



Royal Academy
of Engineering

Africa Prize for
Engineering Innovation



Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation 2026 – Stage 1

Application Guidance Notes

Deadline: Tuesday 23 September 2025, 4pm (UTC+1)

All questions to be sent to Africa.Prize@raeng.org.uk

Contents

Click on the sections below to access the relevant pages

About the Royal Academy of Engineering	3
Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation.....	4
Programme overview and key dates	5
Meet last year’s winner	6
Application timeline.....	7
Eligibility Criteria	7
Assessment of Applications.....	11
How to apply	13
Diversity and Inclusion	15
Stage 1 Application questions	16
Stage 2 Application questions.....	24
Frequently Asked Questions.....	28
Academy policies	33
Terms and Conditions.....	36



The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. This Application Guidance Notes covers the Stage 1 application. Applicants must submit their Stage 1 application by **Tuesday 23 September 2025 to be considered for the second stage.**

Upon passing the technical review, a long-list of applicants will be invited to complete the Stage 2 application on or before 28 October 2025. Stage 2 will focus on elements of the applicant’s business and the applicant will until 18 November 2025 (three weeks) to complete the form.

The Royal Academy of Engineering

The [Royal Academy of Engineering](#) creates and leads a community of outstanding experts and innovators to engineer better lives. As a charity and a Fellowship, we deliver public benefit from excellence in engineering and technology and convene leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics across engineering and technology. As a National Academy, we provide leadership for engineering and technology, and independent, expert advice to policymakers in the UK and beyond.

The world is changing rapidly, with economies, supply chains and security critically dependent on engineering capability. Engineers are uniquely placed to respond to that change and innovate solutions to the challenges it presents.

We have three goals:

- **Sustainable and Innovative Economy**, where sustainability drivers, innovative industries and resilient infrastructures are aligned to drive growth and productivity that will support better lives for all.
- **Technology Improving Lives**, where technology in all its forms is used to meet the most important human needs, avoid harm, support fairer societies and break down barriers to opportunity.
- **Engineering Community Fit for the Future**, where our community reflects society in its diversity, commits to creating inclusive cultures to help drive engineering excellence, and has the skills to meet future needs safely, securely and ethically, and to keep pace with innovation



Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation

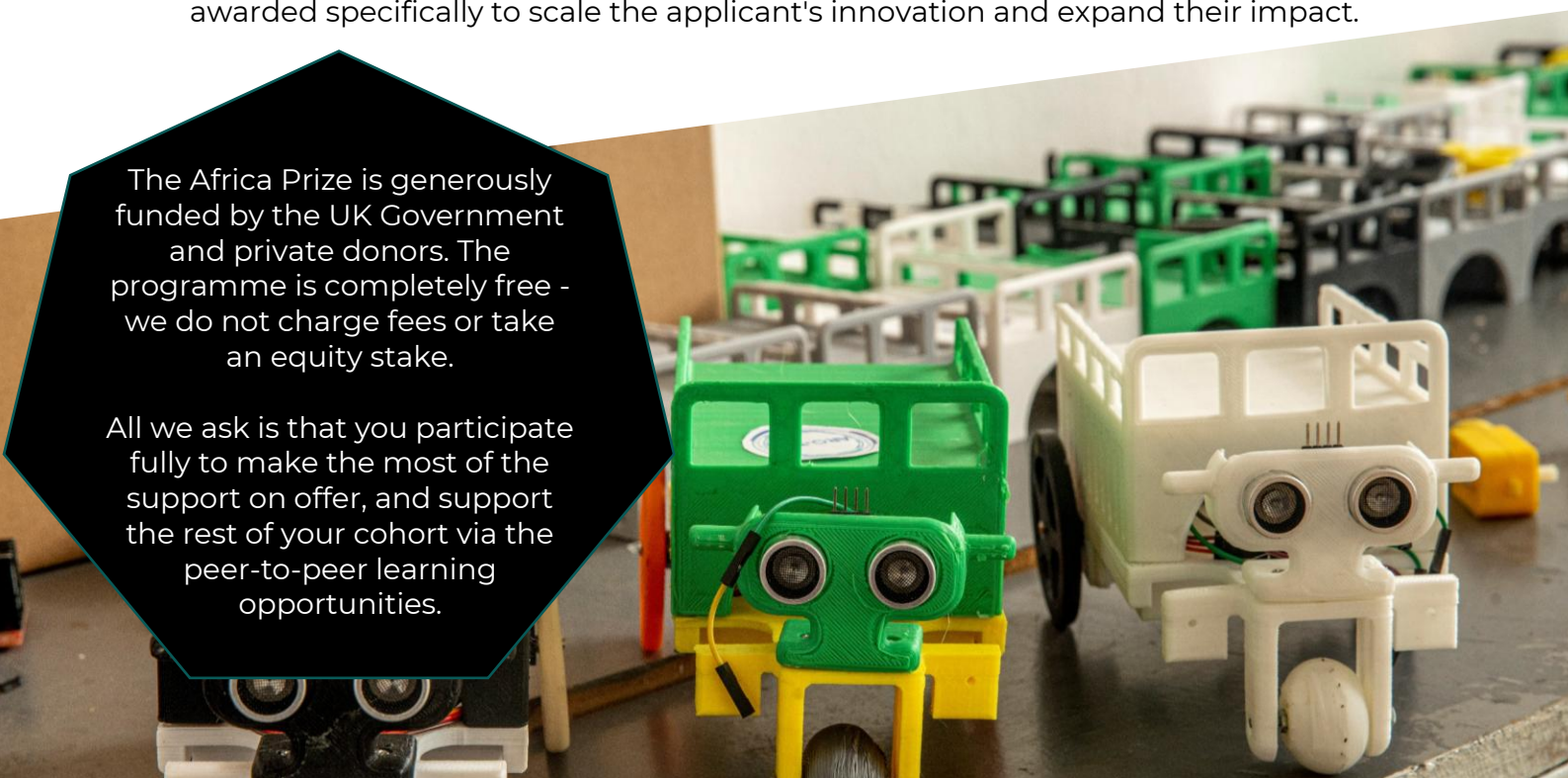
Launched in 2014, the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation awards crucial commercialisation support to ambitious African innovators developing scalable engineering solutions to local challenges, demonstrating the importance of engineering as an enabler of improved quality of life and economic development.

The programme has supported over [165 businesses](#) from 22 countries through the programme. You can read their profiles [here](#), or explore their innovations by country, sector and SDG through our [interactive map](#).

Each year, we support up to 16 shortlisted African innovators with a unique package of support over eight months to help them accelerate their businesses, including:

- **Eight-month tailored training programme**
- **Two fully-funded training weeks**, one in the UK and one in a major African city.
- **1:1 sector-specific engineering mentoring** from the Academy's network of high-profile engineers in the UK and Africa.
- **Bespoke press coverage** and communications support.
- The opportunity to **present your innovation** at the Africa Prize showcase event in a major African city.
- **Prize pot of £85,000 available**, with prizes ranging from £5,000 to £50,000.

The Africa Prize is designed to support businesses and drive their growth. While one person will represent the programme publicly, our communications will showcase the entire company and team behind the innovation. Prize money is awarded specifically to scale the applicant's innovation and expand their impact.



The Africa Prize is generously funded by the UK Government and private donors. The programme is completely free - we do not charge fees or take an equity stake.

