



Request for Proposal: Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation

Entrepreneurship Training

www.raeng.org.uk/africaprize

Deadline for submissions: 23 September 2024

Interviews held: Week beginning 30 September

Period of engagement: November 2024 – November 2025

Allocated budget: £110,000

All queries and submissions to be sent to Catriona MacArthur, Senior Manager, Africa Programmes

catriona.macarthur@raeng.org.uk

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Summary of invitation

The Royal Academy of Engineering is looking to procure a training provider for the Cycle 11 cohort of the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation (Africa Prize) programme.

The Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, founded by the Royal Academy of Engineering, is Africa's biggest prize dedicated to engineering innovation. Running since 2014, it 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.

Sixteen entrepreneurs, 'the shortlist', participate in an eight-month, hybrid, business training and mentoring programme. Towards the end of the training, the shortlisted entrepreneurs are asked to submit a second application, enabling them to demonstrate how they have implemented their learnings into their businesses. The judging panel review the second stage applications and select four finalists from the sixteen, who go on to pitch at the final event and be in with a chance of winning £25,000. All 16 entrepreneurs go on to become part of an engaged and thriving alumni community.

Over the last ten years, the programme has supported almost 150 entrepreneurs from across sub-Saharan Africa. The businesses supported have gone on to create over 28,000 jobs, raise \$39 million in funding, and bring 470 products and services to market, with a reach of over 10 million beneficiaries.

The Prize is currently funded by the UK Government's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's (DSIT) Official Development Assistance funding, as well as charitable trusts and foundations, individual donors and corporate partners.

We are inviting an entrepreneurship training provider to consult, design and deliver a commercialisation training programme for the 11th cohort of the Africa Prize, considering participant and business needs both in the delivery of the programme and in the tailored offering made available for each participant and business.

We look forward to receiving your application.

About our organisation

The Royal Academy of Engineering (the Academy) harnesses the power of engineering to [build a sustainable society and an inclusive economy that works for everyone](#) in line with our strategy. In collaboration with our Fellows and partners, we're growing talent and developing skills for the future, driving

innovation and building global partnerships, and influencing policy and engaging the public.

As a charity, we deliver public benefit from engineering excellence and technology innovation. As a national academy, we provide progressive leadership for engineering and technology, and independent expert advice to government in the UK and beyond. As a Fellowship, we bring together an unrivalled community of leading business people, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics from every part of engineering and technology.

As an Academy we proactively seek to procure services from diverse teams and diverse suppliers. We expect the project to be delivered in line with our values of inclusion and diversity and to the highest ethical standards. Diverse perspectives should be considered in the development of proposals and outputs should be inclusive.

Statement of requirements

Objectives

We are looking for an innovative and dynamic organisation to:

1. Deliver an enhanced end-to-end training programme, online and in person, for the 2025 Cycle 11 Africa Prize shortlist, enabling all 16 businesses to:
 - achieve their full commercial potential;
 - drive profit and value for society; and
 - equip their team with the capacity to grow their businesses.
2. Provide a high degree of tailored support, ensuring all programme activities and the overall programme structure are designed in line with the individual requirements of the Africa Prize shortlist and their businesses.
3. Utilise organisational networks to allow for further support in areas of need, integrating diversity and inclusion considerations in doing so.

Deliverables and KPIs

Objective 1 deliverables:

- Deliver all elements of the programme on time, to budget, and in line with agreed parameters (to be confirmed at the inception meeting), maintaining clear communication with the Academy.
- Attendance and leadership at both in-person training weeks, including the final, scheduled for March and October 2025 respectively.



KPIs:

- Evidence that different member's needs are taken into account in the delivery of the programme, e.g. format of training, timings etc.
- High level of participant satisfaction and engagement, measured through net promoter scores, learning outcomes and data collection, regarding the quality of the training received.
- Monthly meetings held with the Academy and feedback provided on a regular basis.

