



OSRI - Oil-spill-response Prize and InnoCentive FAQs

- 1) **Where do I find more information about InnoCentive?** More information can be found simply by going to their website www.innocentive.com. If you register as a 'solver', further information can be found about the specific types of problems for which InnoCentive offers prize awards. There is no cost to sign on as a 'solver.' Those that post problem statements and offer prizes are termed 'seekers.'
- 2) **What services does InnoCentive Provide?** InnoCentive does the following:
 - a. Helps craft challenges to insure the best possible solutions.
 - b. Markets the challenges.
 - c. Screens solver questions to keep our anonymity.
 - d. Packages the submissions and conducts preliminary review to determine if the solution criteria have been met.
 - e. Sends OSRI & partners the cleaned up submissions for final decision.
 - f. Facilitates award payment and intellectual property right transfer.
- 3) **What types of challenges are there?**
 - a. *Theoretical challenge* (typically \$15K-\$25K) No lab work. Deliverables: theoretical proposal. No validation before award. This uses InnoCentive as a "Global Think Tank."
 - b. *Reduction to practice challenge* (typically \$40K-\$60K) Usually involves lab work. Deliverables: validated solution (research data/samples). Validation before award.
 - c. *Ideation challenge* (typically \$5-10K) This is similar to the Theoretical challenge except an award must be given and the criteria are less stringent.
 - d. *Request for Proposals* (varied) This program is designed to find someone that can take an idea and convert it to practice.
- 4) **What do we end up with in a theoretical challenge?** In many ways a theoretical challenge is similar to issuing a Broad Agency Announcement. What we receive are proposals to address a particular issue. The advantage of going through InnoCentive is that we reach a broader audience. More people are likely to submit solutions because there is less structure and by stopping at the idea stage, people with good ideas, but with limited capability to implement the idea, can still put their ideas forward. The largest disadvantage is that we only see the contact information of the person(s) we award prizes to. If we want to follow up on multiple ideas we would need to award multiple prizes.

- 5) **How many challenges can we post?** As many as we have funding to cover.
- 6) **How do OSRI and partners determine which challenges to post?** This year OSRI invited people working in the field related to problems of oil spill response in cold environments to submit example problem statements that they thought might be solved through the Oil-spill-response Prize process with InnoCentive. We received six problem statements over the course of several months. On February 7-8, we held an Ideas Generating Workshop with scientific advisors of InnoCentive with 24 attendees from 13 organizations including (InnoCentive, Oil Spill Recovery Institute, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Alaska Clean Seas, Alyeska-Pipeline Services, Department of the Interior, ConocoPhillips, Minerals Management Service, Cook Inlet Spill Response Inc., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Exxon Valdez Trustees Council, Shell, and a concerned citizen). After generating a list of 10 possible topics for problem statements, experts in the workshop voted on the top five that we would develop immediately into more official problem statements. Clearly there are many unsolved challenges in the field of oil-spill response in the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

In the future we would like to review the procedure and decide as a partnership group how to improve the process to consider other important oil-spill problems. This review should happen soon so that we can keep a flow of questions going through the system.

- 7) **What challenges are we considering posting this year?** During the meeting in February 2007, we decided to write-up five challenge ideas. These five ideas are all to deliver theoretical designs. Future challenges may include demonstrating the feasibility of a particular design. The general challenge topics we identified in 2007 are:
- a. **Elastomers, coagulents, non-sinking solidifiers.** Deliverables: A description of problems to overcome in using solidifiers and a description of solutions for overcoming those problems.
 - b. **De-icing method for oil-spill-response equipment.** Deliverables: A description of a technique (chemical or mechanical) to remove ice from oleophilic skimmers that can be deployed from small recovery vessels and barges. The solution cannot add a significant amount of additional material that must be recovered. Chemical solutions cannot be toxic.
 - c. **Detecting and remediating lingering oil.** Deliverables: A description of a technique to detect, and physically remove, immobilize, or make bio-unavailable the oil remaining in sediment the nearshore/intertidal zones in Prince William Sound.
 - d. **Containment and removal of submerged oil.** Deliverables: Describe a method that can be used to contain and remove subsurface oil, particularly that on the ocean floor.
 - e. **Breaking the viscous shear of oil so that it can be pumped from/to a storage unit.** Deliverables: 1) Detailed description of a method to break the viscous shear. Method must be economically feasible and realistic in cold weather operations..

