



Inventor Prize - Frequently Asked Questions

Below you can find a collection of answers to the most common questions about the Inventor Prize.

For further details please refer to the [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Judging Criteria](#).

If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact us at inventorprize@nesta.org.uk

About the Prize

1. Why is Nesta, and partners, running the Inventor Prize?

The Inventor Prize has been launched as part of the [Government's Industrial Strategy](#), and some of the key pillars of this Strategy centre around backing local innovation, supporting businesses to start and grow, and creating the right conditions so that these new businesses can access the finance and management skills they need.

The Inventor Prize feeds into this, as the Prize will be supporting people with great products to scale and grow, and help them in their journey to getting their product to market. The Prize will do this by offering the finalists the support they need, and by removing and lowering the barriers that stop inventors from succeeding.

2. What are the key dates of the Prize?

9 August 2017 - Prize opens for entries
22 October 2017, 23:00 - Deadline for entries
Early December 2017 - Finalist announcement
10 January 2018 - Induction event for finalists
Mid-May 2018 - Mid-point event for finalists
September 2018 - Winner announcement

3. Who is providing the funds for running this challenge?

The Challenge Prize has been funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) that brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy, and climate change. See the [BEIS website](#) for more information.

4. What kind of products are you looking for?

We are looking for both physical and digital products that can make lives of people in the UK better. It should be clear how the product is making people's lives better (how it tackles issues faced by people in the UK).

- Physical Products are merchandise, apparel, and other physical goods that are sold to customers. Examples include clothing, furniture, homewares and hardware.
- Digital products are online and can be downloaded, such as eBooks, software and apps . This can include digital services such as banking apps, but excludes services like Uber and Spotify.

5. What do you mean by 'make lives of people in the UK better'?

We're looking for products that can help solve some of the issues faced by people in the UK - therefore making their lives better. Issues that people face can range from energy and the environment, jobs and the economy, to public health, education and ageing.

We've put together a [brief on issues](#) to help you think how your product can relate to a bigger issue. For examples of inventions that help people, see our case studies page.

6. What do you mean by innovative?

Innovation could involve coming up with a brand new idea, combining things in a new way, or finding new ways of making existing solutions work better. The best innovations often involve re-organising processes or the way people interact with a product for example.

7. How does the Prize define 'inventors'?

An inventor is a person or a small group that has made an intellectual contribution to the proposed invention. They may invent something totally from scratch or might build on and improve something already established. (Please note if building or improving on something already established you have to ensure you are not infringing on the intellectual property of someone else). See question 25 for more information about the IP.

8. What do you mean by co-creation?

In simple terms, co-creating an idea means developing and testing the product with the people it's meant to benefit. For the purpose of this prize it can mean that either a potential user is part of the team developing the product or that the users are involved through comprehensive consultation and user testing during the development of the product.

9. How important is it for entrants to demonstrate an insight into the issue their product is related to?

It is extremely important and that is why co-creation is a key entry criterion. Your product needs to meet a need and demonstrate a genuine understanding of the issue(s) faced by people in the UK that your product is trying to tackle.

10. How can I contact the Inventor Prize team?

If you have enquiries about how to enter the competition please e-mail inventorprize@nesta.org.uk or use our [online contact form](#).

11. Why is the Inventor Prize restricted to the UK?

Because the funding is provided by UK Government, the funding needs to be allocated in the UK.

Entry period

12. Who can enter the Inventor Prize?

You need to be an individual or a small team to be eligible to enter. The entrants don't have to be professional inventors, they can be hobbyists, life hackers, DIY disrupters - anyone who has a good idea and started turning it into reality can apply. Please note, if you are applying as a small business you need to meet a micro-entity requirement, so have two of the following:

- a turnover of £632,000 or less;
- £316,000 or less on the balance sheet;
- 10 employees or less.

If you are applying as another type of an organisation (e.g. NGO, CIC etc), you need to meet the above requirements.

13. What stage of development do you expect the submitted products to be?

We will accept products that have NOT been on sale before. We expect entrants to already have a working example of how their product can potentially function. It doesn't have to be a finalised prototype, as support will be offered to finalists to improve their model.

14. When is the deadline for online entries?

The deadline for entries is at 23:00 GMT on 22 October 2017.

15. How do I access the entry form?

[The entry form can be accessed via this link](#). Please note, new users will be asked to register first to access the entry form. You can save your application and come back to it later using the same registration details. You can also find a PDF version of the entry form on our website to help you understand what the questions are beforehand. **Please note we only accept applications submitted electronically.**

16. Does my product need to solve a specific issue?

We only accept products that tackle specific issue(s) faced by people in the UK to make their lives better, Please refer to Question 5 for more information about what types of issues we're particularly interested in.

17. Can I apply if I'm based outside of the UK?

The Inventor Prize is open to entrants based in the UK only. However, if you reside outside the UK you can partner with a UK based individual/team and apply as a group with the UK based team member being the main applicant. All money received through

the Prize must be spent in accordance with the terms of grant agreement on activities in the UK to the benefit of people in the UK. See Question 12 for guidance on who can enter the prize.

18. I am already part of a similar initiative; can I use that as an entry for this challenge?

As we are looking for innovative products therefore you will need to explain how your product differs if it builds on something else that you know of or are currently delivering. It's important for us to understand that it is a new idea and the information included in the application need to be relevant to our [judging criteria](#).