Objective 2 deliverables:

- A diagnostic analysis of each Africa Prize shortlist member's current knowledge, stage and intentions to inform targeted and tailored training and support. Application forms will be provided to the training provider; however, additional baseline activities can be conducted.
- Creation of short business profiles for each entrepreneur that can be shared with product mentors and experts.
- Operational oversight of all individual programme tracks so all participants receive a tailored and meaningful experience of equal quality to their peers, with regular updates provided to the Academy.
- An overview of progress for each entrepreneur against the initial baseline assessment, alongside SMART objectives for the next two years

KPIs:

- As part of the inception report, a clear overview of findings for each Africa Prize shortlist business, including suggested areas of focus, both for the individual businesses as well as for the wider cohort.
- Clear, consistent and easy-to-follow business profiles, delivered within one month of the first training week in London.
- High level of participant satisfaction and engagement, measured through net promoter scores, learning outcomes and data collection, regarding the tailored support received.
- Evidence of progress of all shortlist members against key metrics (to be provided by the Academy and to include investment raised, progress made within investor readiness framework, other prizes won etc) reported in progress and final reports.
- Evidence of progress against initial baseline assessments, alongside a 2-year plan of action for each business, in the final report.

Objective 3 deliverables:

- Relevant introductions and facilitation of meetings with experts, investors, mentors for the Africa Prize shortlist as needed for their specific business goals.
- Diversity of experts recruited to deliver training and tailored business sessions, taking into account a variety of considerations, including but not

limited to ethnic, gender, sectoral expertise, language and regional considerations.

KPIs:

- Demonstrated evidence of shortlist members being connected with relevant stakeholders in relation to growing their businesses.
- Evidence of diversity of trainers and experts detailed in the inception report.

Duration

This engagement begins in November 2024 with onboarding and preparation for the shortlist announcement and ends in November 2025 following the Africa Prize final. The timeline for key dates in Cycle 11 is detailed below.

Date	Cycle 11	Cycle 12
13 June 2024	Applications open	
15 October 2024	Applications close	
October - January 2024	Review of applications	
January 2025	Shortlist decided	
February 2025	Training begins	
17-21 March 2025	Shortlist come to London	
19/20 March 2025	Shortlist press release	
July 2025	Deadline for submission of stage 2 applications	Applications open
September 2025	Judges meet and determine finalists (1-5 Sep) Finalists press release (8-12 Sep)	
October 2025 (Working date: 16 October)	Training and final event Winner press release	Applications close

Within the eight-month training programme, there will be two in-person segments:

- **Beginning of training programme – March 2025**
This will take place in London. The training programme will be designed in collaboration with the Academy team and is likely to include technical training, soft skills training and visits and networking in the UK relevant to the innovations and desired impact. There will also likely be a media training session run by the designated communications agency. The shortlist will be announced to the public during this time.

- **End of training programme – October 2025**

This will take place in a location tbc on the African continent. The final will take place on the Thursday evening and the expectation is that the final training week will take place ahead of this event, commencing on the Sunday evening, and ending on the Friday morning, after the final.

Further context

Further information about prospective applicant requirements and the shortlist can be found in Annex 1.

Training programme content

General entrepreneurial training might include: (please note this list is not exhaustive and innovative topics and ways of conducting training will be welcome).

<p>Enabling environments for innovation and entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development Goals • Impact through entrepreneurship • Innovation ecosystems (Africa) 	<p>Communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business communication • Personal communication • Presenting and pitching • Networking
<p>Customer discovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding customer needs • Customer relationships • Market research • Product iteration based on customer understanding • Customer acquisition, sales and revenue 	<p>People and Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and inclusion • Human resourcing/team building • Leadership and team culture • Mindfulness and wellbeing
<p>Business modelling and customer markets</p>	<p>Routes to market and commercialisation options (license, spinout, start-up)</p>
<p>Core value proposition and competitor analysis</p>	<p>Financing growth</p>
<p>Sales and marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation and influencing • Digital marketing and building a brand 	<p>Raising investment and bootstrapping</p>
<p>Finance and cash flow</p>	<p>Operations and governance</p>
<p>Intellectual property rights and regulation, IP strategy</p>	<p>Growth and scalability</p>
<p>Peer-to-peer learning sessions</p>	<p>Pitch design support</p>

In addition to the entrepreneurship components, the programme should integrate the following:

- Sustainable business impact: A consideration of for profit, for purpose business principles and sustainable business models, integrating long term perspectives on environmental impact and sustainability, including inclusive, human-centred design, and designing for end of life. This component should include reference to the role that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play as a tool for driving socio-economic development.
- Investor readiness within the African context: Although ranked as one of the most entrepreneurial regions in the world, seed and early-stage investment in African early-stage companies remains underserved. H1 has been the quietest semester in terms of start-up funding in Africa since late 2020, with \$780m raised; 79% of which was invested in start-ups in one of the Big Four (Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa).

