



Royal Academy  
of Engineering

Africa Prize for  
Engineering Innovation



# Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation 2027 – Stage 1

## Application Guidance Notes

Deadline: Tuesday 8 September 2026, 4pm (UTC+1)

All questions to be sent to [Africa.Prize@raeng.org.uk](mailto:Africa.Prize@raeng.org.uk)

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**The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. These Application Guidance Notes cover the Stage 1 application. Applicants must submit their Stage 1 application by **Tuesday 8 September 2026** 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 22 October 2026. Stage 2 will focus on elements of the applicant's business and the applicant will have until 12 November 2026 (three weeks) to complete the form.

# The Royal Academy of Engineering

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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

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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 Africa Prize has supported over [180 businesses](#) from 24 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**, including expert sessions, 1:1 financial modelling coaching and business support.
- **In-person training weeks.**
- **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 International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) 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.

The team will hold **four information sessions** to introduce the programme, guide applicants through the application process and answer any questions:

- **[17 July 2026, 13:00–14:00 BST](#)**
- **[23 July 2026, 11:00–12:00 BST](#)** (in French)
- **[12 August 2026, 13:00–14:00 BST](#)**
- **[25 August 2026, 11:00–12:00 BST](#)**

# Programme overview and key dates

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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 2027**. The training will take various formats and will require 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
- Intensive training weeks delivered in a cohort setting



## Africa Prize Final

In **July 2027**, 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 2027** to present at the Africa Prize final.

All shortlisted applicants will pitch their innovations at the final event in **October 2027**. 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.

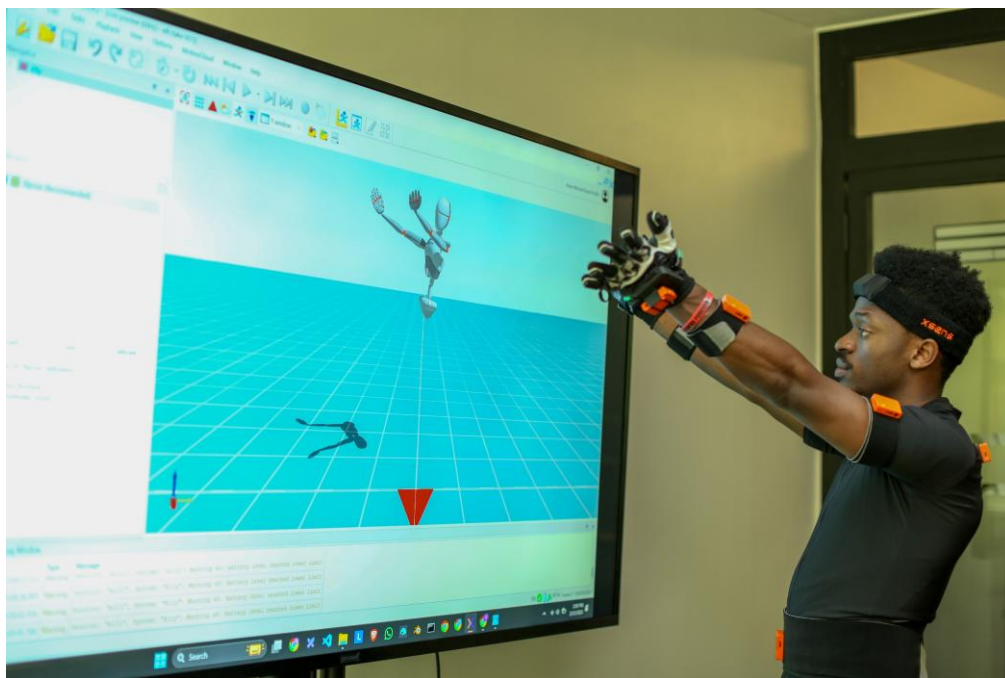
- One winner will receive £50,000.
- Three runners-up will receive £10,000 each.
- One shortlist (non-finalist) member via audience vote will receive £5,000.

