

# **\$1 MILLION CATEGORY**

## **NOMINATION GUIDE 2025/26**

**\$1,000,000** may be awarded to one exceptional team to implement their project.

The \$1 Million Arctic Inspiration Prize category is intended for diverse teams who have provided a truly exceptional and innovative plan to implement knowledge (traditional, scientific research, or practical) into relevant and real action for the benefit of the people and communities of the Canadian North.

Nominations in this prize category are for the full prize amount of \$1 million. This amount will not be reduced during the selection process. Teams requiring or considering lower prize amounts are encouraged to review the Nomination Guides for the two other prize categories.

Teams are advised to submit a nomination in the prize category that best fits their project. It is important that the project and its financial needs are not inflated to qualify for the \$1 Million category as this will weaken the nomination. Since the same project cannot be nominated in multiple categories in the same year, you are encouraged to carefully review and understand the criteria for each category before proceeding with a nomination.

**Before starting the Nomination Template, ensure you have carefully reviewed this Nomination Guide.**

### **What is included in this guide?**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Important Due Dates .....</b>                                     | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>What is the Arctic Inspiration Prize? .....</b>                   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>What Are the Different Prize Categories? .....</b>                | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Letter of Intent (Optional) .....</b>                             | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Eligibility Criteria .....</b>                                    | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Selection Criteria .....</b>                                      | <b>11</b> |
| <b>About Team Ambassador/Nominators.....</b>                         | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Submitting Your Nomination.....</b>                               | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Review and Selection Process .....</b>                            | <b>13</b> |
| <b>What is Required from and Agreed Upon by Winning Teams? .....</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>The \$1 Million Nomination Template .....</b>                     | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Frequently Asked Questions.....</b>                               | <b>15</b> |

## Important Due Dates

This Nomination Guide includes important information that should be carefully reviewed and considered before submitting a nomination. A project is required to fulfill all of the [Eligibility Criteria](#) to be included in the selection process. The Regional and National Selection Committees use the [Selection Criteria](#) to choose Finalists and Laureates out of all eligible projects, so make sure to review all criteria closely.

**Letter of Intent due date (Optional):** October 20, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. PT

**Nomination due date:** January 19, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. PT

Please check the [AIP website](#) to learn about [upcoming webinars](#) and [additional resources](#) for teams.

## What is the Arctic Inspiration Prize?

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is by the North, for the North, with the unconditional support of the South. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of Northerners.

The Arctic Inspiration Prize inspires team building and encourages the development of projects that deliver near-term benefit to Arctic communities. By enabling teams to carry out projects and celebrating their achievements, others can be inspired to do the same.

Since its launch in 2012, the Arctic Inspiration Prize has grown to become an annual prize of up to \$3.7 million awarded across three categories: the \$1 Million category (\$1 million for one team), the AIP category (up to \$500,000 each for up to four teams), and the Arctic Inspiration Youth Prize category (up to \$100,000 each for up to seven youth teams).

### Relevance to the North

The Arctic Inspiration Prize addresses any opportunities or challenges that are of importance to the people and communities of the Canadian Arctic. A project can have one or more focus areas including, but not limited to, education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

The proposed project should be carried out and have impact within the regions eligible for the Arctic Inspiration Prize (specifically Yukon, the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut).

## **Team Building**

The Arctic Inspiration Prize brings people together from different disciplines and backgrounds to break down barriers, collaborate, and harness collective strengths. Diverse teams can consist of Northerners and Southerners, youth and elders, and include different people from northern communities, grassroots organizations, industry, governments, and the research, philanthropic, culture, and education sectors.

## **Transforming Knowledge into Innovative Action**

The Arctic Inspiration Prize transforms knowledge into innovative action with direct and lasting impacts in northern communities.

- Knowledge can be traditional knowledge, scientific research, and/or practical knowledge.
- Outcomes are secular, non-ideological and have a direct and lasting impact in northern communities. (Note that this does not exclude projects that involve Indigenous ceremony, healing, traditional practice, etc.)
- Actions are innovative and are not simply a continuation, expansion, or repetition of an established project/program in a new location. Actions are not to be one-time events (such as a conference). If building on an existing initiative, the proposed project should bring substantial new team members, partners, objectives and deliverables.