There are challenges in equipping entrepreneurs to be investor ready, both from a market perspective (being aware of regulatory issues, understanding unit profitability and its peak, developing points of differentiation, etc) and from a softer skills perspective, i.e. having the right team and story. The content under this theme should consider how early-stage businesses can become investor-ready within an African context. The format of this integration is not prescriptive.

Linked to this, we would like to see evidence of relevant networks that could support in connecting the entrepreneurs with VCs, or impact investors, for example.

- Social entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs design innovative solutions for the world's toughest challenges, often generating social, economic and environmental value for the markets and communities in which they operate. Can business still generate profit while doing good? Is profit and purpose inextricably linked? We anticipate that content in this theme will explore how business can be a force for good in creating a better world for all.
- Expert sessions: A key USP of the Africa Prize is the opportunities available for tailored training and support. We would like the entrepreneurs to be able to sign up for a number of expert sessions during the training programme on topics where their need is greatest.
- Leadership and resilience: Experience with recent cohorts has shown the importance of self-awareness, and that knowing your own and your team's



strengths and weaknesses is vital for overcoming setbacks, adapting and pivoting. Developing resilience and attaining a good work life balance is crucial for our shortlist to support themselves and their team to grow and thrive through hard times. We anticipate this theme will involve peer support and learning, the importance of looking after one's own mental health and prioritising effectively, discussions around resilience and understanding strengths and weaknesses and will also touch on confidence and leadership skills.

In most recent years, the Abaca framework has been utilised as a means of collecting evidence to demonstrate business readiness for future investment. Though the use of this particular framework is not prescriptive, the Academy would welcome suggestions for frameworks that are designed with a focus on investor readiness.

Experience

We are looking for a provider with:

- Capacity and resources to deliver a tailored training programme for 16 entrepreneurs over an 8-month period, commencing in November 2024 and ending in November 2025.
- At least five years' experience in delivering high-impact entrepreneurship training for early-stage start-ups in an African context. We would like to see evidence of unique insights and lessons learnt through this experience.
- Demonstrable knowledge of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in sub-Saharan Africa
- Direct experience of starting up or developing new businesses.
- Direct experience of coaching and/or mentoring early-stage start-ups.
- Evidence of flexible approach to accommodate potential last-minute changes and ability to respond to the needs of the situation.
- Evidence of relevant networks that could support in connecting the entrepreneurs with VCs, or impact investors, for example.

ODA compliance

As a government funded project this work must be ODA compliant. The proposal will need to make explicit reference to how the project will adhere to ODA guidance for use of funding. All proposed items should be justified, and the budget must represent value for money, given the nature of the funding.

Working with the Academy

The service provider will be required to:

- Hold monthly meetings with the Africa Prize team to update on progress and discuss future plans.

- Provide evaluation reports in an agreed format for the Academy at key milestones.

These should include;

An **inception report, post training week** detailing:

- An overview of findings from the baseline business assessments, including areas for focus
- Any modifications needed to the original training plan or suggestions as a result
- Business profiles for each entrepreneur
- Overview of training implementation to date
- Details on trainers and experts involved in delivery of training
- Entrepreneur framework to be utilised
- Entrepreneur engagement
- Confidence and wellbeing levels
- Feedback and reflections from in-person training week
- Any modifications needed to the original training plan or suggestions as a result

A **mid-year report** detailing:

- Lessons learned and iterations made to date
- Progress of all shortlist members against key metrics (to be provided by the Academy and to include investment raised, progress made within investor readiness framework, for example)
- Feedback from shortlist on training content, delivery, and trainers
- Updated framework and or/Gantt chart as needed, taking into account any necessary agreed changes

A **final report** detailing:

- As above for the mid-year report
- An overview of progress for each entrepreneur against the initial baseline assessment, alongside SMART objectives for the next two years.
- Further details to be discussed nearer the time



Schedule

Activity	Timeline
Deadline for submissions	23 September, 12pm BST
Interviews	Week beginning 30 September
Award tender	Week beginning 7 October
Contracting	14-25 October
Onboarding	November
Commencement of work	January 2025
End of contract	November 2025

Please send your clarification questions and submissions to:

Catriona MacArthur, Senior Manager Africa Programmes

catriona.macarthur@raeng.org.uk

Submitting a proposal

Tender documents should not be more than 20 pages and should include the following information, against the following headings:

- **Company details:** Information about the organisation and links to relevant policies, including registration number, bank details for financial reference purposes, evidence of public and product liability insurance, and written confirmation of willingness to provide audited accounts should they be required.
- **Company track record:** A description of the provider's track record in delivering similar entrepreneurial training programmes, events and community-building activities across the globe, in person and/or digitally and with specific reference to Africa.