All we ask is that you participate fully to make the most of the support on offer, and support the rest of your cohort via the peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Programme overview and key dates

A shortlist of 16 applicants will be selected to receive an eight-month package of mentoring and training. The programme will be structured to give entrepreneurs the skills and knowledge to move towards commercialisation or scale up by:

- Strengthening and developing their existing business plans
- Successfully communicating their innovations through pitching
- Further develop their innovation



Eight months of training

The training period will run from **February to November 2026**. The training will take various formats and will require a significant time commitment over the eight months. All reasonable costs are covered to attend and participate in these activities. This includes:

- Remote group and one-on-one training and mentoring, taking place on a regular basis online
- Two residential training weeks, one in the UK in **March 2026** and one in an African city (location TBC) in **October 2026**.



Finalist application

In **the summer of 2026**, the shortlist will be asked to submit a full business plan and updates on their businesses. The judging panel will review these and identify four finalists in **September 2026**.



Africa Prize Final

All shortlisted applicants will display their innovations at an exhibition at the final event in **October 2026**. The four finalists will pitch in front of an audience and the Africa Prize judges. The prizes will be awarded following an assessment by the judging panel.

- One winner will receive £50,000
- Three runners-up will receive £10,000 each.
- One shortlist (non-finalist) member via audience vote will receive £5,000

Alumni programme

Following successful completion of the programme, the shortlist will join the Africa Prize Alumni Community, where they have access to further training, grant and networking opportunities. They will also join the Academy's [Awardee Excellence Community](#), where they will gain access to exclusive events and have opportunities to get involved in the work of the Academy.

Meet last year's winner



[Esther Kimani](#), the winner of the 2024 Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, is also the CEO of Farmer Lifeline Technologies. She developed the Early Crop Pest and Disease Detection Device to help smallholder farmers in Africa detect and identify pests and diseases quickly using a solar-powered tool equipped with artificial intelligence and machine learning. Her innovation significantly reduces crop losses and increases yields, empowering farmers to improve their livelihoods. Esther's journey to agri-technology was driven by her personal experiences and the desire to make a difference in her community. Winning the Africa Prize has helped her scale her innovation and expand its reach to benefit more farmers across the continent.

“The Africa Prize offered expert support, individualised mentorship, and tailored business advice—resources that are otherwise very expensive for a startup. It was an opportunity we couldn't let go.” – Esther Kimani

Application timeline



The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. Applicants must submit their Stage 1 application by Tuesday 23 September 2025 to be considered for the second stage.

Upon passing the technical review, a long-list of applicants will be invited to complete the Stage 2 application on or before 28 October 2025. Stage 2 will focus on elements of the applicant's business and the applicant will have until 18 November 2025 (three weeks) to complete the form.

1 Stage 1 – Technical Assessment: Covers eligibility criteria and technical innovation details, allowing technical reviewers to assess feasibility, innovation potential, and engineering merit.

1. Stage 1 applications close on **Tuesday 23 September at 16:00 UTC+1**
2. Applications checked for eligibility following submission deadline
3. Reviewed by technical experts in **October 2025**

2 Stage 2 – Business Assessment: Covers business elements such as financial projections, market analysis, and strategy.

1. Long-listed applicants will be invited to complete Stage 2 at the end of **October 2025**
2. Shortlist selected by judging panel by **January 2026**
3. All applicants notified of outcome by the **end of January 2026**



The deadline for the first stage applications is on Tuesday 23 September 2025 at 16:00 UTC+1

Eligibility Criteria

The Africa Prize is looking for ambitious entrepreneurs from sub-Saharan Africa who have developed an engineering-based solution to address local sustainable development challenges. Applications from both engineers and non-engineers are welcome. Innovations must be in the early stages of commercialisation and have strong potential to be replicated or scaled up.

If you're unsure if you meet our eligibility criteria, please contact the Africa Prize team for advice at AfricaPrize@raeng.org.uk.

Applicant requirements

- Applicants can apply as an individual or on behalf of a team.
- The applicant must be a citizen of a country in sub-Saharan Africa*. For teams of two or more, the lead applicant (the person participating in training) must be a citizen of a country in sub-Saharan Africa*.
- The applicant must be ordinarily based in sub-Saharan Africa*; if based overseas, this must be temporary for studies or otherwise.
- The applicant must be over the age of 18 when applications close on 23 September 2025. There is no upper age limit.
- The applicant must have a high level of English proficiency, which will allow them to fully participate in the entire programme. The application must be written in English.
- The applicant cannot be an alumni of the Africa Prize or part of the same team, business or innovation that has been through the Prize.
- Industrial researchers and establishments are not eligible.
- **Alumni of the Academy's Advance programme or alumni of the Leaders in Innovation Fellowship (LIF) programme who participated after June 2024 are not eligible to apply to the Africa Prize. LIF alumni** who participated in the LIF programme before June 2024 may be eligible if they can evidence through their application why participation in the Africa Prize is necessary and/or will add value to them and their business.

Innovation requirements

- The innovation must be based in a country in sub-Saharan Africa*
- The innovation can be any innovative product, technology or service, based on any area of engineering defined in its broadest sense to encompass a wide range of fields. The lead applicant is not required to be an engineering graduate or student to apply.
 - This includes but is not limited to: agri-tech, biotechnology, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, design engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, ICT, materials science, mechanical engineering, and medical engineering. If you are in any doubt that the area your innovation operates in would be considered as engineering, then please contact the Academy to discuss your application.
- The innovation must be beyond the ideation stage and in the early stages of commercialisation. The innovation must:
 - Bring social and/or environmental benefits to sub-Saharan Africa*
 - Have a strong potential to be replicated and scaled up.
 - Be accompanied by an ambitious but realistic business plan that has strong commercial viability.



What does “early stage of commercialisation” mean?

If the business is mainly based on hardware, then applicants should:

- Have built one or more working prototypes that prove the technical concept and performance
- Have evolved the design ready for initial commercial production
- Have realistic cost and schedule estimates for manufacture
- Have clear evidence that an early version of their innovation is generating traction with a sufficient number of prospective customers to underpin for initial revenues and profitability

