

Africa Innovation Prize 2018 call to entry

ACCRA, Ghana - The African Innovation Foundation (AIF) has launched its call for applications for the Innovation Prize for Africa 2018 Awards. The theme this year is *Investing In Inclusive Innovation Ecosystems*.



[AIF](#) issued a pan-African open call inviting submissions for the seventh edition of the Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) awards from 10 October 2017 to 10 January 2018. African women innovators are especially encouraged to participate, following a record number of entries in the previous edition.

There is a grand prize of US\$ 185 000, which will be shared among the top 10 African innovators who demonstrate scalable, impactful, market-oriented, and outstanding innovations solving African challenges.

The selection process will be led by an expert panel based on their knowledge and experience within five [IPA](#) key sectors, as well as their influence and contributions to the tech and business industry on the African continent

The annual award seeks to celebrate outstanding breakthroughs that deliver practical, and commercially viable African solutions that are innovative and sustainable: rewarding the best home-grown innovations on the continent.

Affirming AIF's purpose to catalyse the innovation spirit in Africa, Pauline Mujawamariya Koelbl, IPA director commented, "With each edition, IPA has gone from strength to strength, attracting innovators across disciplines and with outstanding solutions to African challenges. For this seventh edition, we also look forward to expanding our ever-growing network of innovators, enablers and partners in order to join hands and build stronger, more sustainable innovation ecosystems that will propel the continent forward."

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IPA specifically honours and encourages pioneering achievements that contribute towards developing new products; increasing efficiency; and/or saving cost in Africa. Applications will be accepted from all Africans, including those living abroad in the diaspora. And this edition encourages greater participation from women innovators, who are increasingly playing a key role in driving African economies forward through business and entrepreneurship.

Criteria

The submissions will be judged on the backdrop of IPA's themes supporting social and economic innovation in the following five categories:

1. Manufacturing and service industry.
2. Health and well-being.
3. Agriculture and agri-business.
4. Environment, energy and water.
5. ICT, showcasing ground-breaking innovations.

IPA 2018 winners will be announced at an annual ceremony in July 2018 (exact dates and country to be confirmed). The Award is the leading innovation event on the African calendar, bringing together some of Africa's most inspiring innovators and entrepreneurs, leaders of hubs and accelerators, angel and venture capital investors, development institutions, government leaders, media practitioners and other game changers.

This year's theme, *Investing in Inclusive Innovation Ecosystems*, calls for African governments and innovation stakeholders to invest in building bridges for more inclusive ecosystems that will accelerate and scale African innovation at all levels of society.

The aim is to increase access to innovative financing and know-how and to enhance collaboration between African nations to enable local innovators to access higher value markets for their solutions at a faster rate.

“IPA is a platform to showcase the inherent ingenuity that exists in Africa,” added Walter Fust, chairman of the AIF Board. “Each year, several hundred participants submit their entries with new solutions to overcome African-specific challenges.

This year we want to drive greater pan-African synergies across our network of enablers and partners to create inclusive opportunities for local innovators and together, disrupt business models, empower people and drive positive social impact across the continent.”

Last year saw over 2,500 applications from across the continent, with the highest number of women applicants (482, representing 19%). To date, IPA has attracted more than 7,500 innovators, spanning 52 countries, featuring 55 of the continent’s top innovators and more than 400 ‘innovation enablers’, making it a truly a pan-African initiative.

Previously AIF has supported past winners and nominees with over US\$ 1 million to move their innovations forward. Due to the exposure received via IPA, past winners have gone on to secure over US\$ 30 million in investments to grow and scale their businesses.

In addition to the lucrative share prize of US\$ 185 000 cash, selected innovators are offered many opportunities, including access to the AIF networks via its platform, ZuaHub, where AIF connects innovators with resources and help them grow.

Organisations can also register their interest in supporting African innovation by contacting AIF for more details on the IPA sponsorship opportunities available.

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