



End Plastic Pollution International Collaborative Innovation Prize Request for Proposals

RFP application open: August 29, 2024

Award announced: December 2024

Funding Type: Subaward grants for non-profit winners, Fixed-fee contracts for for-profit winners. Please note that projects are funded by the Aspen Institute through the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of State (DOS). All funded projects are managed on a cost-reimbursable basis of actual costs.

Project Size: 1 award (between \$500,000 and \$900,000 USD) for prize design, implementation, and post-award support (the prize purse is a separate fund).

Project Duration: 16 - 24 months (tentative start date is January 2025).

Attachments:

- [Annex A: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan](#)
- [Annex B: Domestic Subrecipient Profile Questionnaire](#)
- [Annex C: Foreign Subrecipient Profile Questionnaire](#)
- [Annex D: Subaward Grant Agreement \(draft agreement\)](#)

About the Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Aspen Institute seeks proposals from organizations who are capable of designing and implementing the EPPIC Plastics Innovation Prize in concert with the Institute and its EPPIC partners. Organizations who apply should have a proven track record of working in the prize/competition design space. The Institute is particularly interested in organizations who have a proven track record in managing international innovation prizes/competitions, and can offer robust services inclusive of a communication and outreach strategy, applicant support both during the application window and after the awards are disbursed, and resource mobilization support for a larger prize purse. This RFP is for 1 competition/prize with an opportunity to award multiple ‘prizes’.

Timeline

Request for Proposals	
August 29, 2024	Qualified applicants are invited to submit full proposal



September 27, 2024 (11:59 PM EST)	Deadline to submit full proposal
December 2024	Awards announced

Proposals should be submitted to aspeneep@aspeninstitute.org with the following subject: EPPIC Innovation Prize Proposal from [name of lead organization].

Overview of the Plastics Innovation Prize

The Aspen Institute is seeking proposals for an organization to design and implement its newly launched [Plastics Innovation Prize](#) through the [End Plastic Pollution International Collaborative](#) (EPPIC), which aims to promote global efforts to advance plastic circularity with an emphasis on targeting innovations in the upstream and midstream plastic value chain. ‘Upstream’ is exclusive of raw material extraction.

The Institute, along with its EPPIC partners (see *About the EPPIC Host Consortium* below), will actively engage with the selected organization to design and implement a robust innovation prize that aligns with the principles of EPPIC.

The prize, with an initial, tentative prize purse of ~\$1 - 2M USD (higher range is contingent on additional Department of State funds and/or additional funds acquired through resource mobilization), will catalyze innovation for location appropriate plastic circularity solutions. The forthcoming prize should support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), locally appropriate solutions, and/or informal sectors.

The organization, along with the EPPIC Host Consortium, will convene an Ad Hoc Prize Committee. The Committee will be composed of plastic pollution experts who will ultimately assist with the final selection of winners. The Aspen Institute will chair that committee with the assistance of the selected organization.

The awarded organization chosen to support the Plastics Innovation Prize will assist the Aspen Institute and its partners to design, promote, and implement the prize on a global scale, including within EPPIC priority regions (Central America and Sub-Saharan Africa) and Small-Island Developing States (SIDs)¹. An essential aspect of the innovation prize will be the support offered

¹There are countries the prize will be prohibited from working within due to the restrictions of funds from the U.S. Department of State. The EPPIC team will discuss country restrictions with the selected prize partner.



to awardees post-award to ensure the success of their work. Support offered may include mentorship opportunities, resources, etc. Support should range between 3 and 12 months.

About Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. Within the Institute, the Energy & Environment Program (EEP) works with thought leaders to challenge, review, test, and shape energy, conservation, and environmental policies, governance systems, and institutions that support the wellbeing of both nature and society. EEP addresses these issues through non-partisan, non-ideological convenings and facilitated collaborations, with the intent of bringing together diverse stakeholders to improve the process and progress of policy-level dialogue. Our core strategy focuses on mitigating the effects of climate change and helping communities to adapt to its inevitable impacts by fostering the leaders, relationships, dialogues, and policy objectives necessary to achieve these goals. EEP has established subject matter expertise in the following areas: energy policy, maritime shipping decarbonization, water policy, and climate and education. Across these and other issue areas, we seek to collectively drive existing energy and environmental solutions and foster the spaces to imagine and implement what more is needed.

About the EPPIC Host Consortium

EPPIC was created in 2023 as a public-private partnership that convenes governments, businesses, civil society, philanthropies, and others to galvanize global action on plastic pollution by supporting projects around the world to make the full lifecycle of plastic more sustainable. EPPIC is hosted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with partners the Aspen Institute (USA), The Ocean Foundation (USA), and Searious Business (NL), with initial seed funding from the U.S. Department of State (DOS).