## 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

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[Elly Savatia](#), CEO of Signvrse and winner of the 2025 Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, developed Terp 360, an app designed to support deaf people. Using 3D avatars and AI, Terp 360 translates speech into sign language with lifelike fluidity, setting it apart from existing tools. Though still in its testing phase, the app has already engaged with more than 2,000 members of the deaf community. Elly and his team are now preparing to expand into the B2B market, with a focus on education, corporate and healthcare sectors.

Elly's passion for assistive technology began early. While in high school, he worked on a project enabling people with physical disabilities to access buildings. Years later, during a robotics class in Northern Kenya, the idea for Terp 360 took shape when he observed a class of 300 deaf students supported by just one interpreter. This stark imbalance inspired him to explore how mobile technology could help bridge communication gaps for deaf people at scale.

***“The Africa Prize has been a transformative journey. It strengthened my entrepreneurial thinking, sharpened our fundraising approach, and expanded Signvrse’s visibility across the continent.”– Elly Savatia***

# Application timeline



**The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation uses a two-stage application process. Applicants must submit their Stage 1 application by Tuesday 8 September 2026 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 22 October 2026. Stage 2 will focus on elements of the applicant's business and the applicant will have until 6 November 2026 (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 8 September at 16:00 UTC+1**
2. Applications checked for eligibility following submission deadline
3. Reviewed by technical experts in **September 2026**

- 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 in **October 2026**
2. Shortlist selected by judging panel by **December 2026**
3. All applicants notified of outcome by the **January 2027**



The deadline for the first stage applications is on Tuesday 8 September 2026 at 16:00 UTC+1

# Eligibility Criteria

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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.

## 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\*.
- Where a venture has one or more co-founders based outside sub-Saharan Africa, the Africa-based lead applicant must hold at least 50 percent equity in the venture at the time of application.
- 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 8 September 2026. 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 programme does have francophone experts to support applicants whose first language is not English.**
- The applicant cannot be an alum 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 |
| Botswana            | Gabon         | Principe     |
| Burkina Faso        | The Gambia    | Senegal      |
| Burundi             | Ghana         | Seychelles   |
| Cameroon            | Guinea        | Sierra Leone |
| Cape Verde          | Guinea-Bissau | Somalia      |
| Central Africa      | Kenya         | South Africa |
| Republic            | Lesotho       | South Sudan  |
| Chad                | Liberia       | Sudan        |
| Comoros             | Madagascar    | Tanzania     |
| Republic of the     | Malawi        | Togo         |
| Congo               | Mali          | Uganda       |
| Democratic Republic | Mauritania    | Zambia       |
| of the Congo        | Mauritius     | Zimbabwe     |
| Cote d'Ivoire       | Mozambique    |              |
| Djibouti            | Namibia       |              |
| Equatorial Guinea   | Niger         |              |
| Eritrea             | Nigeria       |              |

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

# Assessment of Applications

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## 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. The technical review will be scored on the technological viability and credibility of the engineering solution presented. All reviewers will commit to keep application information confidential.

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:** credible technology with proven functionality and technical viability, show a high degree of innovation or effective adaptation of existing technology including its application in new markets, and provide clear evidence that the solution directly addresses the identified problem.

**-Business viability:** a realistic revenue model with a clear strategy for growth and market expansion, including competitive landscape analysis and differentiation strategy.

**-Impact and purpose:** ability of innovation to address a real, well identified need, plus evidence of contribution to SDGs.

**-The team:** entrepreneurial capability of applicant and a strong team composition that shows awareness of capacity needs.

# How to apply

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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 8 September 2026 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 2026/2027 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.

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 2026 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.



## Use of generative AI in applications

Applicants are fully responsible for all of the content presented in their grant application(s). While these tools may be used to assist in various aspects and the grant process does not penalise the use of generative AI tools, applications must reflect the applicant's own ideas, work and voice. Applicants must provide clear acknowledgement if they have used generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the process of writing their grant application and a failure to declare use may result in your application being removed from the review process.

AI-generated products or prototypes are not acceptable for the Africa Prize and will result in immediate disqualification. The same applies for enhanced AI images.