- 8) **What is the process for posting a challenge?** The first part is to come up with a problem that we would like solved. We then draft the challenge using InnoCentive's Problem Statement Template or discuss details of the challenge with scientific staff of InnoCentive during the Ideas Generating Workshop. InnoCentive writes the challenge and consults with OSRI and partners to determine additional information that should be posted, appropriateness of the challenge, and clarity of the criteria for successful solutions. The challenge statement is then reviewed multiple times by us and InnoCentive until we are satisfied with it. InnoCentive suggests how long to post the challenge and an appropriate prize level. Once we agree to those details we can post the challenge and begin the wait for solutions. At the end of the open period InnoCentive will send us a package of solutions that they think have a chance of being deemed successful. OSRI and partners determine which solution(s) we wish to award the prize to.
- 9) **How much does it cost?** There is an annual fee for 'seekers' of \$25,000 to sign up for services with InnoCentive. Once challenges are designed there is a \$2,000 posting fee for each challenge. Upon a successful solution being found there is the solution prize plus a 20% fee to InnoCentive (solution cost is 1.2 x prize amount). The fees associated with Ideation and RFP challenges are different, but I don't have details on them right now.
- 10) **Who is paying the costs?** OSRI paid the \$25K annual fee in February 2007. This gives OSRI the right to post challenges and pay prizes. This means that all funding will go through OSRI. Each entity wishing to partner in this process should decide if there are specific questions that they would like to sponsor and then contribute the 2K posting fee and the prize funding and plus the 20% fee.
- 11) **How is the prize level determined?** InnoCentive will recommend a prize level based on their experience in the expected difficulty of the solution. Generally, theoretical solutions will have a lower prize level (\$15K-\$25K) than demonstration solutions (>40K). In the end, we determine what we want to offer as a prize.
- 12) **Do we have to always have to pay the prize?** If there are solutions that meet the criteria set up in the challenge, payment **must** be awarded to one of the solutions. If we desire, we can award multiple prizes (all at the original prize level). If no solutions meet the criteria, there is no prize awarded. It is very important that the criteria of success be well worded.
- 13) **Who determines if a problem has been solved?** We send out the solution to reviewers to determine if a solution meets the criteria. InnoCentive will remove some solutions that clearly do not address the challenge. OSRI has been able to determine if the challenge has been solved.
- 14) **Who determines which is the best solution?** We do with the reviewers.

- 15) **How long do we have to review the solutions?** Normally the review is required within two weeks. Because we do not have a team of qualified people working for OSRI that we can expect to be available when solutions arrive, they have permitted us more time in reviewing the solutions. *The capability of getting qualified and willing reviewers is an important consideration when putting together challenges.*
- 16) **Who gets intellectual property rights?** The way things are currently set up, intellectual property rights will go to OSRI. For our case this may change to allow the individual to retain intellectual property rights. We hope that this would encourage more people to work on solutions. With Ideation challenges the intellectual rights stay with the solver.
- 17) **When do we have to pay the prize?** Because we are asking for theoretical solutions we will need to pay the prize as soon as we determine the best solution. Most likely within two months of the challenge period being closed. If OSRI retains the intellectual property rights, we may explore the possibility of follow-up with a new challenge to reduce the theoretical solution to practice.

For further questions, please contact OSRI Research Program Manager, Scott Pegau
Email: wspgou@pwssc.gen.ak.us Tel. (907) 424-5800 x222