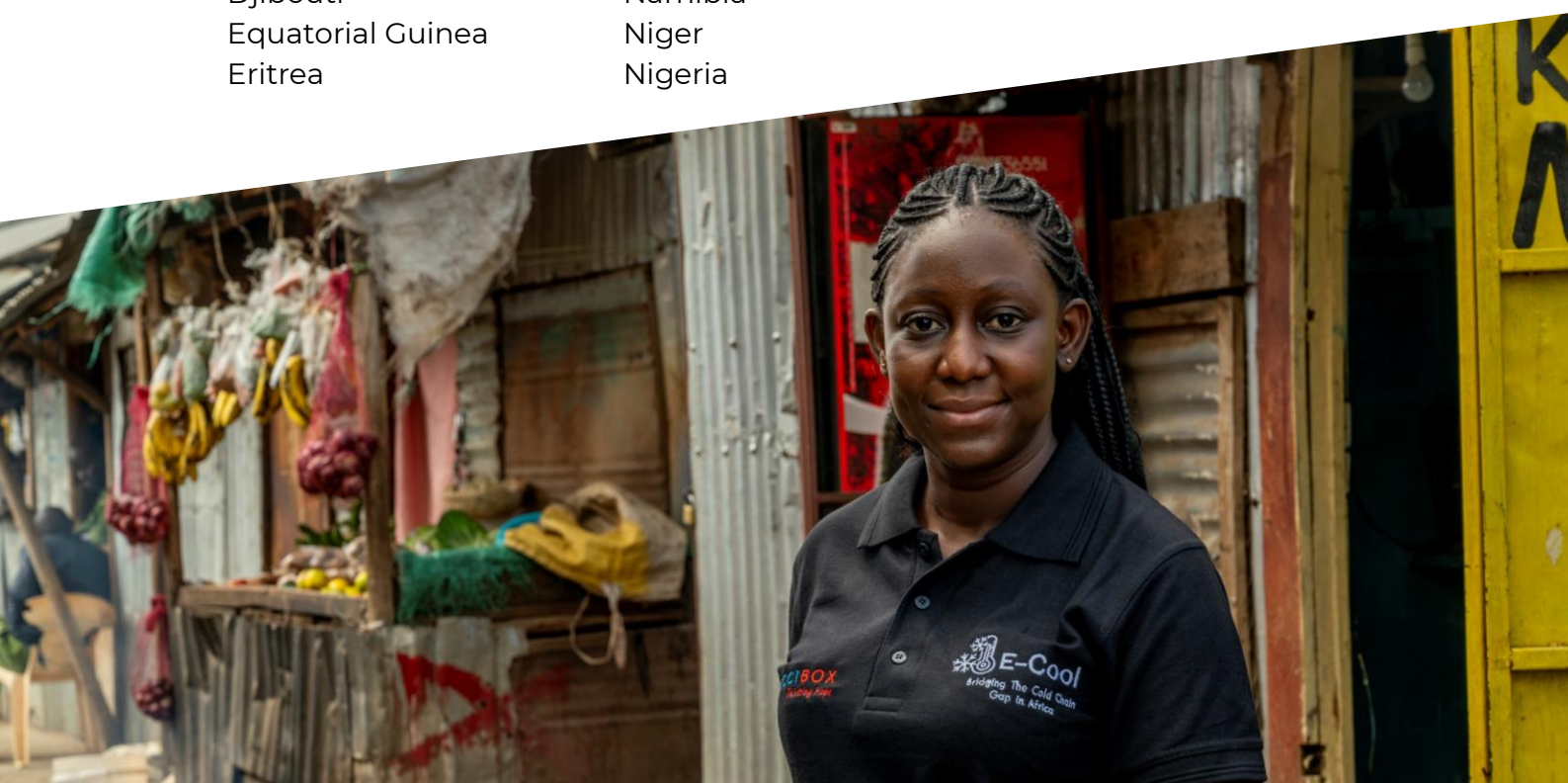
If the business is primarily software/app based, then applicants should:

- Have developed a minimum viable product with demonstrable functionality
- Have clear evidence that the minimum viable product is generating traction with a sufficient number of prospective customers to underpin forecasts for initial revenues and profitability

- The innovation does not have to be new. It can be an adaptation of existing technology or the first application of existing technology in a new market
- The lead applicant must provide a letter of consent from the originators/collaborators of the IP to this innovation, where relevant.
- The lead applicant must provide a technical diagram and photo that showcases the technical aspects of the innovation as part of their application.

* For the purposes of the programme, the definition of sub-Saharan Africa includes all countries defined by the African Union within Central, East, Southern, and West Africa. These are:

Angola	Ethiopia	Rwanda
Benin	Eswatini	Sao Tome and Principe
Botswana	Gabon	Senegal
Burkina Faso	The Gambia	Seychelles
Burundi	Ghana	Sierra Leone
Cameroon	Guinea	Somalia
Cape Verde	Guinea-Bissau	South Africa
Central Africa Republic	Kenya	South Sudan
Chad	Lesotho	Sudan
Comoros	Liberia	Tanzania
Republic of the Congo	Madagascar	Togo
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Malawi	Uganda
Cote d'Ivoire	Mali	Zambia
Djibouti	Mauritania	Zimbabwe
Equatorial Guinea	Mauritius	
Eritrea	Mozambique	
	Namibia	
	Niger	
	Nigeria	



Assessment of Applications

All applications for the Africa Prize go through a vigorous assessment process of eligibility checks, technical review, and business review before a shortlist is selected.

Assessment process

The assessment process is as follows:



All Stage 1 applications are first checked for eligibility by Academy staff. Eligible applications will then be reviewed by two technical experts from the Academy's network of engineers. All reviewers will commit to keep application information confidential.

Reviewers will have expertise in the applicant's sector, but may not be familiar with the African context, so applicants should ensure the application does not make assumptions in this regard and provides relevant detail as requested. The technical review will be scored on the technological viability and credibility of the engineering solution presented.

A longlist of candidates with the highest average scores will be invited to complete a stage 2 application. These applications will be sent to the Africa Prize judging panel who will assess the business viability and overall fit for the programme.

Candidates may be contacted for further information that is required by the judges before they make their decision.

Assessment criteria

The technical reviewers and judges will take into account a number of factors. These include the extent to which the application complies with the aims and objectives of the programme , as well as:

Technical innovation

- **Proven technology credibility** with demonstrable functionality and technical viability
- **Innovativeness of the solution**, or if not novel, how well it adapts existing technology, or the first use of an existing technology in a new market
- **Clear evidence** the technology addresses the identified problem

Business viability


- **Commercial viability** with realistic revenue model and path to profitability
- **Comprehensive business plan** featuring achievable milestones
- **Scalability potential** with clear strategy for growth and market expansion
- **Market understanding** including competitive landscape analysis and clear differentiation strategy

Impact and purpose

- Ability of innovation to address a **real, identified need**
- **Evidence of social or environmental benefit**, particularly among those in more disadvantaged communities.
- Evidence that the innovation contributes towards achieving the **SDGs**

The team

- **Entrepreneurial capability** of applicant to build and lead a growing business
- **Strong team composition** with complementary skills or clear understanding of required expertise.



All applicants will be notified of the result of their application by January 2026

How to apply

All applications must be submitted via the online grant management system (GMS), available here: <https://grants.raeng.org.uk>. You must register through the system before you can apply.



The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. Applicants must submit their first-stage application by Tuesday 23 September 2025 to be considered for the second stage.

The Stage 1 application form has seven sections and will take approximately 90 minutes to complete on GMS. However, please allocate more time to gather the relevant documentation and prepare your answers offline.

After logging into the online grant system, please select **Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation 2025/2026 Stage 1**. This will take you to the 'Instructions' screen. Here you will see some general instructions on how to use the system as well as the seven sections of the application form:

1. Applicant details (5 minutes)
2. About you and your team (15 minutes)
3. Your innovation (30 minutes)
4. Your impact (25 minutes)
5. Supporting information (10 minutes)
6. Declaration (2 minutes)
7. Marketing (1 minute)

At any stage in the application process, you can save your work and return to it later. You can answer the questions in any order so you may skip sections and return to them later if you wish. To submit your application, all sections and all required questions must be completed.

Many of the questions have prescribed word limits which are designed to keep your answers focused and indicate the level of detail we require. In such cases, the number of words you have used will be displayed beneath the question and updated in real time.