## **Address Causes Instead of Symptoms**

The Arctic Inspiration Prize addresses causes of Arctic issues, rather than their symptoms, to support the meaningful and sustainable improvement of life in the Canadian North. For example, a project that aims to prevent oil spills addresses the cause, and would therefore qualify for the Arctic Inspiration Prize. A project that intends to clean up oil spills addresses the symptoms and would therefore not qualify. This applies to all projects – including those of a socioeconomic and human health nature.

## What Are the Different Prize Categories?

This chart provides you with an overview of the different prize categories and will help you choose which category best fits the scope of your project. More information on the other categories can be found in the respective Nomination Guides.

|   | <b>\$1 Million</b>  | <b>AIP</b>  | <b>Arctic Inspiration Youth Prize</b>   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>How many prizes will be awarded?</b>   | Up to 1   | Up to 4   | Up to 7   |
| <b>How much can a team apply for?</b>   | \$1 million CAD (no more, no less)  | Up to \$500,000 CAD   | Up to \$100,000 CAD   |
| <b>Do all team members need to be Northerners?</b>  | No, but the Team Leader and the majority of team members are required to be Northerners | No, but the Team Leader and the majority of team members are required to be Northerners | No, but the Team Leader and the majority of team members are required to be Northerners     |
| <b>Are there any age restrictions for team members?</b>   | No, all ages can apply  | No, all ages can apply  | Yes, the Team Leader and majority of the team are required to be 30 years of age or younger |
| <b>How diverse does the team need to be in terms of background, disciplines, etc.?</b>                                | Broadly diverse   | Diverse   | Preferably somewhat diverse   |
| <b>What kinds of impacts will the project have in northern communities?</b>   | Long-term impact across a large geographic area or a profound impact in a smaller area  | Impact in a larger or smaller geographic area (preferably in the long term)             | Impact at the community level or beyond.  |
| <b>Are in-kind or financial commitments from other partners and team members expected for project sustainability?</b> | Yes, significant support from partners and preferably from team members is expected     | Yes, support from partners and preferably from team members is expected                 | Some support from team members and partners is preferable but not required                  |

## Letter of Intent (Optional)

You can submit a Letter of Intent to receive feedback on the eligibility of your project. This is optional, but it is very helpful.

Letters of Intent can be submitted **at any time until October 20, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. PT**. If teams submit a Letter of Intent early enough, they have the opportunity to make changes based on the feedback received and resubmit their letter one more time before the due date.

This is the opportunity to have your questions answered and get tips that can help strengthen your nomination and make sure you are headed in the right direction. The Letter of Intent will not be used in the selection process in any way.

Letters should be submitted to the Arctic Inspiration Prize office by e-mail to **aip@rhf-frh.ca**

You are encouraged to submit Letters of Intent as early as possible. **The last day you can submit a letter for the 2025/26 Arctic Inspiration Prize is October 20, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. PT.**

Please keep Letters of Intent to a maximum of **two pages**.

The Letter of Intent should include the following components:

- The prize category in which the team intends to submit the nomination;
- A description of the proposed team (team member backgrounds/sectors);
- What northern organization or individuals will lead/manage the project (finances, activities) and will submit the nomination;
- The name of the official Ambassador/Nominator that intends to nominate the project (if possible at this stage, but not necessary for the LOI);
- An outline of the proposed project;
- An overview of the activities, goal(s) and intended impact(s) of the proposed plan;
- Where the proposed activities would take place; and
- Describe from whom and how/where you learned about AIP that made you submit this Letter of Intent.

The Arctic Inspiration Prize office will confirm receipt of submitted Letters of Intent and will respond with written feedback.

Once the final due date to submit a Letter of Intent has passed, the Arctic Inspiration Prize office cannot provide feedback regarding a potential nomination's eligibility.

## Eligibility Criteria

In order to be included in the Arctic Inspiration Prize selection process, **nominations are required to fulfill all of the Eligibility Criteria listed below.** Fulfilling these criteria does not guarantee that a team will receive an Arctic Inspiration Prize.

