works for my country

It can be applied to these countries with minimal modifications to my current solution

It can be applied to these countries only after substantial modifications to my current solution

It cannot be applied to other countries. The solution is unique to my country

* If you were to market and distribute your innovation beyond your native country, how would you do it?

2,000 characters maximum

* If you were to scale access to your innovation beyond your home country, what kind of challenges do you anticipate in the scaling up effort and how would you address these?

2,000 characters maximum

**Criteria 4: Social Impact**

Under this criteria, we seek to understand to what extent the implementation of this innovation will contribute to address a problem or concern that is of wide public interest and not necessarily related to the motive of making a profit.

* Does the use of your innovation ALSO address a problem that is a clear social concern of wide public interest for your target market? *See explanatory note***[[18]](#endnote-18)**

**Please answer the questions below only if you answered YES above.**

* What is the nature of the social problem and how does your target market currently address this problem?

1,500 characters maximum

* Describe the kind of positive social impact you expect your innovation to have? 1,500 characters maximum

* How many people do you expect to be directly positively impacted by your innovation?

20 characters maximum. Figures only

* How would you assess whether the positive impact would be a direct result of your innovation and NOT other external factors? *See explanatory note***[[19]](#endnote-19)**

1,500 characters maximum

* How can the noted positive impact be sustained over a long period of time?

1,500 characters maximum

**Criteria 5: Scientific/Technical aspects:**

Under this criteria, we seek to understand: firstly, the technical description of the innovation to determine whether it would indeed work and deliver the solution that the Applicant claims it will deliver. This will enable industry experts to assess the validity of the claims made in the application.

How best would you describe your innovation? *See explanatory note***[[20]](#endnote-20)**

*Tick ONLY one below*

**Tangible**: It involves the application of a physical product and/or a software program to achieve its effect;

**Intangible**: It involves the application of a service, process, or business method to achieve its effect;

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**Please answer the questions below only if you selected TANGIBLE above.**

Please provide the technical description of your innovation? *See explanatory note*.**[[21]](#endnote-21)**

2,000 characters maximum

How are the KEY technical specifications of your innovation different from those of your main competing products in the market addressing the same challenge?

1,500 characters maximum

**Other supporting documents and details:**

* Are you currently employed?
* If yes, did you produce this innovation in the course of your employment, or are you supported by your employer in the development of your innovation?
* Please provide details of your employer’s involvement and most importantly whether they would have a claim on the prize if the innovation won. Attach their endorsement letter(s) in the links provided below. Their relative role and/or contribution should be indicated in the letter (s).
  + Name of organization/person
  + Contact person and title
  + Contact details – email and phone
  + Nature of collaboration
* Outside of your team, have you collaborated with any organizations or individuals in the development of your product? *See explanatory note***[[22]](#endnote-22)**
* If yes, then in separate attachments, please provide their details and attach their endorsement letters. Their relative role and/or contribution should be indicated in the letter (s). The documents should include:
  + Name of organization/person
  + Contact person and title
  + Contact details – email and phone
  + Nature of collaboration

*Please provide up to a MAXIMUM of 3 Collaborators’ details*

* Do you currently have Users for your innovation who can testify on how your innovation works?
* If yes, then in separate attachments, please provide their details of and attach their endorsement letters. Their relative role and/or contribution should be indicated in the letter (s). The documents should include:
  + Name of organization/person
  + Contact person and title
  + Contact details – email and phone
  + Nature of their involvement with your innovation

*Please provide up to a MAXIMUM of 3 Users’ details*

* Please provide names of three experts who are experienced in this field and can vouch for your innovation?
  + Name of organization/person
  + Contact person and title
  + Contact details – email and phone
  + Nature of their expertise and involvement with your innovation

*Please provide up to a MAXIMUM of 3 Experts’ details*

* Please provide the full names and titles of the persons who shall receive the Award for this innovation (ONLY if different from the applicant). If this is a team project, please indicate people who will be representing the team on the stage and their titles.