Once you have completed all sections of the application, a 'Submit Application' button will become available at the bottom of this summary page. This button is initially greyed out and only becomes available once all pages are marked as

'complete'. Once you click on the 'Submit Application' button you will be prompted to confirm that you wish to submit your Application.

Those who are long-listed for the Africa Prize will be contacted in October 2025 to complete their Stage 2 application.



Tips for completing your application

- **Save your work regularly** - The system will automatically save your work when you change pages, but we recommend that you also save your work at regular intervals to avoid loss of data
- **Prepare answers offline** - We recommend you compose your answers offline and then copy and paste them into the form
- **Allow sufficient time** - We recommend leaving plenty of time to complete the application form ahead of the deadline and thoroughly going through your application prior to submission

Technical Issues: If you try logging in and the GMS displays an error message, please try clearing your cookies and browsing history, closing the window(s) and opening again in a new window. Alternatively, you can try using a different browser, or opening your application in an incognito window. If you still have issues, please email the Africa Prize team.



Diversity and Inclusion

The Royal Academy of Engineering is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all underrepresented groups across engineering. It is the Academy's [policy](#) to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged or receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Before you commence your application, you will be asked a few diversity monitoring questions to help the Academy monitor and assess our progress on diversity and inclusion in Academy programmes. It will only be used for statistical purposes with access restricted to staff involved in processing and monitoring the data. No information will be published or used in any way that identifies individuals. The Academy will retain personal information as per our [Data Retention Policy](#) in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

The information will be treated as strictly confidential, nonattributable and will not be seen by anyone involved in any selection processes. You will need to complete the diversity monitoring section before you can submit the grant application form, but can choose “prefer not to say” as responses.



Stage 1 Application questions

1. Applicant details

In this section, the applicant will be asked to provide personal information, confirm their nationality and location, and upload their CV.

Before proceeding, carefully review the eligibility criteria to ensure you qualify for the Prize and ensure you use an account registered under the lead applicant's name. The lead applicant is the team member who completes this application and would attend the majority of training sessions if selected.

Please note, the applications must be completed in English and the application deadline for Stage 1 is Tuesday 23 September 2025

Question	Information
Lead applicant details*	Provide your full name and contact details.
Entrepreneur nationality* Drop-down selection	Select your nationality from the drop-down list. Please note, individual applicants, or a team's lead applicant, must be citizens of a country within sub-Saharan Africa.
Innovation location* Drop-down selection	Select from the drop-down list the country where your innovation is based. Please note, innovations must be based in a country in sub-Saharan Africa.
Entrepreneur location* Drop-down selection	Where are you currently based? Select other if you are temporarily living outside of Africa. You will be able to provide details on where you are currently located, for what purpose, and how long you anticipate being there.
Lead applicant's CV* File upload	Upload your CV here. The format and content of your CV is your choice, but please include education history and work history. Maximum of two pages permitted.
Start date*	Enter 1 March 2026, which is approximately when the programme will start.
End date*	Enter 31 October 2026, which is approximately when the programme will start.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required and must be completed by all applicants.

2. About you and your team

In this section, the applicant will be asked to confirm IP ownership, detail team composition with equity breakdown, and identify current partnerships and supporters.

Question	Information
<p>Ownership* Drop-down selection</p>	<p>Confirm if the idea/innovation is your own and/or you are the sole owner of the technology IP</p> <p>If you responded 'No' to the question above, please tell us about your association to the innovation with regards to the originator of the idea/innovation or owner of the technology.</p> <p>If you are selected to participate in the programme, you will be required to share a consent letter from the originators/collaborators of the IP. This needs to confirm that they give consent for you to submit the idea in your application for the Africa Prize. This can either be one document with multiple signatures, or individual consent letters per originator.</p>
<p>Current and past team details*</p>	<p>Fill out the following details - name, email, role, length of service, aware of submission, % equity in company- for the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yourself • Any other key team members who are currently working with you on your innovation • Any other originators or collaborators who have been involved with the development of the innovation, <p>Please ensure 100% of equity is accounted for; the figures entered in this section should add up to 100.</p> <p>You are responsible for ensuring the details provided for each team member and collaborator are correct. The Academy may request contact details for corroboration.</p>
<p>Current partnerships and supporters* 100 words max</p>	<p>Identify any other critical advisors, supporters or partners helping you now, beyond your current team, and how they support your business.</p>

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required and must be completed by all applicants.

3. Your innovation

In this section, the applicant will be asked to describe their innovation's technical features, development stage, product roadmaps, and upload technical diagrams with cost breakdowns.

Question	Information
Innovation *	Give the name of your innovation or project. This should not be a research title, but the name of the product or service you are developing.
Business name	Give the name of your business or company, if different from the above.
Website and social media	If you have a website, Facebook page or Twitter account for your innovation or business, please paste the links here. Please provide active business accounts – do not post links to personal accounts or inactive pages/websites.
One-line pitch* 50 words max	Provide a one-line pitch for your business or innovation.
Product development stage* Drop-down selection	Indicate the product development stage your innovation is at (concept/idea, proof of concept, prototype, minimum viable product, beta/pre-launch, launched product). Please note that innovations at idea stage are not eligible.
Innovation summary* 100 words max	Give an overview of the product or service you have developed. What makes it innovative and what is its unique selling point?
Key features* 100 words max	List and explain the key technology and engineering features that underpin your innovation and how it works.
Short-term product roadmap* 100 words max	Outline up to five product development priorities for the next 12 months. For each development, explain the technical capabilities it will add, the engineering challenges to overcome, and how these improvements will enhance product performance or functionality
Long-term product roadmap* 100 words max	Describe your product vision for the next 2-3 years and identify up to three key technical developments or engineering advances that will transform your current solution. For each development, explain the technical capabilities it will add, the engineering challenges to overcome, and how

	these improvements will enhance product performance or functionality.
Technical diagram and image upload* File upload	<p>Please upload technical diagrams and photographs that clearly illustrate how your product works. All materials must be original content (your own photos/diagrams) rather than academic references or stock images. If you have diagrams that need explanation, please compile them into a single Word document before uploading.</p> <p>You must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A simple diagram or schematic showing all key components and interfaces <p>You could back this up with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional material in the form of a short video or pictures showing your prototype or photos in action • Any other more detailed schematics and design drawings that illustrate your innovation <p>These will be used by our technical experts to understand how your product works.</p>
Product costs breakdown*	<p>Please provide a clear financial breakdown of costs for your product in GBP (£). You can convert from your local currency to GBP here: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling price to customer • Commissions/agency fees (if indirect) • Direct revenue received per unit • Cost per unit • Net margin
Engineering category* Drop-down selection	<p>Select from the drop-down list one single broad engineering category that best aligns with your innovation. If your proposal fits into several categories, please pick the category that is most applicable. Further detail around each engineering category can be found on our website www.raeng.org.uk/about-us/fellowship/election-to-the-fellowship</p>
Keywords*	<p>Please provide a maximum of 10 keywords to describe your innovation. For example, carbon, oil, engines</p>

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required and must be completed by all applicants.

4. Your local impact

In this section, the applicant will be asked to explain the problem they're solving, their solution's benefits, competitive advantages, and evidence of impact.