### Team Diversity

***The Arctic Inspiration Prize aims to inspire team building and empower Northerners to address challenges and opportunities relevant to their communities.***

1. **Diverse Perspectives:** The Arctic Inspiration Prize is an award for diverse teams and is about teambuilding. Individuals alone cannot be nominated. Teams should be broadly diverse. Teams that are not diverse are not eligible.

Diversity can refer to many things. It can mean including youth and Elders, people from communities large and small, grassroots groups, industry and governments, and/or people from research, philanthropy, culture, and education, etc. Diversity can mean including a variety of perspectives and experience to ensure the project is meeting the needs of the community/region or the team possesses the necessary skills required to complete the project, from program delivery to administration/finance and beyond. If your project is in several communities, you may want to consider having team members from each of those communities. While the team lead and a majority of team members must be Northerners, the project can be supported by Southern team members.

When you think about your project, it will be important to think about the different skills, expertise, and knowledge that your team will need to complete it. Then, build the team with that in mind.

2. **Northern Led and Managed:** The Team Leader and the majority of the team are required to be Northerners as the Arctic Inspiration Prize is about inspiring Northerners to build, lead, and manage their own solutions. Northerners must lead and shape the project from inception to implementation to ensure that these projects are truly northern projects by the North and for the North.

A Northerner is defined as:

- An Indigenous person of the North preferably working and residing in the regions eligible for the AIP; or
- A non-Indigenous person working and residing in the regions eligible for the AIP.

3. **Nominee and Recipient of Funds:** The entity that is nominated for the AIP (the nominee) and individuals or organizations that would receive and manage the AIP prize funds are required to be exclusively northern. Organizations or individuals that are not exclusively northern are ineligible to receive the prize funds, even if their project is based in the North. Southern individuals or organizations can be part of the project team or provide support, however they cannot be the nominee and/or recipient of the prize funds.

### **Novelty**

***The Arctic Inspiration Prize has a focus on innovation and turning knowledge into action.***

4. **New Project:** The Arctic Inspiration Prize supports new, innovative, and novel initiatives that are ready to be implemented and have a real, relevant impact in the North. It is important that nominations clearly show how the proposed project is distinct from any ongoing work by the team or others in the same area your project would impact.

What is eligible:

- A completely new initiative.
- An initiative new to your community that is inspired by work in another community — as long as your team has not already implemented it elsewhere.
- A pilot project that has gathered community input or data showing the approach is relevant, effective, needed, and wanted in the community. This type of project may be eligible for funding to scale up or be fully implemented.

What is not eligible:

- Projects that are simply a continuation or expansion of work already being done.
- Replicating an existing project (even if successful) in a new location by the same team.
- Existing projects that are not collecting data to demonstrate community need or impact.

Key difference:

- Pilot project ready to grow: Has tested an idea in a limited way, collected evidence of success or need, and is now ready to be implemented at a larger scale.

- Ongoing project expanding: Has already been fully implemented and is now being continued, expanded, or duplicated — this is not eligible.
5. **Knowledge Basis:** Proposed projects should be based upon traditional knowledge, scientific research, and/or practical knowledge (e.g. a small pilot project) in order to be eligible.

## **Impact**

***The Arctic Inspiration Prize enables real, relevant, and direct impacts in communities across the North.***

6. **Relevance to the North:** Teams and projects should address opportunities or challenges that are relevant and of importance to the people and communities of the Canadian Arctic. A project can have one or more focus areas, such as (but not limited to) education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change and the economy.
7. **Addressing Causes Rather than Symptoms:** Proposed projects should address the root cause(s) of an Arctic issue, rather than its symptoms. How the project will address the root cause(s) should be clearly outlined in the nomination. For example, a project that aims to prevent oil spills addresses a cause; a project that aims to clean up oil spills addresses a symptom. This applies to all projects – including those of a socioeconomic and human health nature.
8. **Region of Impact:** Proposed projects are required to be carried out and have impact within the regions eligible for the Arctic Inspiration Prize: Yukon, the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut.
9. **Impact of Project:** Proposed projects should bring knowledge to action with lasting impacts. Therefore, projects that **only** collect and store knowledge are not eligible. Environmental monitoring that goes beyond just collecting and storing knowledge (for example, that includes education, job creation, etc.) is eligible.
10. **Immediate and Long-term Impacts:** Proposed projects should lead to an immediate and long-term impact across a large geographic area or a profound impact in a smaller area. Single, short-term activities such as conferences, workshops and meetings are not eligible unless clearly embedded in a broader action plan.
11. **Secular and Non-Partisan:** Proposed projects are required to provide secular, non-partisan solutions that do not contravene the laws of Indigenous self-governments and land claims agreements. (Note that this does not exclude projects that involve Indigenous ceremony, healing, traditional practice, etc.)