1,500 characters maximum

**Uploads**

* Please upload the following attachments (if they are available):
  + Document(s) explaining or showing the difference between your product and the competing products
  + Photos of competing products
  + Any document providing a further technical description of your innovation
  + Any peer reviewed research papers supporting the basis of your innovation
  + Any documents with test results from experiments you may have done
  + Any research documents that provide details of the social problem your innovation may be addressing
  + Any document(s) detailing any social impact assessment of your innovation
  + Photos of evidence of your social impact
  + Links to video(s) or website(s) with testimony of your social impact
  + Endorsement letter(s) from your Employer (if applicable)
  + Endorsement letter(s) from your Collaborator(s) (if applicable)
  + Endorsement letter(s) from selected Users (if applicable)
  + Endorsement letter(s) from selected Experts (**Mandatory**)
  + Business Plan (if available)
  + Business Model Canvas (if available)
  + Links to videos or website(s) with the above specified information *See explanatory note***[[23]](#endnote-23)**

**Explanatory Notes**

1. Information Tip: This is the main person behind the innovation. If you are the one preparing the application and you are NOT the principal person behind the innovation, ensure that the details that you enter under the Principal Applicant are of the main person behind the innovation. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Information Tip: Country of citizenship refers to the nationality listed in the passport of the applicant. If you have more than one passport from different countries, then select the citizenship of an African country. Country of origin refers to people who may be of African origin but hold the passport or citizenship on a non-African country.