The Host Consortium (HC) holds a range of technical expertise, convening power, and vast stakeholder networks interested in tackling plastic pollution, which it will leverage to facilitate change across the plastics lifecycle. In addition to its implementation activities, the Host Consortium will measure and monitor commitments made by members and partners of EPPIC to ensure progress in advancing plastics circularity and ending plastic pollution.

The HC will play a vital role in the design, implementation, and finalization of the innovation prize. Members of the HC will actively participate in meetings with the chosen organization and will serve as decision-makers throughout the full lifecycle of the prize. DOS will also play an important role as decision-makers.



Regional Context

EPPIC is working in specific countries within Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Senegal, Kenya, and South Africa). However, the innovation prize should be globally-focused, inclusive of the EPPIC priority regions. The EPPIC team is further exploring opportunities within Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in either the Caribbean or African regions. The prize designer should be mindful of incorporating these regions into their proposal while also determining how to have global impact².

Qualifying Criteria

Eligible Organizations

An organization that has expertise in designing and implementing an environmental prize/competition/challenge internationally. Specific expertise in the circular economy and/or plastic pollution is not a requirement, but would look favorable.

Financial

Budget submission should be for activities of 16 - 24 months (inclusive of a post-award support period) beginning January 2025 with a maximum total request between \$500,000 and \$900,000. Applicants must have completed the domestic or foreign subrecipient questionnaire (see Annex C and D, respectively) to ensure eligibility for United States government funds. The finalist will also need to be able to pass The Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) clearance issued by the Aspen Institute.

Language

Applications should be in English.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be maximum nine (9) pages (exclusive of the Subrecipient Questionnaire, Budget and Budget Narrative) using Times New Roman, 12-point and single spacing in .pdf format. Applications should include the information below.

The proposal must include:

² There are countries the prize will be prohibited from working within due to the restrictions of funds from the U.S. Department of State. The EPPIC team will discuss country restrictions with the selected prize partner.



Cover Sheet (no more than 1 page - does not count toward page limit)

- Title of your project
- Identify lead contact name, phone number, and email address
- Include your website or social media site
- Amount requested from EPPIC (between \$500,000 and \$900,000 USD)
- Timeframe of the proposed project or program up to 24 months, inclusive of a post-award support program for selected winners
- One to four sentence brief description of the request

Organizational Overview/Information (2 pages)

A full description of your organization(s) and why you are well-suited to carry out the proposed plastic innovation prize, with specific emphasis on the organization's track record and experience working globally, but also in Central America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Small-Island Developing States. Also include specific experience your organization has in attracting new sponsors and ecosystem partners into international prizes/challenges. Please provide a list of current personnel and/or positions from each organization that will have direct implementation responsibilities within the project.

Narrative Description (6 pages)

- A detailed description of the proposed project, inclusive of:
 - Overarching theory of change, goals and specific objectives during the project period that align with the prize overview section above.
 - Expected results (quantitative and qualitative) with targets, and how they will be measured. (Note: you will detail your plan in the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan template in Annex A.)
 - Detailed description of the activities you will undertake for the duration of the project, inclusive of events (in-person and virtual) to broaden the reach of the prize/competition. Please divide those activities into the following phases with corresponding timelines (in months):
 - 1) Research and design of prize (inclusive of the branding of the prize, and a communication strategy for announcing the prize to a global audience);
 - 2) Resource mobilization strategy³ (inclusive of a comprehensive plan to secure and manage the financial and non-financial resources needed to sustain and grow the prize over time). The strategy should include:
 - **Integration of new sponsors** - Developing a clear framework for attracting and onboarding new sponsors. This framework should

³ The resource mobilization strategy will be designed and implemented with the full support of the EPPIC HC, ensuring alignment with global best practices and leveraging EPPIC's network to maximize the impact of the resource mobilization efforts.



outline the value proposition for potential sponsors, detailing how their involvement will benefit both the sponsor and the prize. It should also include strategies for approaching and negotiating with sponsors, ensuring that the prize remains financially sustainable.