Question	Information
Problem and users* 75 words max	Describe the specific social, economic or environmental challenge or unmet need that your innovation addresses , and the people or organisations most affected by this problem.
Solution benefits* 75 words max	Please describe how your innovation addresses the problem you have identified above. Focus on potential impact of your innovation, not technical capabilities. Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest benefits with specific details.
Competitive advantage* 75 words max	Describe why your innovation is better than existing or new alternatives. Focus on technical advantages rather than business or market considerations. Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest technical differentiators with specific details.
Evidence of impact and validation* 75 words max	Outline evidence that your solution is having the intended impact on the problem you identified. Focus on measurable outcomes that demonstrate that your technical solution works in practice. If relevant, include customer feedback, satisfaction evidence, pilot results, or proof that customers value your solution. Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest impact metrics and validation points with specific details.
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* Drop-down selection	Please select from the list a maximum of three UN SDG your innovation is working towards.

5. Supporting documentation

In this section, the applicant will be asked to upload supporting documents and provide a gender equality statement.

Question	Information
<p>Supporting documentation* File upload</p>	<p>Please upload one supporting document. to provide independent validation of your business and/or innovation's credentials. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letter of support from an incubator, accelerator or startup competition your business has previously been involved with • If an academic spin out, a letter of support from a university or research institution or school affiliated with the applicant • document of incorporation for your business • patent certificate for your innovation <p>If submitting a letter of support, this should not exceed two pages and should address the points below as relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details on the nature of the affiliation between the applicant/business and the university, research institute, incubator or tech hub • an explanation of why the business is suitable to be shortlisted for the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation • comment on the involvement, if any, of the university, research institute, incubator or tech hub with the business so far • a description of any IP, its ownership and status
<p>Gender and equality statement* 400 words max</p>	<p>In line with the UK Government's Gender Equality in Research and Innovation Policy, all successful applications to this scheme must demonstrate consideration of the activities on gender. All funded activities will, and at a minimum, ensure that no harm is done to gender equity. To this end, please outline any specific gender considerations and implications for your proposed project. This could include any measures you have put in place to ensure equal opportunities, any expected impacts on people of different genders, or any outcomes or outputs that you will measure disaggregated by gender.</p>

6. Declaration

In this section, the applicant will be asked to read and agree to the terms and conditions and confirming they agree with the conditions of the Africa Prize.

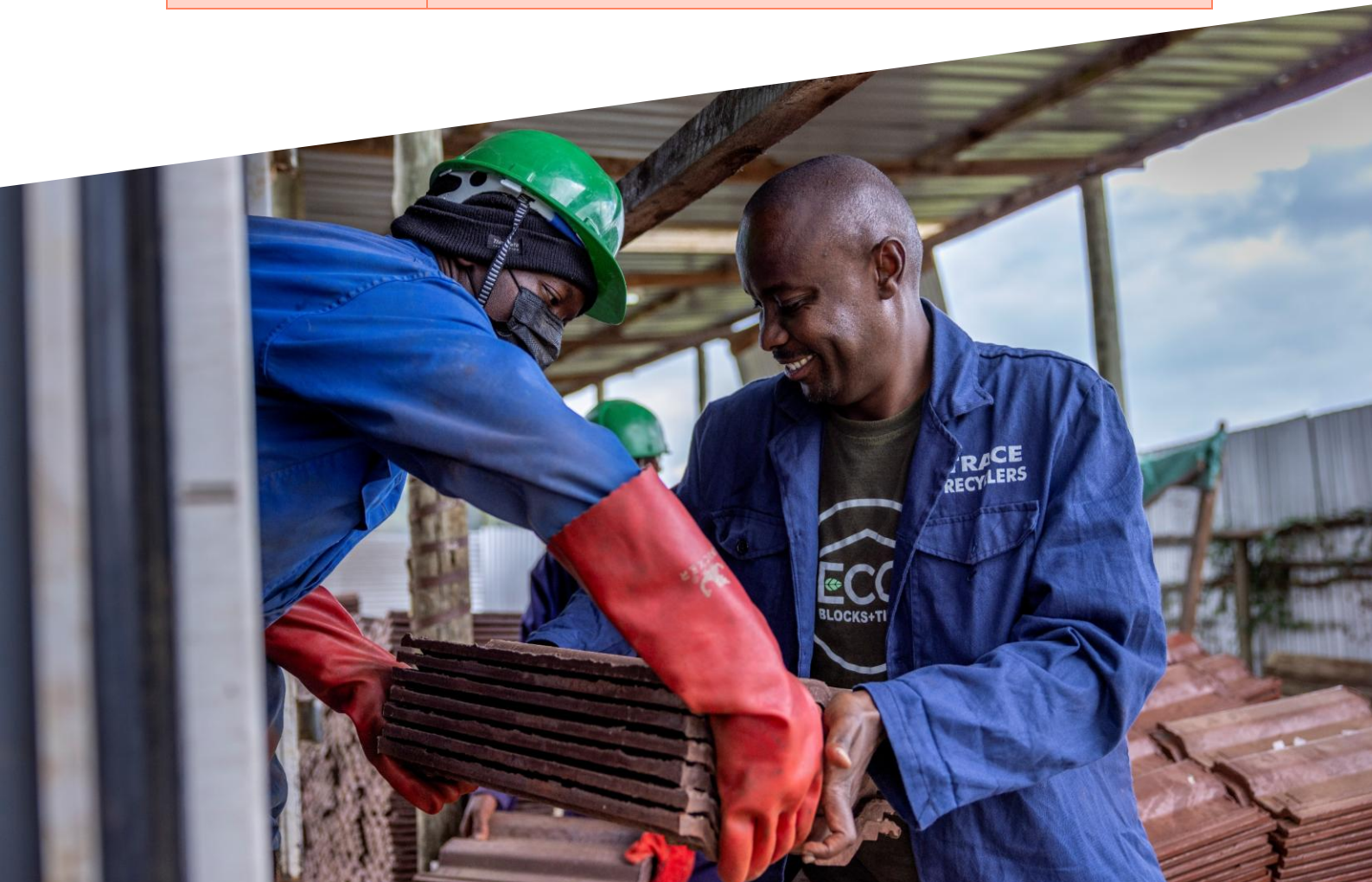
I confirm here and by submitting this application that:

- I have read and understood the application guidance.
- I am over 18 years old at the time of submitting this application.
- I/my co-founder have not participated in the Africa Prize previously.
- The ideas presented are my own and not plagiarised or containing IP that is not owned by myself, except for that IP that I have express permission to utilise in this way
- All contributions have been appropriately referenced or credited including the use of any online tools such as AI generative tools used in developing my application.
- I understand that failure to cite and declare references or sources for material information will result in my application being removed from the process, or the uncorroborated information disregarded.
- If selected, I will be able to share a consent letter from the owners of the innovation/IP on request.
- If appropriate, I have the permission of my employer to apply for the Prize and participate in the training programme.
- If selected, I will set aside significant time to participate in training activities from March 2026 to October 2026.
- I understand that due to possible global events, the programme could be held remotely and I will need to have regular access to the Internet. The Academy can offer a small grant for internet accessibility for the duration of the entrepreneurship training. There may be a chance of travel for residential training week and events but it is not guaranteed.
- I understand that programme dates are subject to change
- I understand that, if selected to participate in the programme, it is my responsibility to arrange suitable travel insurance and to obtain the necessary visas for travel, with support from the Academy, if travelling to an event or training.
- If selected to receive prize money, I agree to report back to the Academy on how I have utilised the prize money approximately 6 months after the conclusion of the programme.
- I understand that The Royal Academy of Engineering will disclose the information submitted in this application to reviewers for the purpose of assessing this application. Any external reviewer we ask to assist us has agreed to keep this information confidential.
- I will allow the Royal Academy of Engineering to share material from this application with its Fellows, the Judging Panel and subcontractors for the purposes of selection of candidates and designing the training content.
- I have the permission of any person or persons I have included contact details for, to share their details with the Royal Academy of Engineering for the purposes of administering this application.
- I understand that The Royal Academy of Engineering or other third party evaluators may contact me for the purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation of this programme.
- If selected, I consent to the Academy sending me relevant updates in the form of emails and newsletters, during the training and afterwards when I become a member of the Africa Prize alumni.