- **Team capacity:** an overview of the team, including facilitators and peer mentors, responsible for implementing the training and programme design and their roles and experience.
- **Value fit:** A description of how you will ensure diversity and inclusion in programme delivery, in particular through integration of underrepresented groups (e.g. women, black Africans and French speakers) in the implementation and delivery of the programme as facilitators and trainers.
- **Proposed methodology:** a full description of the proposed conceptual framework to drive end to end learner experience and deliver training through a hybrid model. This will include key modules, module description, learning outcomes and hours and modes of engagement.
- **Project implementation plan:** displayed diagrammatically and chronologically.
- **Evaluation:** The process and metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the training programme, with reference to the impact metrics listed above for individuals and the programme as a whole.
- **Budget:** A detailed account of the total cost of designing and delivering the training programme. Please break down the cost by: project design, project management, data collection and analysis, reporting, content development, virtual platform fees and other technology, facilitator or speaker fees, travel and subsistence (if applicable) and any other costs related to the programme, such as administration, staff costs etc. Please note the Academy will not support any per diem expenditure.
- **Client testimonials:** At least three references with written statements, and links to any available work undertaken (media coverage, links on social media etc.) from clients engaged in the past three years, with full name of the organisation, title and summary of the scope of work undertaken, and contact details.

Scoring matrix

0	No Answer/Unacceptable Response
1	Very Poor Response
2	Poor Response
3	Acceptable Response
4	Good Response
5	Excellent Response

To score well (i.e. 3 and above) the evaluation panel will look for clear evidence. The scores will be weighted to give an overall score. The tables below indicate the weightings which will be applied to each section. The three highest scoring proposals will be invited to the Academy to present their proposal.

At interview, we will consider all criteria. The scores given before the interview may be amended following new information provided at interview.

Selection criteria

Your response will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Selection criteria and scoring table

Section: Programme Content			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Quality, appropriateness and novelty	0-5	4	20
Approach to customisation and tailored support	0-5	3	15
All key requested service areas covered	Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
Total		35	

Section: Track Record			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Expertise of the supplier(s) and required individuals in relation to the service being procured.	0-5	2	10
Track record of the supplier in delivering high impact entrepreneurial training for an African audience	0-5	2	10
Evidence of relevant networks to enable useful introductions and connections to be made for entrepreneurs.	0-5	2	10
Appropriate resource to deliver	Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
Total		30	

Section: Evaluation			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Appropriateness of the process and metrics used to evaluate the programme	0-5	2	5
Total		10	

Section: Diversity and Inclusion			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Careful thought of an inclusive and diverse team, leveraging knowledge, connections or experience in SSA to deliver the training. Inclusion of Black African and French-speaking trainers and mentors as leads for delivery of the programme.	0-5	2	5
Total		10	

Award criteria scoring table

Section: Schedule			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
The timescale to successfully deliver is realistic	0-5	7	5
Delivery process is clear and realistic	0-5	7	5
Total		10	

Section: Cost			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Is reasonably costed	Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
Has accounted for all costs to deliver proposal	0-5	7	5
Expenditure broken down and pricing clear	0-5	7	5
Total		10	

Section: Organisation			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Suitability of the organisation	0-5	2	10
Client References - suitability of nominated references	Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
Client References - quality of reference received back	Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
Total		15	

If you wish to receive any additional or updated information, please ensure that you register interest prior to submitting the proposal. All proposals* must remain valid for a period of **90 days** from the date of submission by the vendor. This RFP and the information contained within it are deemed to be confidential information. Proposals must include information about costs and state whether these do or do not include VAT or any other levies. By submission of a proposal, the vendor warrants that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation or agreement with any other potential vendor.