- **Ecosystem partnerships** - Identifying and engaging with ecosystem partners who can contribute to the prize in various ways beyond just financial support. This could include technology partners, media partners, or other organizations that align with the goals of the prize. The strategy should outline how these partnerships will be formed, managed, and leveraged to enhance the impact and reach of the prize.
 - **Sustainability and growth** - Ensuring that the prize has a long-term sustainability plan by diversifying the sources of funding and support. This could involve creating tiered sponsorship levels, seeking grants, or establishing endowments. The strategy should also consider how to scale the prize as it grows in prominence, ensuring that the infrastructure and resources are in place to support an expanded scope.
 - **Monitoring and evaluation** - Including mechanisms for regularly assessing the effectiveness of the resource mobilization efforts. This could involve setting KPIs for sponsor engagement, partner contributions, and overall resource growth. Regular reviews would allow for adjustments to the strategy to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the prize.
- 3) Implementation of prize (inclusive of a plan for developing and monitoring the application portal, communications strategy for the dissemination of the application, accessibility considerations, including language, to broaden the applicant pool, and applicant support),
 - 4) Finalist preparation and winner selection (inclusive of the curation of a judging panel, the review of the applications, how you will engage with the EPPIC Host Consortium for the final determination of the winners and your communications plan for announcing the winners), and
 - 5) Post-award (inclusive of support, if any, you offer awardees (e.g., mentorship opportunities, resources, etc.), and a communication plan to share project success and learning). Note that the post-award support should encompass 6-12 months of project duration.
- How your approach is unique or differentiates you within the global prize/competition space.
 - A description of how your organization collaborates with a prize sponsor, including track record, experience in proposed regions, etc.



- Explain how the work recognized through the prize mechanisms can be scaled in the future if additional resources were made available.

***For-profit Institutions:** Please provide the information above, but outline your interventions around activities and expected deliverables. If selected, you will be paid upon completion of the deliverables.*

Budget and Budget Narrative (can be submitted as an Excel document)

Please include a total proposed project budget, with a detailed line-item breakout*, and a detailed budget narrative. The narrative statement shall clearly state any assumptions, clarifications, or exceptions that may influence the cost of meeting the requirements. If there are no assumptions, state that “There are no assumptions, clarifications, or exceptions that may influence the cost of meeting the requirements outlined.

If you do not have a NICRA rate with the US Government, you are able to include a maximum of 10% overhead towards your budget.

****For profit institutions:** Please **submit a budget based on the deliverables** you expect to achieve, as per your proposed Scope of Work.*

Please note:

Selected applicants funded via the EPPIC award will be funded with United States Government resources, thus:

- Non-profit winners will receive a sub-award agreement and be paid on a quarterly, cost-reimbursable basis. **Please note Aspen Institute is unable to make up-front payments for project costs. All selected projects must confirm they have the cash flow available to cover the first quarter of project implementation.**
- A cost-reimbursable basis means: an agreement between two parties to provide payment for allowable costs incurred by the other party. You will get your first payment after the completion and submission of your first quarterly report.
- For-profit applicants must demonstrate that they will **not** generate a profit using EPPIC funds in the budget line-item breakout and narrative description. They must also confirm that they will receive a contract for services agreement rather than a sub-award agreement from Aspen Institute. These winners will be reimbursed on completion of deliverables or milestones.



Evaluation Criteria for Award

The Aspen Institute (Institute) will award a subrecipient grant or fixed-fee contract resulting from this RFP to the responsible Quoter whose proposal conforming to the RFP will be most advantageous based on the best value, price, and other factors considered. The Aspen Institute shall determine the best value based on: all evaluation criteria other than price, when combined, are significantly less important than cost or price.

The major evaluation criteria for this request for quotation include technical (which encompasses technical and capability performance) and cost/price factors. All evaluation criteria other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly less important than cost or price. In any case, the Aspen Institute reserves the right to award the proposal that provides the best overall value to the Institute.

The Institute intends to evaluate offers and award a subrecipient grant or fixed-fee contract without discussions with Quoters. Therefore, the initial offer should contain your best terms from a price and technical standpoint. However, the Institute reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by the reviewing panel to be necessary. The Institute may reject any or all offers if such action is in the public interest; and waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received. The Institute also reserves the right to make no award.

Technical Criteria

Category	Percent	Description
Clarity	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a clear understanding of how the funds will be used throughout the 16-24 months? Are the proposed activities manageable?
Alignment with priority themes	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposed approach clearly align with and contribute to the development of a plastics innovation prize?
Impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal present a credible rationale for why this model is likely to be successful? Does the proposal present a clear articulation of the intended impact on the fund's objectives in the 16-month



		<p>project period as well as for the potential sustainability and scalability of the model going forward?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal clearly articulate the organization’s approach to mobilizing additional resources, both in terms of funds and partners?
Sustainability	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a clear/compelling vision for how awardees will be supported after the prize ends?
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a theory of change clearly articulated? Is there a clear plan to disseminate learning? To what extent will lessons from this project inform the work of EPPIC?
Additional Criteria	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness of application.