7. Marketing

In this section, the applicant will be asked information that will help the Academy with future applications. Please note their answers will not impact their application.

Question	Information
How did you hear about the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation?*	<p>Please select from the drop-down list of options, if not listed please select other.</p> <p>If 'Other', please answer the sub-question by giving details of where you heard about the Prize.</p> <p>If you are an alumni of the Africa Innovation Fellowship programme, please select other and write AIF.</p>
Marketing consent	<p>Please select this box if you're happy to receive emails from the Royal Academy of Engineering regarding future funding opportunities</p>
Have you applied or participated in any other Academy programmes?*	<p>Please select from the drop-down list of options any other Royal Academy of Engineering programmes you have applied to or participated in. This could include for example Leaders in Innovation Fellowships or Africa Innovation Fellowship. Please note this will not affect your current application.</p>



Stage 2 Application questions



The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. Applicants must submit their first-stage application by Tuesday 23 September 2025 to be considered for the second stage.

The questions below outline what will be required in Stage 2. Longlisted applicants will be contacted at the end of October 2025 if they advance to Stage 2 and invited to complete the full application. Stage 2 will focus on elements of the applicant's business and the applicant will until 18 November 2025 (three weeks) to complete the form.

Stage 1 responses will be pre-filled in the Stage 2 application form. The applicant can then review and update any relevant sections to reflect recent progress, new developments, or changes since their initial submission

1. Your business plan

In this section, the applicant will be asked to provide comprehensive business details including financial statements, funding history, business model, market analysis, risk assessment, IP status, and upload a pitch deck.

Question	Information
Business stage* Drop-down selection	Please select from the drop-down list the stage that best fits your business: Idea, Proof of Concept Validation, Minimum Viable Product Launch, Pre-Seed Funding Secured, Early Market Traction, Full Seed Round, Scaling, and Series A Funding.
Organisation Type* Drop-down selection	Please select the type that best fits your business/innovation: For profit, Not-for-Proft, Social Enterprise, Undecided
Employees*	Please tell us how many full-time and paid employees are currently working for your business. If none, please put 0.
Other stakeholders*	Please tell us how many others, including part-time, volunteers unpaid and consultants, are working in your business. If none, please put 0.
Funding* Drop-down selection	From the drop-down list, please select where most of the funding comes from for your business.: Angel

	investors, debt, grants, awards and prizes, friends and family, loans, VC funds
Investors	Please list the name and type (Angel etc.) of any current investors, if any.
Capital*	<p>Please tell us the total capital you have raised for your business/innovation to date, from</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. investors, 2. debt 3. grants 4. awards 5. any other sources (such as from friends and family or crowdfunding) <p>Please provide this number in GBP, you can convert local currencies to GBP at: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/</p>
Capital sought*	Please tell us how much you aim to raise for your business/innovation to achieve your goals in the next two years in GBP. Ensure it is realistic and aligned with the scale and scope of your business goals. You will have the opportunity to provide more detail on how you intend to allocate these funds to support your growth in the "Business Model Overview" question.
Grants/awards*	Please list any grants, awards, prizes or fellowship schemes that you have attended or won - please list the year, amount received (if applicable) and position (shortlist/winner etc.). Please put none if not applicable.
Profit and loss statement*	<p>Please provide a simple aggregated profit and loss statement for the last three years (2022-2025) that includes the most recent backward-looking year. If it is not applicable to your business or innovation, please enter 0.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue – the total money coming into the business from sales of products or services before any costs are deducted. This does not include grants and awards. • Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) – The direct costs of producing the goods or services that were sold. This includes materials, direct labour, and manufacturing costs directly tied to production.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Profit – The revenue minus COGS. This shows how much money is left after covering the direct costs of what you sold, but before accounting for other business expenses. • Expenses – All other business costs not included in COGS, such as rent, salaries, marketing, utilities, insurance, and administrative costs. • Net income – Your bottom line. This is the final profit after all costs and expenses have been subtracted from revenue <p>You can convert your numbers into GBP here: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/</p>
Gross Profit Margin*	If relevant to your stage, please provide your gross profit margin in 2023, 2024, and 2025 in GBP. This is your sales price minus the variable cost of goods/services sold. You can convert this into GBP here: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/
Expected Gross Profit Margin (i)*	What is your expected Gross Profit Margin (in GBP) in 12 months' time?
Expected Gross Profit Margin (ii)* 50 words max	Please explain how your expected gross profit margin will be reached
Business valuation (i)*	If you have an established business, please give an estimation of the business value before external investment in GBP. If not applicable, please put 0. You can convert this into GBP here: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/
Business Valuation (ii)* 50 words max	Please explain the method and assumptions used to arrive at this valuation (e.g., multiples of revenue, comparable company analysis, or any other relevant metrics).
Business model overview* 100 words max	Please give details on your business model and why you think it will succeed,
Business roadmap* 100 words max	Give us details on your business road map for the next three years
Significant milestones* 100 words max	Give us details on any significant milestones your business has achieved since it started

<p>Market opportunity, competitors and competitive advantage* 200 words max</p>	<p>Please describe the market for your innovation, including: your market size and location, market competitors or those offering a similar product or service, your competitive advantages, your opportunity to scale. Focus on your business, not your product</p>
<p>Risks and Challenges* 200 words max</p>	<p>Please identify three main risks and challenges to your business and what you are doing to mitigate these. You might want to consider internal risks – such as resources, staff expertise etc. And external risks – such as regulations, environmental issues, the economic or political situation, etc.</p>
<p>Intellectual property*</p>	<p>From the list, please tick all those that you have been granted or completed for your innovation.</p>
<p>Pitch Deck*</p>	<p>Please upload your pitch deck, which will provide useful additional information for the judges. Your pitch deck should contain at least five slides, covering your problem, solution, business, team and</p>



Frequently Asked Questions

General Programme Information

Q: What kind of innovations does the Africa Prize accept?

Applicants should be in the early stages of commercialising an engineering innovation that:

- is accompanied by an ambitious but realistic business plan that has strong commercial viability
- has strong potential to be replicated and scaled up
- will bring social and/or environmental benefits to a country or countries in sub-Saharan Africa
- is based in, and will benefit, a country in sub-Saharan Africa.

The innovation can be any new product, technology or service, based on research in any field of engineering, including: agricultural technology, biotechnology, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, design engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, materials science, mechanical engineering, and medical engineering. If you have questions about whether your innovation would be considered as engineering, please contact the Africa Prize team to discuss your application at africaprize@raeng.org.uk

For more information, have a look at the [Africa Prize interactive map](#) which showcases all current and previous shortlisted innovations.