Annex 1 – Key stakeholders

(i) Applicants

Applicants should have developed, and be in the early stages of commercialising, an engineering innovation that:

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

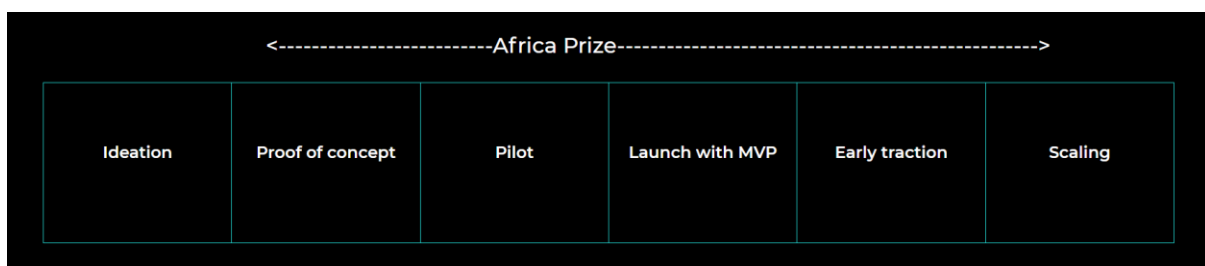
The innovation can be any new product, technology or service, based on research in engineering defined in its broadest sense to encompass a wide range of fields. This includes but is not limited to: agricultural technology, biotechnology, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, design engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, ICT, materials science, mechanical engineering, and medical engineering.

If the business is focused on **developing 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 manufacturing
- have clear evidence that an early version of their innovation is generating traction with a sufficient number of prospective customers to underpin forecasts 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





Please note, the lead applicant must have an engineering innovation, although they are not required to be an engineering graduate or student to apply.

For a full list of eligibility criteria, please visit the [Africa Prize website](#).

Though participation of women founders has been growing over the last decade of the programme, this is still an area of focus for the programme, and efforts to promote the programme and encourage applications from women will be looked upon favourably.

To date, there have been applications for the Africa Prize from 37 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and entrepreneurs from more than 20 countries have been selected to participate in the programme. The Africa Prize seeks to support entrepreneurs from countries that have less developed entrepreneurship ecosystems and increasing applications from such countries remains a priority. Further details on the relevant countries can be provided to the selected supplier.

(ii) Shortlist

- Sixteen entrepreneurs are selected by the Academy to participate every year in the programme; this group is known as the 'shortlist'. The shortlist are the faces of the respective innovations/businesses that have been selected for participation in the programme. They participate in the majority of trainings, online and in person, and in media interviews. Co-founders sometimes participate in trainings if the shortlist member is unable to attend (with prior agreement).
- The shortlist member will travel to London for the in-person training, as well as to the final where they will pitch their business to a live audience.
- The shortlist member does not need to be an engineer themselves; however, they do need to be able to speak to the engineering/technology components of their innovation.
- The majority of the entrepreneurs are based in SSA, with a small percentage based outside of SSA with imminent plans to return.
- Shortlist members will have developed, and be in the early stages of commercialising, an engineering innovation that:
 - will bring social and/or environmental benefits to a country or countries in sub-Saharan Africa
 - has strong potential to be replicated and scaled-up
 - is accompanied by an ambitious but realistic business plan that has strong commercial viability.



- Their innovation can be any new product, technology or service, based on research in engineering defined in its broadest sense to encompass a wide range of fields. This includes but is not limited to: agricultural technology, biotechnology, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, design engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, ICT, materials science, mechanical engineering, and medical engineering.
- The shortlist will mostly be early-stage entrepreneurs with, at minimum a prototype but predominantly pre-revenue. However, there will be a range of stages and business acumen represented, therefore bespoke support is required.
- As part of the eight-month programme, and to complement the entrepreneurship training component, the Academy will match each entrepreneur with a product mentor who can support the entrepreneur with the more technical components of their business. The process of matching will start as soon as the shortlist are confirmed, with the goal of making a connection within the first two months of the programme. The entrepreneurs are advised to meet with their product mentor for up to 1.5 hours per month whilst they are participating in the programme. The current mentor pool is largely made up of Academy Fellows and the Academy's UK and international networks.

The 16 individuals/teams on the Cycle 11 shortlist will not be selected until January 2025. Previous participants can be viewed on our [interactive map](#) or on our list of [recent awardees](#). To date, there have been applications for the Africa Prize from 37 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and entrepreneurs from 22 countries have been selected to participate in the programme.