



INNOVATION  
AWARDS



# INDIAN OCEAN DEFENCE & SECURITY

## INNOVATION AWARDS HOW TO PREPARE A STRONG ENTRY

How do you prepare a strong entry for the AMDA Foundation's **Indian Ocean Defence & Security (IODS) 2024 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).

### **THE IDEAL APPLICANT**

The ideal entrant for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Innovation Award** will have just started production of their innovation and be able to demonstrate a domain-related market for their product, both in Australia and internationally.

They clearly understand the customer requirements from their own knowledge, that of their launch customer and from wider investigations. The product has clear differences from alternative solutions and those differences are a source of competitive advantage. A significant part of the difference is innovation which is supported by patents or protected in another way.

The ideal entrant for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Emerging Technology Award** may not have a launch customer just yet but clearly understands the customer's needs based on their own knowledge, that of their prospective customers and from wider investigations. The product has clear differences from alternative solutions and those differences are a source of competitive advantage. A significant part of the difference is innovation. The entrant will also be able to demonstrate that, as well as a need for the product, process or approach to business concerned, there is a potential market for it.

The ideal entrant for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Young Innovator Award** is under the age of 30 at the time entries fall due and is a significant member of a team developing a new product or service. The judges are looking for evidence of originality and innovation in the way the nominee tackled the technical and business challenges associated with the project. The judges will also look at older entrants who have had a break in their education or career, for example due to childbirth or illness.

This award is aimed at engineers, researchers and scientists near the beginning of their career and is to be used to further develop their capabilities. The person may be self-nominated or nominated by his or her employer. The employer doesn't necessarily need to be an exhibitor, award finalist or winner.

The ideal entrant for the **IODS 2024 Collaborative Innovation Award** must have entered for any of the other Awards – but that entry will be judged on whether or not the entry meets the criteria above for either the Innovation, Emerging Technology or Young Innovator Awards. The judges are looking for a team of two or more Innovators or Young Innovators who have worked collaboratively to develop jointly the innovation in question – the intent is to encourage and reward collaborative behaviour because, to quote an old saying, 'If you want to go far, go together.'

**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. The strongest evidence is independent and, if necessary, can be independently verified.

Entries don't need to be long! Succinct answers supported by strong evidence can be short. And remember you're writing for Judges who may not be a technical expert in your particular discipline.

Types of evidence you may want to consider include but are not limited to:

- Quantified evidence of market size in \$s or units
- Comparisons of performance with competing/similar products or processes
- Ease of integration into the customer's workflows, processes and equipment
- Validation against the customer's stated requirements
- Quantitative / measured results from testing or demonstrations
- Independent, 'on the record' 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.).
- Diversity in your organisation and its contribution to the innovation

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

1. Sales brochures – unless these are merely to show what the entry looks like
2. Brochure- and marketing-speak
3. An application that does not provide objective evidence or support for its claims (unverified or subjective statements). **Don't expect the judges to search for evidence that you should be providing up-front!**
4. Something that is a well-engineered but merely incremental improvement to an existing product or process.
5. 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.
6. Something which has been developed overseas and you are the first to make it available in the Australian marketplace.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Make sure you read the entry form correctly. The criteria against which all **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Innovation Award** entries will be judged are deliberately simple:

1. Market Status
2. Understanding of user needs
3. Originality
4. Innovation
5. Diversity and Inclusion

Judging criteria for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Young Innovator Award** are also deliberately simple:

1. The entrant's contribution to the project
2. Understanding of user needs
3. Originality
4. Innovation
5. Diversity and Inclusion
6. Use of the Award to advance the entrant's career

These awards are designed for practical innovators: people 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?

Judging criteria for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Emerging Technology Award** are likewise very simple:

1. Understanding of user needs
2. Originality
3. Innovation
4. Market Analysis
5. Diversity and Inclusion

The judging criteria for the **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Collaborative Innovation Award** are those of the categories above: the entrant must have entered for one or other of these categories and if their contender is a team entry they should indicate this on the entry form. Whether or not they make it to the Top 20 and subsequently deliver a pitch is entirely down to the quality of their innovation.

## INNOVATION AWARD

Firstly, think carefully about **‘Market Status’**. You may have invented a new product or service – but have you studied the domestic and export markets for it? You need to provide clear evidence that you have.