We do not accept:

- innovations that are still at idea stage
- innovations that are designed for military purposes or purely for economic gain.

Q: Can I apply if my innovation is still in prototype stage?

Yes, prototypes are eligible as long as they demonstrate technical viability and you have clear evidence of customer traction. However, innovations at the "idea stage" are not eligible - you must have moved beyond conceptual development.

Q: Can I apply if my innovation is primarily a service rather than a physical product?

Yes, engineering-based services are eligible, including software applications, digital platforms, or service innovations that use engineering principles.

Q: What happens to my intellectual property and confidential information if I participate in the programme?

The Academy takes no equity stake, and you retain full ownership of your intellectual property. We understand concerns about sharing technical details, so all reviewers and judges are bound by confidentiality and conflict of interest

agreements to protect your information. We recommend consulting with your legal advisor if you have specific concerns about information sharing.

Q: If I am successful, what are the terms and conditions for my participation in the programme?

Upon applying, the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions outlined at the end of this application guidance document.

If the applicant is successful and selected to participate in the Africa Programme, their participation and any subsequent prize money will be awarded under the RD&I Terms and Conditions found on the [Academy's website](#).

This agreement has been developed to ensure funding aligns with our Academy values, is used for the purposes for which it was awarded, and is managed in compliance with our own funders' agreements, UK legislation and funding best practice.

Eligibility and Application Requirements

Q: Can applications be submitted in any language?

Applications for the Africa Prize must be submitted in English. Applications submitted in any other language will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed. The core Africa Prize training will take place in English, so it is important that shortlisted applicants have a good understanding of English. Some support will be available for participants in French via expert engagement. We encourage those with English as a second language to apply.

Q: Can I apply if I'm currently studying or working outside of Africa temporarily?

Yes, if you're temporarily outside sub-Saharan Africa for studies or work, you're eligible to apply. You'll need to indicate this in your application and explain the temporary nature of your location.

Q: My internet is sometimes unstable, am I still eligible to apply?

The Africa Prize team will support applicants where possible to ensure unstable internet connection isn't a barrier to the programme. If you think you will have a problem connecting to the online training, please contact the Africa Prize team at africaprize@raeng.org.uk

Completing the Application Form

Q: Can I update my application after submission?

No, applications cannot be modified after submission. However, if you advance to Stage 2, you can provide updated information about your business progress and any significant developments.

Q: I have multiple innovations, can I apply more than once?

Applicants are welcome to submit more than one application per round for different innovations. However, you can only be selected for participation for one business.

Q: I was unsuccessful last year, can I apply again?

We encourage previous applications to submit a new application each year, using previous feedback provided by the technical reviewers and judging panel.

Q: I have previously been on the shortlist, can I apply again?

No. Applicants who have made it to the shortlist in a previous round of the Africa Prize are not eligible to apply again. This is because they have already benefited from training and other opportunities while being part of the shortlist. Co-founder or other team members of the same innovation or business are also ineligible for the Africa Prize.

Two-Stage Application Process

Q: Why did the Africa Prize switch to a two-stage application process?

The Academy moved to a two-stage process to make applications more inclusive and accessible. The two-stage approach reduces the application burden - applicants focus on technical details first, and only longlisted applicants are asked to take the time to submit their business elements in the second stage.

Q: What happens between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

After Stage 1 closes on 23 September 2025, applications undergo eligibility checks and technical review by expert reviewers in October 2025. Only long-listed candidates will be invited to complete Stage 2 at the end October 2025.

Q: How will I know if I've been selected for Stage 2?

Long-listed applicants will be contacted directly by the Academy team in October 2025 with instructions for completing their Stage 2 application. If you don't hear from us by late November, your Stage 1 application was not successful.

Q: How much time will I have to complete Stage 2?

Stage 2 applications will be open for approximately three weeks.

Q: What's the difference in assessment between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Stage 1 focuses on technical innovation and engineering merit and is reviewed by technical experts. Stage 2 emphasises business viability, market potential, and entrepreneurial capability, assessed by the judging panel who select the shortlist.

Q: Can I modify my innovation description between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Stage 2 focuses on business elements rather than technical details, so you shouldn't need to significantly modify your innovation description. However, the Stage 1 responses will be pre-filled in the Stage 2 application form. You can then review and update any relevant sections to reflect recent progress, new developments, or changes since your initial submission.

Q: What if my circumstances change between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

You should update the Academy about any material changes that might affect your eligibility or application. Please contact the Africa Prize team at africaprize@raeng.org.uk

Q: Are there different eligibility requirements for Stage 2?

No, the same eligibility criteria apply throughout. However, Stage 2 delves deeper into business viability, so you'll need to demonstrate commercial potential and scalability more thoroughly.

Assessment and Review Process

Q: What is the review process for Africa Prize applications?

All Stage 1 applications are first checked for eligibility by Academy staff. Eligible applications will then be reviewed by two technical experts from the Academy's network of engineers. All reviewers will commit to keep application information confidential.

Reviewers will have expertise in the applicant's sector, but may not be familiar with the African context, so applicants should ensure the application does not make assumptions in this regard and provides relevant detail as requested. The technical review will be scored on the technological viability and credibility of the engineering solution presented.

A longlist of candidates with the highest average scores will be invited to complete a stage 2 application. These applications will be sent to the Africa Prize judging panel who will assess the business viability and overall fit for the programme.

The shortlisting process will consider:

- Adherence to all entry and eligibility requirements
- The relevance and viability of the engineering innovation
- The potential social, economic or environmental benefit of the innovation
- The extent to which the innovation can be replicated and scaled-up
- The individual, or teams', entrepreneurial potential

Candidates may be contacted for further information that is required by the judges before they make their decision.

Q: If I'm not selected for Stage 2, will I receive feedback?

Individual feedback will be provided for all applications in Spring 2026.

Q: What is an example of a good and bad application?

Indicators of an outstanding application could include:

- An applicant with sound technology with excellent potential for commercialisation or which is already being commercialised;
- A highly innovative engineering solution to address a real identified need;

- Great entrepreneurial potential and awareness of strengths and weaknesses;
- An impressive business plan and sound route to market.

Indicators of a poor application could include:

- Technology which is not viable and at idea stage
- Technology which lacks innovation and does not appear to address a real need
- Responses which do not address the questions asked
- An applicant with little entrepreneurial potential and lack of awareness on strengths, weaknesses and future growth.

Programme Participation and Training

Q: What happens if I'm shortlisted after Stage 2?

Successful applicants will be notified by the end of January 2026 and will begin the eight-month training programme starting in February 2026, culminating in the final event in October 2026.

Q: If I am shortlisted, will I need to travel?

The Africa Prize is a hybrid programme.

Usually, the Africa Prize includes a week of in-person training in the UK, as well as an in-person final event on the African continent. Please note that if required to travel for a residential training week or event, the Academy will cover the related costs.

The remaining training and mentoring for the Africa Prize shortlist is carried out remotely (online), to allow you to continue to run your business so you do not need to spend a long time away from home.

Q: How does my participation in the Africa Prize affect my participation in other Academy programmes?