12. **Total Project Cost:** The Arctic Inspiration Prize aims to inspire diverse teams to *initiate* innovative projects with social impact. Therefore, **the total project cost cannot be more than \$2 million.**

### **Sustainability and Lasting Impact**

***The Arctic Inspiration Prize is about having impact with the support and engagement of partners and team members.***

13. **Project Buy-in:** Proposed projects require buy-in from partners and are encouraged to have buy-in from team members. Buy-in can be in the form of in-kind or cash contributions. Buy-in from partners is required to be at least \$200,000 (20% of the amount requested from the AIP) but cannot exceed \$1 million (see criteria 12). For example, a buy-in amount of \$500,000 (50%) would be considered strong. Buy-in from partners and team members demonstrates engagement and support for a project and will therefore help to sustain the project beyond its planned duration. It will also help to attract additional funds from others in the long term.

#### **GLOSSARY:**

**Buy-in** refers to the support or investment that individuals, groups, or organizations give to a project. It indicates that stakeholders are actively engaged and have a stake in the success of the effort. Buy-in can be either financial or non-financial.

An **in-kind contribution** is a kind of buy-in. Instead of cash, people contribute goods, services, or time that support a project.

A **cash contribution** is a kind of buy-in when partners provide money to a project.

**NOTE 1:** Only in-kind contributions directly related to the project activities can be counted as buy-in. For example, the in-kind contribution of someone's entire salary can only be counted if all of that individual's work is for the project. Otherwise, only the proportion of time that the individual will spend working on the project can be counted.

**NOTE 2:** Letters of Support are required to confirm in-kind or cash contributions from partners listed in the project budget (section 4.4 of the Nomination Template). If needed, partners or organizations can note in their letters that the contributions are conditional on the team winning the Arctic Inspiration Prize. Any cash or in-kind partner contributions that are not supported by a Letter of Support will not be considered as part of the project buy-in, and having less than 20% confirmed partner buy-in will result in a nomination's ineligibility.

**NOTE 3: Only buy-in from partners (not team members) counts towards the 20% minimum buy-in required to be eligible for the Arctic Inspiration Prize.** Buy-in from team members is encouraged and will show the selection committees that team members believe in the project and are committed to it.

## **General**

14. **Submit by Due Date:** Submit the nomination electronically to the Arctic Inspiration Prize office by the due date. Nominations received after the due date will not be accepted.
15. **Official AIP Ambassador:** Teams are required to be nominated by an official Ambassador/Nominator of the Arctic Inspiration Prize who is not connected to the project and team in any way. Projects nominated by team members, individuals from connected organizations or groups, or individuals who are in any way connected to the activities, outputs, funding or management/administration of the project will not be eligible.

Ideally your Ambassador/Nominator is from the region (or one of the regions) impacted by your project. If this is not possible, an Ambassador/Nominator from another region can nominate your project. For example, if all Ambassadors/Nominators from your region are connected to your project, then you can expand your search.

See the list of official Ambassadors/Nominators here:

[www.arcticinspirationprize.ca/ambassadors](http://www.arcticinspirationprize.ca/ambassadors)

16. **Nomination Template Required:** Teams are required to use the current prize cycle's Nomination Template and complete all sections. Incomplete nominations or those not in the current prize cycle's template provided are not eligible.