   This competition is open firstly, to persons who are citizens of an African country, meaning they have the passport of an African country, even if they have more than one passport or are of non-African origin. Secondly, it is also open to people of African origin of the first or second generation even if they hold the passport of a non-African country. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Information Tip: If you are not sure in which category your innovation falls, please contact the IPA Secretariat for guidance. Send an email to: ipaapplications@africaninnovation.org [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Information Tip: Target market generally refers to those people that are MOST likely to benefit from using your innovation and would be willing to pay to enjoy that benefit. Your target market can be defined by age, income level, geographical location, lifestyle choices etc. For purposes of assessment, clearly defining your target market enables the jury understand for whom the innovation is important and whether they would be able to access it and enjoy the benefits. The more detailed your target market definition the better. Sample Response: My target market comprises low-income nomadic pastoralists living in rural and inaccessible areas or Northern Nigeria and have difficulties accessing a market for their livestock. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Information Tip: Think clearly about the specific problem you seek to solve. If you are solving more than one problem, try to focus on the MAIN problem and the others can be explained separately in an attached document. Essentially, you have to provide two pieces of information in defining the problem. Firstly, you need to state what is the NEED you seek to address for the target market. Secondly, you need to explain WHY it is important to address this need. Sample Response: Most urban households living in these informal settlements do not have access to proper waste and sanitation systems. This leads to poor disposal of human waste which is the greatest contributor to communicable diseases in the area. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Information Tip: It is important to remember that some of the people reviewing your application may not be experts in your particular field. You therefore need to guide them to understand your innovation without being overly technical. Avoid using jargon and technical terms and as much as possible refer to examples people are familiar with; this will help them better appreciate your innovation. For further explanation, you can attach and upload in links below documents providing a more detailed description of your innovation. Sample response: For instance how would you explain a how a mobile phone works? The mobile phone is a combination of a telephone and radio. Like a telephone, you can listen and talk to someone on the other end, and like a radio, you can do it wirelessly over the air. The signals that come into and go out of a mobile phone are like the ones the TV and radio signals are received on; they just have a different structure. When making a call, signals are sent back and forth between the phone and a base station. The base station is a device that is usually set up by the mobile network operator that receives and transmits these signals and is usually high up on a tower. Once the signals arrive at the base station, they are converted into regular telephone signals and sent over the public telephone network to whomever you are calling. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Information Tip: It is important for us to know just how advanced you are with regard to the stage you are currently in. This enables the judges to better understand what your next possible steps would be. E.g if you are developing a prototype you can indicate how close you are to completing the prototype or maybe you are in a second version of the prototype. Sample Response: If you selected “*Detailed idea backed by research*” you could say: “I have been researching the idea for the last 7 months. To date I have spoken with three companies who have expressed an interest in my innovation. From my discussions with the companies, I have collected data showing, how they would use my product, when they would use it and the price they are willing to pay. I have compiled this data into a report which is attached.” [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Information Tip: Please note that this is NOT whether your innovation is intended to lead to generation of revenues or not. There are many “not-for-profit” ventures that still generate a lot of revenues. However, whether your venture is “for-profit” or “not-for-profit” will greatly determine many aspects of your business model e.g customer type, pricing, distribution, marketing, partnerships etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Information Tip: If the issue you seek to address is truly a problem for your target market, then there MUST be an existing solution. It does not have to be a perfect solution, it does not have to be a solution that is similar to yours; but you need to show how this problem is currently addressed. In most cases, if you CANNOT show how your target market deals with the problem, it is most probably because they do NOT think there is a problem to be addressed which may affect the adoption and sales of your innovation. Sample Response: Most rural farmers have poor access to market information. They have no way for determining the price or demand of their product beforehand. The most commonly used method is for the farmer to travel physically to the market itself and only once there can they collect this crucial market information. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Information Tip: When thinking of other suppliers, do not think ONLY of suppliers providing the SAME product or service as yours, but also of those providing alternatives. For instance, a lot people take bread for breakfast with tea. But there are many others who take boiled maize on the cob, cassava or sweet potatoes with their tea. These are alternatives. So think of the different ways in which people currently solve the problem you seek to address and then find out who are the main suppliers of either similar or alternative products to yours. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Information Tip: Firstly you need to identify common things that you can use for purposes of comparison with competing products. Mostly people do comparisons on the basis of: price per unit, how easy it is to use, the quality of the product/service, better design, improved efficiency etc. So identify that aspect you want to use for comparison and then explain why yours is better. Sample Response: Our multi-food processor is several more times more efficient in processing root tubers than traditional method of pounding using mortar and pestle. With our processor, a farmer can process 50kgs of root tuber in 5 minutes while the traditional method takes up to 5 days to process the same quantity. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Information Tip: This is where the greatest part of assessment of your originality will take place. After explaining why you think your product is better when compared with other similar products or services, you then need to explain why you think that superior aspect you identified is something totally new in the industry. If you need to provide more information, please attach documents in the link provided. Sample Response: With demand for fresh water growing by the day, scientists are turning to sea and ocean water to extract fresh water by a process of desalination. This has however not been widely exploited due to its high energy cost but also because the salt-concentrate that is returned back to see after the desalination process and can ruin marine life. For the first time, our technology offers a solution that is able to viably manage the salt-concentrate NOT as waste but as source to mine precious metals such as lithium and magnesium which are on high demand. This is a major breakthrough and the economic benefit may offset the overall cost of desalination, making it more viable on a large scale, in turn reducing the human pressures on freshwater ecosystems. