



# 11<sup>th</sup> AFRICA ENERGY INNOVATION CHALLENGE

**Theme: Accelerating Value Addition, Youth Innovation & Community Action.**

**(Open to young entrepreneurs across Africa)**

SubmissionSubmission

## ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The **11th Africa Energy Innovation Challenge (AEIC)**, organized by NEF, mobilizes young, early-stage energy entrepreneurs across Africa to develop, prototype and scale innovative devices, equipment and digital solutions for **social enterprise, agribusiness, fintech and energy management** using locally available resources. The Challenge connects young innovators to quality employment, entrepreneurship and investment opportunities, advancing **Value Addition, Youth Innovation and Community Action** across Africa.

## FOUR (4) INNOVATION TRACK(S)

Proposals are invited across four innovation tracks for early-stage energy entrepreneurs from Africa, including:

- Track 1: Powering Youth Employment & Green Jobs;
- Track 2: Energizing Agribusiness & Waste-2-Energy
- Track 3: Greening Local Manufacturing & Value Addition
- Track 4: Transforming AI & Connectivity.

## ELIGIBILITY AND HOW TO APPLY

Young professionals between the ages of 18 and 35 years from Africa are invited to participate in the competition across any of the four (4) innovation tracks above. Applications may be submitted by a team of at least three people. Team composition **MUST** reflect gender balance, (comprising at least 1 woman and 1 man). Teams may be formed across different schools, institutions, companies, countries etc. Individuals or teams may submit multiple applications.

## COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Your proposed prototype model submission must not exceed 1-side of an A4 page and should include the following:

|                                       |                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 🌐 <b>Project Title</b>                | 🌐 <b>Your solution</b> (250 words)               |
| 🌐 <b>Innovation Track</b>             | 🌐 <b>Expected impact</b> (50 words)              |
| 🌐 <b>Short abstract</b> (50 words)    | 🌐 <b>Design tools and method</b> (50 words)      |
| 🌐 <b>Problem Statement</b> (50 words) | 🌐 <b>Estimated costs and timeline</b> (50 words) |

Submissions **MUST** be made online at [www.thenef.org/aeic](http://www.thenef.org/aeic) .

- Submissions **MUST** not exceed the word limit.
- Shortlisted submissions would be invited to participate in the final round by submitting on the AEIC webpage a **1-page poster** to summarize their design, with detailed budget, **2-page Design Brief** and a **Short 2-minute video** to pitch a prototype model of the proposed solution.
- Public vote on Video pitch will be held in Nov. 2026.

## PRIZES AND RECOGNITIONS

The finalists and winners will be selected by an independent panel of industry experts and experienced development professionals from public and private sector institutions.

Up to 20 or more shortlisted entries will be offered complimentary passes to fully participate in the 11<sup>th</sup> Nigeria Energy Forum to be held virtually on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2026. Winners of the competition get the opportunity to:

- Receive share of cash prize grants of up to **US\$10,000** to demonstrate or scale the proposed solution;
- Pitch their proposed prototype model at the 2026 Nigeria Energy Forum, using a poster and short video;
- Benefit from unique networking opportunities with other young professionals as well as some of the most senior decision-makers in government, international development, academia and the private sector; &
- Attend business development workshops, industry mentorship & exhibitions valued at over US\$15,000 and receive support from a venture incubator.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The first round of submissions will be evaluated using the following attributes:

- **Local Content:** utilize local resources, demonstrate use of local expertise, alternative energy services or efficient solutions for powering agriculture, education, healthcare, industries etc.; and be significant enough to impact large numbers of people, households and/or businesses.
- **Originality and creativity:** present solutions that are original, creative in areas that are either underdeveloped or severely underdeveloped in research and literature.
- **Commercial Viability:** proposed prototype model should be realistic, practical rather than just theory, cost efficient and outline commercial arrangements that address obvious roadblocks, using a specific prototype model.
- **Youth Employment:** ideas must link young people to quality employment or entrepreneurship opportunity.

## Timeline

- **Open call for proposal:** August 10, 2026
- **Proposal submission deadline:** **September 10, 2026**
- **Shortlist for final round:** September 30, 2026
- **Deadline for final submissions:** October 20, 2026
- **Video-pitch, posters & awards:** **Nov. 19, 2026.**

*N.B: Organizers reserve the right to fully adjust/modify any of the details provided in this document above the contest.*