Capability Criteria

Feasibility	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the timing, sequencing, and resourcing of the effort reasonable? Is there appropriate staffing articulated both for qualifications and size?
Functional ability to fulfill the requirements (Entity history)	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the entity’s portfolio of work including, history, areas of expertise, and any other additional information that will provide a clear idea on the scope of the firm’s abilities to respond to the RFP. Does the entity have experience delivering projects in Central America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and/or Small-Island Developing States? Does the organization have the means to manage the implementation? Including, but not limited to, past experience in managing plastics and/or circular economy related prizes.



Cost Criteria

Cost will not receive an adjectival rating. However, the cost must be considered complete to be considered for award.

The Institute will evaluate the overall cost and the individual line items to determine whether they are fair and reasonable. The Institute will not perform Cost Analysis and Cost Realism Analysis; however, the cost quotation must include all essential phases of work to be considered complete. A quotation that does not price all essential phases of work, labor rates, or indirect rates (if applicable) will be considered incomplete and deficient unless the narrative statement explicitly states that those portions of the work are purposely gratis to the Institute.

Failure to include price information for major features of work will be considered deficient pricing.

RFP Submission Guidelines

The proposal should be submitted as a password protected PDF file prior to the deadline of September 27th, 2024 to aspeneep@aspeninstitute.org.

A separate email will be sent between 12:00am and 5:00pm EDT on the above-mentioned date transmitting the password for the submitted proposal.

Proposals will be opened at 5:00pm EDT on the above mentioned date, any passwords received after this time will be treated as late and the proposal will be rejected and returned unopened

An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent immediately as soon as any of the above messages are received.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsor:



Annex A– EPPIC MEL Template

EPPIC - Grantee Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan

This document serves as a framework to assist grantees in structuring a common MEL plan for learning both within grantee projects and across grantees. For questions regarding elements of this template, please reach out to Catie Tobin at Catherine.Tobin@aspeninstitute.org.

MEL plan narrative

Please describe your MEL plan, including your logframe, indicators and targets, data collection methods, dissemination plan, and learning questions.

Logframe

Please include a logframe for your project using the following structure. Be sure to include **concrete targets (including number of people, business, communities, etc.)** as part of the proposed outputs, outcomes and impact. It is expected that structure of the logframe reflects the different result categories described in your narrative proposal as per the guidance suggested under the narrative description section (Research and design of prize, Resource mobilization, Implementation of prize, etc).

	Summary	Project Indicators (include quantitative and qualitative indicators)	Targets	Means of Verification (sources you will use for your data collection etc.)
Goal				
Outcome(s)				
Outputs 1. 2. etc.				
Activities 1.1 1.2 2.1 2.2. etc.				



Definitions

- **Goal:** *What is the long-term change that you want to impact at scale? (Note – you may not be able to directly measure or attribute program activities to this.)*
- **Outcomes:** What are the short and medium-term changes you expect to see as a result of the completion of your outputs and that contribute toward your ultimate impact goal?
- **Output:** What are the products, capital goods and services that your project will provide and that will contribute to the achievement of the outcome(s)?
- **Activities:** What activities will you carry out during the project through which inputs are mobilized to produce outputs? Each activities should have dedicated human, material and financial resources attached to them

Indicator

Grantees of EPPIC are required to collect and report on the following indicator (if applicable to their project):

- Number of prizes granted: 4

Data collection plan

Please describe your data collection plan at the project’s baseline, ongoing data collection, and at the project’s conclusion. Data collection plan should be linked to expected results and indicator.

Expected Result (goal, outcomes, outputs)	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Data collection method/mec hanism	Timing/ Frequency	Responsible person

Dissemination plan

Please detail dissemination plans for the application, awards, and other project outputs, including webinars, workshops, panel discussions, toolkits, or other publications.



Type of output	Anticipated Timing	Anticipated Promotion plan	Dissemination indicators tracked

Key learning questions

Developing a key learning question may help frame your evaluation efforts.

A learning question can be structured as such: *Does [program unique feature] lead to [key targeted gender outcomes]?*

When developing a learning question, consider the following:

- What is the key unique feature about your program that has not been attempted before in the prize design space?
- Are there any new interventions or components that you are testing?
- Are there any specific learnings for women, rural vs. urban, indigenous, or other key stakeholder groups?
- How will the competition drive research and development and/or innovation?
- How will the work of the selected winners be scaled?