See the Nomination Templates and Guides here:

<https://arcticinspirationprize.ca/nomination-selection/nomination-guides-and-templates/>

17. **Maintaining Fairness in Nominations:** Arctic Inspiration Prize Trustees, staff, and Selection Committee members, and Rideau Hall Foundation staff and Board members are not eligible to be nominees or nominators for the Arctic Inspiration Prize during their terms, and for six months following the end of their term.

## Selection Criteria

The Regional and National Selection Committees will use the following **weighted Selection Criteria** during the selection process to assess eligible nominations and select Finalists and Laureates:

- 1. TEAM DIVERSITY (WEIGHT = 2)**
  - Degree of team diversity and extent of meaningful participation of Northerners;
  - Extent to which those who will benefit from the project are included in the team; and
  - Capacity of the team as a whole to successfully carry out the proposed project.
- 2. PROJECT NOVELTY (WEIGHT = 1)**
  - Degree of project innovation and novelty.
- 3. IMPACT (WEIGHT = 5)**
  - Degree of long-term impact (geographically or in depth) in the target communities and degree of relevance for the target communities; and
  - Degree to which anticipated project outcomes reflect the effort (time and funds).
- 4. SUSTAINABILITY (WEIGHT = 3)**
  - Degree of buy-in (in-kind and cash contributions) from partners and team members; and
  - Extent to which being a Laureate of the Arctic Inspiration Prize can be leveraged for the sustainability of the project and its impacts; and the potential to inspire others to develop their own projects.
- 5. PROJECT ACCOUNTABILITY (WEIGHT = 2)**
  - Degree of accountability (leadership, management, finances, project timelines); and
  - How progress will be measured and reported.
- 6. ABILITY TO HIGHLIGHT NORTHERN ACHIEVEMENTS (WEIGHT = 2)**
  - Degree of the team's ability to highlight inspiring northern achievements and innovations in the North and South; and
  - Degree of the team's ability to leverage the recognition of being a Laureate (media coverage, social media, etc.) to the benefit of the North.

## About Team Ambassador/Nominator

Teams need to be nominated by an official Ambassador/Nominator of the Arctic Inspiration Prize who is **independent from the project team**. Nominators should be aware of both the team and project, and be able to confirm the value, quality, and relevance of the proposed project by completing and signing a **Nomination Letter**.

- Nominators are required to be **official Ambassador/Nominator** of the Arctic Inspiration Prize
- See list of the individuals who are official AIP Ambassador/Nominator here: <https://arcticinspirationprize.ca/ambassadors/>
- Nominators are required to be independent from the team. Nominators **cannot** be team members, belong to organizations or groups connected to the project, nor be in any way connected to the activities, outputs, funding or management/administration of the proposed project.
- Arctic Inspiration Prize Trustees, staff, and Selection Committee members and Rideau Hall Foundation staff and Board members are not eligible to be nominees or nominators for the Arctic Inspiration Prize during their terms, and for six months following the end of their terms.

More information about Ambassador/Nominators, as well as successful past nominations, is available on the website ([www.ArcticInspirationPrize.ca](http://www.ArcticInspirationPrize.ca)).

## Submitting Your Nomination

An electronic copy of the complete nomination should be submitted to the Arctic Inspiration Prize office at:

E-mail: [aip@rhf-frh.ca](mailto:aip@rhf-frh.ca)

If you have issues sending the file by email, you can upload the file [here](#).

by **January 19, 2026 at 11:59pm PT**

The Arctic Inspiration Prize office will confirm receipt of the nomination.

### Contact

Arctic Inspiration Prize

Contact info: <https://arcticinspirationprize.ca/connect/>

## Review and Selection Process

- Arctic Inspiration Prize staff review all nominations, and forward **all eligible nominations** to the Regional Selection Committees.
- The Regional Selection Committees review all eligible nominations submitted from their region and decide on the Finalists who are sent to the National Selection Committee.
- The National Selection Committee reviews all Finalist nominations and makes the final decision on Laureates.
- Decisions made by the Regional and National Selection Committees are based solely on the Arctic Inspiration Prize's weighted Selection Criteria (as listed on page 11).
- Finalists and Laureates will be acknowledged and celebrated in media releases, on the Arctic Inspiration Prize website, and at the Awards Ceremony.
- Decisions of the Selection Committees are final. There is no appeal process.