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Information Tip: This is also known as the “Customer Archetype”. In order to successfully market and sell or spread the use of your innovation, you need to have a very deep and detailed understanding of the characteristics that would describe the typical user that you are targeting. You would need to know among other things, their age, sex, income status, their monthly budget for items such as your innovation, how frequently would they consume it, from where would they access or buy it, what would influence them to use or buy, what does a typical day in the life of your customer look like etc. From the jury’s perspective, we also get to understand how well your innovation is suited to address the needs of the user and hence its marketability. Sample Response: A typical user for my fashion app is: a single, female between 18 – 25, mostly in college, in the middle to upper middle class. Main source of income is pocket money from her parents, spends about USD 20 per month on fashion magazines. Most of her information is from Facebook and reality TV shows. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Information Tip: This is usually the next step after understanding your customer archetype. Understanding the size of your market is important in determining whether you are addressing a small or global problem. It is also one of the determinants on whether your solution will be offered as a successful business or it will be just a hobby. In Africa, getting information about the size of your market is not usually easy. However, by combining easily available information from different but credible sources, we can arrive at an educated guess on the size of the market. It need not be perfectly accurate. You can use National Census Reports, or reports from Annual Audited accounts of publicly listed companies. Sample Response: The estimates are drawn from the last Annual Audited Accounts XX Fashion Magazine which is listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange. The company had annual sales of USD 200 million last year with a market share of 20%. The estimated market size is therefore around USD 1 billion [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Information Tip: We need to understand the price the eventual user of your product will pay to enjoy the benefit you are offering. When assessed together with the customer archetype, it will be in determining whether your innovation is accessible to your target customer. If you are selling more than one product, focus on the main product discussed in this application. If you have several products that combine to make one offering – then state the amount for the combined offering when viewed as a unit. If the buyer is NOT necessarily the user – e.g an NGO purchasing for a women’s group, state the price per unit that will be paid for by the NGO [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Information Tip: Please only state the total cost of producing the product to be in such state that it can be sold to the eventual user. Do not include costs such as marketing or delivery to customer etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Information Tip: For innovations in the life and health sciences, there is substantial governmental regulation that needs to be satisfied before the innovation can be introduced into the market; e.g clinical trials and marketing approvals. Name the specific regulatory requirement and what you are the specific steps that must be undertaken in order to meet this requirement. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Information Tip: There are usually several layers to any single problem. For instance, by providing a new way to pipe water to a village from the river, an entrepreneur is addressing a clear business problem. This is that, there are people who want water and are willing to pay for it if it is conveniently delivered to them rather than having to go and fetch it. This is the first instance of the business side of problem that offers the business case for investment. However, by providing piped water to the village, the entrepreneur may also be saving women from making the trip to the river which exposes them to insecurity as they have to walk through a forest. It also saves time for the girls which can be used for studying. Under this question, we would like you to clearly identify that social concern that your innovation may be addressing which is of wide public interest. If your innovation was SPECIFICALLY designed to address a social problem you can simply elaborate further on this question. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Information Tip: Social impact could occur as a result of many factors – some may be linked to your innovation and others may be due to external factors. When indicating that your innovation has DIRECT social impact, you are essentially suggesting that the positive change that has been observed WOULD NOT occur or would occur on a much lesser scale or degree if your innovation was available. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Information Tip: **Please note that we have no preference and treat all innovations equally important whether tangible or intangible**. For purposes of the competition, tangible innovations are those innovations whose working or EFFECT of their work is reflected in physical medium that can be perceived by our five senses. These include: medical devices, agricultural tools and implements, pharmaceutical products, new plant varieties and even mobile phone applications and web based programs etc. As for intangibles, they essentially relate to changes in human behaviour that lead to certain desirable goals or outputs. They could either be new types of outputs or improved outputs. The changes in behaviour could be in both business and social contexts. Some of the intangible innovations may include: new marketing or delivery methods, improved working methods, training and empowerment programs, a new model for executing a business, community mobilization etc. Where an innovation involves the application of both tangible and intangible methods focus on one. Preferably select the part that plays the most important or significant role in achieving the goal that you want to achieve. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Information Tip: Here you are required to provide information that would allow a technical expert in this field to understand how your innovation has been constructed and how it actually works. The specifications provided may differ from field to field such as from: pharmaceutical products to software programs, from mechanical tools to biomedical processes. Your description should therefore adopt some of the specifications used in your particular industry. Some of the information required (where applicable) may include: what version of the product it is; weight and dimensions; type of materials used for key parts - physical, mechanical, electrical, chemical, software etc; how the different parts interact with each other to produce the desired effect; the range of environmental conditions for optimal performance; tolerance on the performance; life of the product; the type of maintenance required and frequency; skills required in operation; safety issues; certification required and certifying agency. Where the full information cannot fit within the provided space – please attach/upload any further documents in the upload link provided below. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Information Tip: The development of a product may entail the inclusion of persons or organizations that are outside of the team that initiated the idea. For instance, the creator of a software for collecting and organizing music may collaborate with an external manufacturer of electronic hardware devices in order to implement the music software into a physical device. In this case, the hardware manufacturer would need to provide an endorsement letter indicating their role in development of the final product and more importantly whether or not they would have a claim to the prize if the innovation won. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Information Tip: Please note due to space limitations, all video files should be uploaded on a video hosting website and only links added to the “link fields” provided below. You can use hosting sites such as YouTube or Vimeo. If you are concerned about the privacy of your video, please note that it is possible to upload such files in a private channel that is accessible only to people you gave access to the link. You can also password protect it. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)