19. How do you define a 'small team'?

To be eligible, small teams can be constituted or non-constituted. If you enter as a non-constituted individual or team you will be supported to become a legal entity for grant processing reasons (if you're selected as a finalist). This should also help you to commercialise your product in the future. Small teams might include for example a group of university graduates, club members, local mums or neighbours. For more guidance on who can enter please see Question 12.

20. Is there a registration fee?

No. The Prize is free to enter.

21. I have entered my idea into another competition; can I submit the same product to this competition?

Yes you can apply even if you have entered another competition. Please make sure you provide relevant and specific answers to the entry questions for this competition.

The other competition may have rules about you entering your idea in more than one competition. It is your responsibility to check this before you enter this competition.

22. Can I submit more than one entry?

If you have more than one good idea with a working model demonstrating how it works, you can submit multiple entries to the Inventor Prize. Please note, each product needs to be described in a separate [online application](#).

23. I have already developed my product, can I use that as an entry for this Prize?

We're looking for products that never been on sale before. Additionally, as we are looking for innovation, you will need to explain how your idea differs or if it builds on something else that you know of or are currently developing. It's important for us to understand that it is a new idea or a new way of doing things.

24. Is there an age limit for the entrants?

Yes, according to the [terms & conditions](#) the entrants must be aged 18 or above to be eligible to enter. Younger entrants (14 -17) can apply as a team with an adult as the lead applicant and with permission from their legal guardian.

25. Who owns the intellectual property of the submitted products?

The entrant will retain intellectual property of the idea, in accordance with the [Prize terms & conditions](#).

26. Can I remove my entry once I have submitted it?

Yes, you can send an e-mail to inventorprize@nesta.org.uk and request for your entry to be removed.

27. Can I get some advice on how to best enter the competition?

If you have enquiries about how to enter the competition please e-mail inventorprize@nesta.org.uk or use our [online contact form](#).

28. What happens to the entrants that don't make it to the finalist stage of the Prize?

Although we unfortunately won't be able to support all entrants, we will be looking at ways of signposting applicants to more funding opportunities and other types of support.

Finalist stage

29. Who will decide on the finalists?

We are bringing together a high-profile panel of judges, whose combined expertise will cover: knowledge of the commercial market, experience in inventing a product, experience in running a successful business, experience in supporting inventors, knowledge of IP and others. The judges' profiles will be published shortly on the [Prize website](#).

The judges decision will be based on assessments against the criteria to ensure that the finalists' products have commercial potential and could make a real difference to the lives of people in the UK.

30. How will the finalists be selected?

Ten successful finalists will be selected based on the [judging criteria](#). At the entry stage we're looking for products that best demonstrate the potential to meet the judging criteria.

31. When will the finalists be announced?

We're anticipating to announce the finalists in late November/early December. More details will be published closer to the date.

32. What kind of support will be offered for finalists?

Apart from £5,000 grant, every finalist will be entitled to use the support over the course of the finalist stage (December 2017 to September 2018). This will be provided by a specialist delivery partner who will work with you to understand the level and type of support you require. Engaging with the delivery partner is not compulsory, however, we recommend that finalists make use of their support. We would like to enable finalists to

build their skills to the longer term benefit of their product and organisation. This support may take the form of workshops, materials and toolkits, 1-2-1 mentoring and access to experts.

33. What can finalists expect during the finalist stage?

The finalists will receive financial and non-financial support (see Question 32). The shortlisted participants will also receive relevant guidance on their journey, including but not limited to key dates, document templates, assessment process and criteria. Additionally, the finalists can expect profiling and networking opportunities.

34. What will be expected from finalists during the Prize?

Essentially, the finalists are expected to develop and test their products. They will be also expected to write regular blogs and attend relevant events. To select the winner of the prize, all finalists will be required to complete a business plan (using a template provided by the Prize Team) and present their ideas to judges at the final judging panel (August 2018).

35. What can the £5,000 grant be spent on?

The grant must be used by the finalists to develop their product. It can be used to for example buy materials for a prototype, pay for expert advice or for production and distribution.. All details will be included in grant letters for finalists.

36. What is the judging criteria?

The judging criteria against which all entries will be assessed include: Innovation; Insight and Impact; Quality and Safety; Market Potential & Feasibility. See the [judging criteria page](#) for more information.

WINNER

37. What are the prizes and who will win them?

£50,000 will be awarded to the finalist that best demonstrates meeting the judging criteria. There will be two runner up prizes of £15,000 and £5,000 for two most promising products.

38. Who will decide on the prize winners and runners up?

The judging panel will select the winners of the Inventor Prize. For more details about the panel, see Question 29.

39. When will the winners and runners up be announced?

They will be announced at the award event in September 2018.

40. Are there guaranteed winners and runners up?

No, the distribution of the prize fund will depend on performance against our criteria. We will only award the prize money if the judges consider an entry or entries to have met or exceeded the challenge criteria. Please also read the [Terms and Conditions](#).

41. What can the £50,000 winner's prize and runner up prizes be used for?

The money essentially need to be spent on the product development. The prize will be awarded in the form of a grant contract with agreed deliverables. Read our [Terms and Conditions](#) for more information. More information will be provided to the awardees.

42. Once the prize has ended, then what?

Hopefully, this will just be the start! We hope that finalists will be in a position to continue to develop their products and potentially get them to market. We will be looking at ways of signposting applicants to more funding opportunities and other types of support too.