

Innovation Incentive Awards use a special United States Agency for International Development (USAID) authority to incentivize local innovators, entrepreneurs, and organizations to enter and strengthen weak markets via no-strings-attached awards of up to \$500,000. USAID Missions and Bureaus may carry out prize competitions, a pay-for-results approach that uses cash awards to incentivize participants to solve development and humanitarian challenges.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

All USAID Missions and Bureaus can host prize competitions using the Innovation Incentive Award Authority. Innovation Incentive Awards are neither acquisitions nor assistance, so their flexibility may be ideal for new, local, and nontraditional partners. Prize awards must be disbursed by USAID directly, not by implementing partners.

Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions (EPIC) is available to advise on prize concepts from any sector (agriculture, the environment, economic growth, education, health, and beyond). EPIC will work with Missions and Bureaus to tailor a design that matches their preferred outcome, identify the best mechanism(s) to administer your competition, and follow best practices developed around the globe.

USING THE INNOVATION INCENTIVE AWARD AUTHORITY

- Contact the EPIC team at epic@usaid.gov for support using the Authority.
- Design and run an open innovation competition that:
 - Encourages and rewards the development of solutions for a particular, well-defined problem related to the alleviation of poverty; or
 - Identifies and promotes a broad range of ideas and practices, facilitating further development of an idea or practice by third parties.
- Issue prize awards via a simplified process using Miscellaneous Obligations.
- Write a few paragraphs on your competition's results as part of annual reporting.

EPIC MECHANISMS

- **Innovation Design, Execution, and Acceleration Support (IDEAS):** A buy-in, based contract to support innovative program design—including prizes using the Innovation Incentive Award Authority—and innovation acceleration efforts.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Contact us at epic@usaid.gov. The EPIC team will be happy to discuss your idea and answer any questions. For additional resources, go to:

<https://my.usaid.gov/IPI/ITR/Innovation/exploratory-programs-and-innovation-competitions-epic>.