Participation in the Africa Prize will not affect your participation in other Academy programmes, with the exception of the Leaders in Innovation Fellowship (LIF) programme:

Alumni of the Academy's Advance programme or alumni of the Leaders in Innovation Fellowship (LIF) programme who participated after June 2024 are not eligible to apply to the Africa Prize. LIF alumni who participated in the LIF programme before June 2024 may be eligible if they can evidence through their application why participation in the Africa Prize is necessary and/or will add value to them and their business.

Academy policies

National Security

The Academy is the UK's National Academy for engineering and technology and seeks to increase the potential positive benefit that innovations can have for society, whilst reducing the risks of harm. Hence, in all our activities, we seek to minimise the risk that technology developed as part of work that we support could be misused by a foreign state to build a capacity to target UK interests in a hostile fashion or to control or repress their population. There is a risk that for some grant activities, failure to protect IP and a lack of due diligence into collaborators could result in sensitive technology being transferred to and misused by a hostile or repressive foreign state. As such all applicants should ensure they are familiar with the Academy's [Policy on National Security-Related Risks](#).

Use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessment

The Academy has aligned with other UK funders around the use of generative AI tools in funding applications through the Research Funders Policy Group [joint statement](#).

Regarding the use of AI, applicants are fully responsible for all the content presented in their grant applications. The grant process does not penalise the use of generative AI tools, but it is imperative to ensure that the application reflects the applicant's own voice and ideas. It is not acceptable to solely rely on generative AI tools to write the entire grant application from start to finish. While these tools may be used to assist in various aspects, the application must primarily represent the applicant's own work.

Applicants must provide clear acknowledgement if they have used generative AI tools in the process of writing their grant applications. This includes disclosing the name of the tool used and describing how it was utilized. The following style should be employed for referencing:

I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s), version number and link] to generate materials for background research, styling, proofreading, etc.

Or,

I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s), version number and link] to generate materials that were included within my final assessment in modified form.

Subsidy control

The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. As part of this regime, the Academy is required to report to the UK Government on how award funding is being used when applications collaborating with commercial enterprises are awarded. The regime determines the lawfulness of monetary awards made using public sector resources when given to businesses and other organisations that are engaged in economic activity.

This grant programme has been assessed and is not considered to be a subsidy scheme in relation to the Subsidy Control Act 2022 because funds are being given to small enterprises outside of the UK with no commercial application of the project in sight.

Should the programme of work or focus change bringing this into question then the Recipient must highlight this to the Academy immediately such that the basis of Award can be reviewed. If reviewed and considered a subsidy cumulation rules will apply with all other funding for the project needing to come from non-public funds

Research involving human participants or tissue

Research, development and innovation involving human participants, human material or personal data can contribute to a better understanding of human health and disease as well as the technological efficacy of new and evolving innovations. The Academy will fund research, development and innovation involving the use of human participants, human material or personal data which complies with our [Humans in RD&I Policy](#). If your proposal includes the use of human participants, human materials or personal data you will be asked to declare this at application stage and provide further details of your proposal if you are shortlisted.

Please note: applicable regulatory approval and licenses are not required to be in place at point of application, but all necessary approvals must be in place before the work begins.

Animals in research

The Academy acknowledges that, at present, the use of animals remains the only way for some areas of research to progress. Research involving animals is regulated by comprehensive and strict legislation in the UK and must be conducted with a high regard for animal welfare. The Academy will fund research involving the use of animals in the UK which complies with our [Animals in RD&I Policy](#).

If your proposal includes the use of animals you will be asked to declare this at application stage and provide further details of your proposal if you are shortlisted.

If your proposal involves the use of animals and takes place outside of the UK, the Academy will generally not fund this work. Please contact the Academy before proceeding with your application.

Please note: applicable regulatory approval and licenses are not required to be in place at point of application, but all necessary approvals must be in place before the work begins.



Terms and Conditions

This section sets out the conditions under which the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation is offered. Please ensure that you fully understand the eligibility criteria and have read this document before applying.

General

The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation is run by the Royal Academy of Engineering. The Academy is a not-for-profit entity and takes no stake in any innovation or business shortlisted for the prize.

An international judging panel has been convened solely for the purpose of awarding this prize and will make the final decision.

By entering the Prize, applicants will be deemed to have accepted and agreed to be bound by these terms and conditions.

All applications must be submitted in English.

Eligibility

By submitting an application, applicants confirm adhere to all the eligibility requirements set out in this application guidance notes.

If appropriate, the applicant has the permission of their employer to apply for the Prize and participate in the training programme

If selected, the applicant will be able to share a consent letter from the owners of the innovation/IP on request.

If selected, the applicant will set aside significant time to participate in training activities from March 2026 to October 2026

Training programme conditions

Due to possible global events, programme dates are subject to change. The programme could be held remotely and they will need to have regular access to the Internet. The Academy can offer a small grant for internet accessibility for the duration of the entrepreneurship training. There may be a chance of travel for residential training week and events but it is not guaranteed

If selected to participate in the programme, it is the applicants responsibility to arrange suitable travel insurance and to obtain the necessary visas for travel, with support from the Academy, if travelling to an event or training

Participation Agreement

If the applicant is successful and selected to participate in the Africa Programme, their participation and any subsequent prize money will be awarded under the RD&I Terms and Conditions found on the [Academy's website](#).

This agreement has been developed to ensure funding aligns with our Academy values, is used for the purposes for which it was awarded, and is managed in compliance with our own funders' agreements, UK legislation and funding best practice.

The Prize

The winner of the Africa Prize will receive £50,000 (or local currency equivalent). Runners-up will receive a prize of £10,000 each. This amount will be paid after the final event, which will take place in October 2026. Prize money should be used for business purposes to support the growth and scaling of the innovation.

Recipients are required to utilise the funds to advance their business objectives and expand their impact. The prize money is not for individual use. Recipients will be asked to report on how funds have been used, six months after completing the programme.

All applications will be acknowledged on receipt. Responsibility cannot be accepted for applications lost, damaged or delayed.

Any applications that are incomplete, late, do not adhere to the guidelines or contain false information will be rejected.

All applicants will be informed of their application outcome by the end of January 2026.

By applying to be considered for the Prize, applicants warrant that all information submitted is true, current and complete. The judging panel reserves the right to verify the eligibility of all entrants and the veracity of all statements made.

Publicity and further activities

Shortlisted applicants as well as finalists will be expected to participate in promotional activities where appropriate.

Unless otherwise specified, the video footage uploaded as part of any shortlisted application may be used as part of ongoing publicity for the Prize.

Liability

Protection of any intellectual property rights in any content submitted is the sole responsibility of the owner of such rights. The Academy recommends that no application is made before the protection of any such rights has been considered.

All applications are made at the applicant's own risk and the applicant agrees to release the judging panel, the Academy, its employees and all other connected persons from any liability relating to infringement (whether actual or threatened) of any such rights by a third party anywhere in the world.

The applicant is solely responsible for the content of their application. In submitting an application to be considered for the prize, applicants agree to fully indemnify the judging panel, the Academy, its employees and all other connected persons in respect of all actions, claims, costs, damages, demands, expenses, fines, liabilities, losses, penalties, sanctions, amounts paid in settlement, out of pocket expenses, interest, penalties, and all legal and other professional costs and expenses that may be incurred by any of them in respect of any claims that the nomination and the content that it contains infringes the proprietary rights of a third party.

Data retention

The Academy will retain personal information as per our [Data Retention Policy](#).