For more information please refer to the [Research Funders Policy Group joint statement](#).

# Diversity and Inclusion

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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.

| Question                                                | Information                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lead applicant details*</b>                          | Provide your full name and contact details.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Entrepreneur nationality*</b><br>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.     |
| <b>Innovation location*</b><br>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.                         |
| <b>Entrepreneur location*</b><br>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 in the next questions.                       |
| <b>Entrepreneur location explanation</b>                | If you are not currently located in sub-Saharan Africa, please provide details on where you are currently located, for what purpose, and how long you anticipate being there. |
| <b>Lead applicant's CV*</b><br>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.                 |
| <b>Lead applicant's age*</b>                            | Please provide your age at the time of applying. You need to be at least 18 years old at the time of applying to be eligible.                                                 |
| <b>Start date*</b>                                      | Enter 1 March 2027, which is approximately when the programme will start.                                                                                                     |
| <b>End date*</b>                                        | Enter 31 October 2027, which is approximately when the programme will end.                                                                                                    |

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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ownership*</b><br><b>Drop-down selection</b>               | <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><b>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.</b> 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>                            |
| <b>Current and past team details*</b>                         | <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"> <li>• Yourself.</li> <li>• Any other key team members who are currently working with you on your innovation.</li> <li>• Any other originators or collaborators who have been involved with the development of the innovation.</li> </ul> <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> |
| <b>Current partnerships and supporters *</b><br>100 words max | Identify any other critical advisors, supporters or partners helping you now, beyond your current team, and how they support your business.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Innovation title *</b>                                | 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.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Business name</b>                                     | Give the name of your business or company, if different from the above.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Website and social media</b>                          | If you have a website, Facebook page or X 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.                                         |
| <b>One-line pitch*</b><br>50 words max                   | Provide a one-line pitch for your business or innovation.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Product development stage*</b><br>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).<br>Please note that innovations at idea stage are not eligible.                                 |
| <b>Innovation summary*</b><br>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?                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Key features*</b><br>100 words max                    | List and explain the key technology and engineering features that underpin your innovation and how it works.                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Short-term product roadmap*</b> 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 |
| <b>Long-term product roadmap*</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Product costs breakdown*</b>                           | <p>Please provide a clear financial breakdown of costs for your product in GBP (£). You can convert from your local currency to GBP here: <a href="https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/">www.xe.com/currencyconverter/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling price to customer</li> <li>• Commissions/agency fees (if indirect)</li> <li>• Direct revenue received per unit</li> <li>• Cost per unit</li> <li>• Net margin</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Technology and Innovation diagrams*</b><br>File upload | <p>Please upload technical diagrams 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 a simple diagram or schematic showing all key components and interfaces</p> <p>You could back this up with any other more detailed schematics and design drawings that illustrate your innovation</p> <p>These will be used by our technical experts to understand how your product works.</p> |
| <b>Use of AI acknowledgement*</b><br>100 word max         | Indicate whether you used generative AI to support the creation of the materials attached in the previous question. If yes, please provide details on how and why it was used.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Technology and innovation images*</b><br>File upload   | <p>Please upload supporting material in the form of short videos and or photographs showing your prototype or product in action.</p> <p>AI generated images or videos are not acceptable for this question and could result in ineligibility. All uploaded materials must be real, original and show the actual product as it currently exists.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                     | <p>If your innovation is software based, you may upload a short demo video and/or screenshots that clearly show the functioning product in use.</p> <p>If your video files are too large to upload directly, please compile the relevant links in a Word document and upload that document instead. Please ensure that all links and permissions are correctly set to allow reviewers to access and view the materials.</p> |
| <b>Engineering category*</b><br>Drop-down selection | 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 <a href="#">website</a> .                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Sector*</b><br>Drop-down selection               | Select the sector that most closely aligns with your innovation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Secondary sector</b><br>Drop-down selection      | Select the secondary sector that best applies to your innovation, if applicable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Keywords*</b>                                    | Please provide a maximum of 10 keywords to describe your innovation. For example, carbon, oil, engines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Pitch Deck*</b>                                  | <p>Please upload your pitch deck, which will provide useful additional information for the reviewers.</p> <p>Your pitch deck should contain between five and ten slides, covering your problem, solution, business, financials, traction and team.</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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Problem and users*</b><br>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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Solution benefits*</b><br>75 words max                              | <p>Please describe how your innovation addresses the problem you have identified above. Focus on potential impact of your innovation, not technical capabilities.</p> <p>Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest benefits with specific details.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Competitive advantage*</b><br>75 words max                          | <p>Describe why your innovation is better than existing or new alternatives. Focus on technical advantages rather than business or market considerations.</p> <p>Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest technical differentiators with specific details.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Evidence of impact and validation*</b><br>75 words max              | <p>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.</p> <p>If relevant, include customer feedback, satisfaction evidence, pilot results, or proof that customers value your solution.</p> <p>Be concise and focus on your 2-3 strongest impact metrics and validation points with specific details.</p> |
| <b>UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*</b><br>Drop-down selection | Please select from the list a maximum of three <a href="#">UN SDGs</a> 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Supporting documentation*</b><br>File upload        | <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"> <li>• letter of support from an incubator, accelerator or startup competition your business has previously been involved with</li> <li>• If an academic spin out, a letter of support from a university or research institution or school affiliated with the applicant</li> <li>• document of incorporation for your business</li> <li>• patent certificate for your innovation</li> </ul> <p><b>**</b>You may also upload an optional video up to 1 minute introducing your innovation and why you would like to join the Africa Prize. This does not replace the requirement to submit one supporting document.</p> <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"> <li>• details on the nature of the affiliation between the applicant/business and the university, research institute, incubator or tech hub</li> <li>• an explanation of why the business is suitable to be shortlisted for the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation</li> <li>• comment on the involvement, if any, of the university, research institute, incubator or tech hub with the business so far</li> <li>• a description of any IP, its ownership and status</li> </ul> |
| <b>Gender and equality statement*</b><br>400 words max | <p>In line with the UK Government's <a href="#">Gender Equality in Research and Innovation Policy</a>, 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 2027 to October 2027.
- 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.