## What is Required from and Agreed Upon by Winning Teams?

At the AIP, winning teams are known as Laureates/Winners. Any team, with the submission of its nomination, agrees with the following should it become a Laureate/Winner of the Arctic Inspiration Prize:

- Any team selected as a Laureate/Winner must carry out the key elements of their project as described in their nomination package, such as the Laureate entity, leadership, accountability, financial control, team configuration, tasks, and schedule. These elements formed the basis for their selection as a Laureate/Winner. Any significant changes to these aspects must be approved by AIP in advance.
- All members of a team selected as a Laureate/Winner will be required to pass an Enhanced Criminal Record Check (ECC) if your project involves working with vulnerable peoples (for example, children, people with disabilities, the elderly).
- Photographs and information about the team and proposed project can be used for the promotion of the Arctic Inspiration Prize and other promotional activities (i.e. on the Arctic Inspiration Prize website, social media channels, in media releases, etc.). The AIP will reach out for relevant team/project photos.
- Representatives of the team agree to participate in all Arctic Inspiration Prize activities, including regional promotion of the Prize, media conferences,

ceremonies, and receptions.

- Your team and your Ambassador/Nominator will not reveal that you have been selected as a Finalist or a Laureate/Winner until you have been given written clearance by the AIP team to do so.
- Laureates/Winners will share all media coverage of their winning project (that they are aware of) with the Arctic Inspiration Prize office regularly and without request for the duration of the winning project, and on a voluntary basis beyond that.
- Laureates/Winners will clearly note that they are the 2025/26 Arctic Inspiration Prize \$1 Million Laureate in all communications.
- Arctic Inspiration Prize Staff, Trustees, and Selection Committee members may visit the winning team/project during the proposed duration of the project.
- The Arctic Inspiration Prize will retain \$20,000 of the total awarded prize amount to conduct an independent impact visualization/evaluation, for which Laureates will provide all information requested. The impact visualization/evaluation can be used by Laureates to communicate the successes and lessons learned. The results of the visualization/evaluation will be given to Laureates and can assist them in obtaining additional funding.

## **The \$1 Million Nomination Template**

**Before starting the Nomination Template, ensure you have carefully reviewed this Nomination Guide.**

The \$1 Million Arctic Inspiration Prize Nomination Template will help guide you as you put together your nomination package. It will outline each section, what information to include, and how a nomination should be organized. This template will become the core of your nomination package. You will merge your letters into this document and submit it as a single file.

The Nomination Template is provided as a workable digital file that must be used to complete the nomination. In order to be considered eligible, all sections of the template must be complete.

Please download the Nomination Templates at:

[arcticinspirationprize.ca/nomination-selection/nomination-guides-and-templates/](https://arcticinspirationprize.ca/nomination-selection/nomination-guides-and-templates/)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What if I need help with a nomination?**

There are a variety of resources available to help you as you put together your nomination including [letter of intent](#), [webinars](#), and [more](#).

The Arctic Inspiration Prize office and the Region Managers can give general advice concerning the regulations and proper use of the nomination materials. However, they cannot help you prepare your nomination or offer opinions about your nomination's chance of success.

### **Are Arctic Inspiration Prize awards taxable?**

Prize recipients should contact the Canada Revenue Agency or their provincial/territorial revenue department with any tax-related questions.

### **Can a nomination be resubmitted from a previous year?**

No, all teams have to submit a revised nomination for their project each year they want to be considered. Nominations are not carried over from year to year. Be sure to review the Nomination Template for the new prize year – there may be revisions, and not using the appropriate template and format will result in a nomination's ineligibility.

### **Can a nomination be submitted to multiple prize categories in the same year?**

No, a nomination can only be submitted in one Arctic Inspiration Prize category. Team Leaders and Nominators are encouraged to carefully choose the most appropriate category to apply for. See the table [here](#) for the differences between the prize categories.

### **Is the information in the application protected?**

The Arctic Inspiration Prize will protect personal information as required by the Privacy Act. The Canadian Privacy Act gives individuals the right to access and request correction of personal information about themselves. All information may be accessible to others under the Access to Information Act.