



## **INDO PACIFIC 2022 Innovation Awards**

### **How to prepare a strong entry**

How do you prepare a strong entry for the *Indo Pacific 2022* Industry Innovation Awards? Is there a secret to success? The short answer is No – but here are some guidelines to help you prepare your entry and present it in the best possible light.

#### **ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?**

Download and read carefully the Eligibility Criteria for the category in which you wish to nominate. You'd be surprised how many don't. Check for any age limits (if applicable).

#### **JUDGING CRITERIA**

Make sure you read the entry form correctly. The three criteria against which all entries will be judged are deliberately simple:

1. Commercial Success or Demonstrated Market Potential
2. Understanding of user needs
3. Originality and innovation

These awards are designed for practical innovators: individuals and companies who intend to bring a new product or service (or business process) to market. An innovation can be defined very broadly as a new idea that gets adopted and used. So please treat your entry for these awards as, in some ways, a test of your business case as well as of your creativity and technological mastery: if somebody wouldn't buy it, then why should it be a candidate for these awards?

Firstly, think carefully about '**Commercial Success**' and '**Demonstrated Market Potential**'. The former is simple – have you developed a new and innovative product or service, and then sold it recently to a launch customer? If so, then you meet this criterion. The latter is more difficult: you may have a product or service ready for the market that hasn't yet achieved a sale – but the lack of sales success could be due to one of three factors:

1. The newness of the innovation: not a problem if you satisfy the other two criteria, have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL<sup>1</sup>) of around 7 or, ideally, 8 (System Qualified Through Test and Demonstration) and can show a reasoned plan, based on a **quantified** estimate of market demand and a well thought-out roadmap to bring your innovation to market.

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<sup>1</sup> See here for a description of TRLs:

[https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/scan/engineering/technology/txt\\_accordion1.html](https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/scan/engineering/technology/txt_accordion1.html)

2. The innovation may not, in fact, be market-ready: a working model or proof of concept prototype is not good enough. Depending on the strength of customer demand or the quality of your business case, you'll need to be at TRL 6 (Prototype Demonstration in Relevant Environment) or 7 (System Prototype in Operational Environment) to have any realistic chance of success.
3. The market may not want the innovation: it may be a great solution looking for a problem that doesn't really exist, or you simply haven't done enough market research as yet to be able to build a reasonable business case for the innovation; in which case you don't satisfy Criterion 2 above, either.

Secondly, think about **'Understanding of user needs'**. This is where innovation begins: demonstrating your understanding of the user and the environment he or she is operating in and the benefits and positive changes your innovation can deliver. This is generally quite straightforward and is a function of your own specialist expertise as well as the market research that you've carried out. You may, however, be offering an innovation that is such a game-changer that the user can't really grasp what you're proposing; whether it's invisible paint or a self-cleaning gun, you'll still need to convince the judges that you understand the users' needs and that your innovation will satisfy them, given the chance.

Thirdly, think about **'Originality and Innovation'**. Innovation can be described simply as something that is either new to the adopter or that changes the adopter's circumstances and/or behaviour – and it may be a combination of all three.

For example, you may develop an entirely new and innovative use for an iPad and WiFi. You don't need to have re-invented either to achieve this and your innovation may result in revolutionary change in somebody's working life. That's a genuine innovation. Similarly, you may have developed an all-new product that solves an identified problem or saves somebody a lot of money, or that creates an opportunity for the user to do something important that he couldn't before.

The measures of originality and innovation are fairly simple: if nobody has thought of it before, then it's original. It's innovative if it allows the user to change and improve his or her processes and procedures and achieve a superior outcome – the greater the change, the better the outcome, the greater the impact of the innovation. (And if it doesn't promise sufficient change, then any needless disruption or expense involved in adopting it may be a significant deterrent to a potential end user. That's a sign that it's not really an innovation.)

#### **WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE:**

Focus on providing objective evidence demonstrating how your product/process meets the respective criterion or supports claims you make as part of your submission. Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Comparisons of performance with competing/similar products or processes;
- Quantitative / measured results from testing or demonstrations;
- Independent statements from customers or end-users;
- Measurable impacts (e.g., dollars saved, performance or efficiency gains, etc.);
- References to outcomes or supporting documents (e.g., patents, standards, customer requirements, research publications, media coverage, etc.).

**WHAT THE JUDGES DON'T WANT TO SEE:**

The judges don't want to see:

1. Something that is merely a well-engineered but incremental improvement to an existing product or process.
2. Something that is well engineered and well suited to its intended task, but isn't very different or superior to other solutions to the same problem that may also be available.
3. A really good idea that isn't much more than that as it hasn't been developed properly to the point where it meets Judging criterion 1.
4. An application that does not provide objective evidence or support for its claims (unverified or subjective statements).

**For Further Information:**

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