## 8. 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How did you hear about the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation? *</b>        | <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 alumnus of the Africa Innovation Fellowship programme, please select other and write AIF.</p>                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Marketing consent</b>                                                            | Please select this box if you're happy to receive emails from the Royal Academy of Engineering regarding future funding opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Have you been shortlisted or participated in any other Academy programmes? *</b> | 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 the Advance programme. Please note this will not affect your current application.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Are you an alum of the Africa Innovation Fellowship?</b>                         | If you have been part of the Africa Innovation Fellowship, please specify the year of participation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Use of Generative AI</b>                                                         | <p>Please provide details on how generative AI tools were used in the preparation of your application. Details should be provided on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specify the generative AI tool or platform used</li> <li>• describe how the tool(s) were used</li> <li>• where possible include any prompts that were used and how the resulting outputs were incorporated into this application.</li> </ul> |

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## General Programme Information

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

Please review the Eligibility criteria section of this guide on pages 8-10.

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

Please note that 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.

### **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?**

By applying, the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions outlined in this guidance document. If selected for the Africa Programme, participation and any subsequent prize money will be awarded under the RD&I Terms and Conditions found on the [Academy's website](#).

## 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.

**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.

## 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.

## Two-Stage Application Process

**Q: What happens between Stage 1 and Stage 2?**

After Stage 1 closes on 8 September 2026, applications undergo eligibility checks and technical review by expert reviewer. Only long-listed candidates will be invited to complete Stage 2 in October 2026.

**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 2026 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.

## Assessment and Review Process

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

Please review the Assessment of applications section on page 11 of this guide.

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

Individual feedback will be provided for all applications by Spring 2027.

### **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 or 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 in January 2027 and will begin the eight-month training programme starting in February 2027, culminating in the final event in October 2027.

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

The Africa Prize is a hybrid programme and some travel may be required as part of the programme.

### **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

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## 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

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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 2027 to October 2027.

## 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 2027. 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 2027.

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](#).