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 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 (in \$s or units) estimate of market demand and a well thought-out roadmap to bring your innovation to market.
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. If this is the case you might be better to wait until this has been achieved and then submit an entry
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, either – you don’t understand the user’s needs

Have you won a pilot order from a launch customer? If so, then you meet this criterion; and if you’ve achieved a full production order then you’ve increased your total score.

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 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 – but you’ll still need to convince the judges that you understand the users’ needs and that your innovation will satisfy them, given the chance. Simply responding to a customer specification is not the same as understanding user needs - you need to demonstrate a deeper understanding of those needs.

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 judges want to see evidence that your innovation is truly original: that it is different from other offerings the customer might choose and that this difference provides a competitive advantage to you and/or the customer. If your innovation is radically different from what else is currently available, and nothing else comes close then you’ve scored maximum points.

Fourthly, think about **‘Innovation’** – the OECD describes innovation as: “the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.”

So your innovation could also be in the process used to develop the subject of your entry.

Types of evidence of innovativeness that you may want to consider:

- Your organisation’s research heritage / pedigree
- Comparative analysis with similar products/concepts/processes that objectively validate stated benefits in terms of performance, operation, safety etc.
- Peer-reviewed published academic papers on the novelty
- IP protection / patents and commercialisation agreements

The judges also want to see that protection (such as a patent) has been considered, even if this was rejected. Achieve all that and you’ve scored maximum points.

Finally, think about **Diversity and Inclusion**. If your company isn’t tapping into the skills and experience of every person who might be able to help you, then it is creating a handicap for itself. If your organisation is genuinely diverse and inclusive, and if that diversity has contributed to the innovativeness of your entry, then you score maximum points in this category.

### EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AWARD

As this Award is for low-TRL<sup>1</sup> products, services and processes, a lot of commercial disciplines may not apply just yet. So firstly, 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 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 – but you’ll still need to convince the judges that you understand the users’ needs and that your innovation will satisfy them, given the chance. Simply responding to a customer specification is not the same as understanding user needs - you need to demonstrate a deeper understanding of those needs.

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Finally, '**Market Analysis**' is something of a reality check – you almost certainly won't have considered the potential market for your innovation, but if you're working on an idea that has absolutely no practical application then you're wasting your time. Think about how, or by whom, your innovation is meant to be used and describe this, in outline at least, to the judges.

### **YOUNG INNOVATOR AWARD**

The AMDA Foundation welcomes entries for the Young Innovator Award from across the full spectrum of early-career engineers, researchers and scientists.

Firstly, the judges want to see evidence that the nominee has made a substantial **Contribution to the project**.

Secondly, they're looking for evidence that the Nominee understands the **User's needs**: this will be based on the Nominee's own insights and expertise, though probably building on work done by his or her employer.

Thirdly, **Originality**: the judges want to see evidence that the Nominee either saw things differently from other people in a similar position or was in a position that nobody had ever been in before and so was forced to find new ways of doing things.

Fourthly, **Innovation**: the judges want to see evidence that the nominee pioneered a new approach to a problem nobody had encountered before; or found a solution to a problem that nobody had solved before (or developed a much better solution than already existed); that the resulting solution delivered impact; and that the solution was so good that some sort of protection was considered for it.

**Diversity and Inclusivity** - if you or your organisation aren't tapping into the skills and experience of every person who might be able to help you, then you are creating a handicap for yourselves. If have helped implement diversity and inclusivity in your workplace, and if that diversity has contributed to the innovativeness of your entry, then you score maximum points in this category.

And finally, **Career development**: the judges want to see the prize used to make a meaningful contribution to the Nominee's career development over and above that which could reasonably be expected from their employer.

### **IODS 2024 COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION AWARD**

The **Indian Ocean Defence & Security 2024 Collaborative Innovation Award** will be awarded to the team of two or more individuals or organisations that, in the opinion of the Judges, have developed an innovative new product, service, or production or manufacturing process. The winner would have entered for any of the three categories above – Innovation, Emerging Technology or Young Innovator Award – and the nature and level of collaboration will be assessed by the judges to determine whether or not the team entry deserves to go into the Top 20.

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