

Ocean Discovery XPRIZE Announces Updates to Round 1 Testing



XPRIZE, the global leader in designing and operating world-changing incentive competitions, has announced updates to the first round of testing for the 19 semi-finalist teams competing for the [USD7 million Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE](#).

Before Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the deep sea off the southern coast of Puerto Rico was chosen as the original Round 1 Field Test location for the 19 semi-finalist teams competing in the Ocean Discovery XPRIZE. However, due to the island's ongoing recovery from Hurricane Maria, Round 1 will now be a Technology Readiness Test comprised of site visits to each team, judged against 11 key measurement criteria. Round 1 begins in November 2017 and continues until February 2018, and will ensure the teams are challenged with rigorous criteria that show their technologies are capable of meeting

the operational requirements necessary for rapid, unmanned, and high-resolution ocean exploration and discovery.

The mysteries of the deep sea

Round 1 testing for the Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE takes us a step closer toward accelerating the development of a range of technologies that will give us a better understanding of the mysteries of the deep sea, said Jyotika Virmani, Ph.D., prize lead and senior director of the XPRIZE Planet and Environment team. Virmani added to be very excited to begin Round 1 testing and, for the first time, see all the semi-finalists demonstrate their innovative and diverse technological approaches to rapidly mapping the ocean floor.

The timing of the initial test for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) USD1 million Bonus Prize is also currently under review. For this Bonus Prize, teams will need to demonstrate that their technology can "sniff out" a specified object in the ocean by tracing a biological and chemical signal to its source.

In a dire time where the first priority is Puerto Rico's swift recovery, XPRIZE remains grateful and committed in return. The XPRIZE teams shares hopes with Puerto Rico that they can resume their planning in time for a NOAA Bonus Prize test in 2018.

Judging panel

To support the Ocean Discovery XPRIZE competition, a highly qualified international and independent [judging panel](#) consisting of experts in seafloor mapping, data analysis, marine and drone technologies, and underwater discoveries has been established: Victor Abbott, Ph.D., formerly of the University of Plymouth; Aida Alvera-Azcarate, Ph.D., University of Liege; Douglas Au, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute; Catherine Ball, Ph.D., Remote Research Ranges; Christina Kellogg, Ph.D., United States Geological Survey; David Mearns, Blue Water Recoveries; and Shah Selbe, National Geographic Emerging Explorer.

Virmani stated to be extremely honoured to have such a high calibre of expertise on the judging panel. Their diverse backgrounds and experience has added the necessary rigor needed to judge this very challenging competition.

Technologies

As determined by the judging panel, all semi-finalist teams that meet the Round 1 Technology Readiness Test Criteria will split a USD1 million Milestone Prize and move forward to the final Round 2 Field Test. In Round 2, the teams will have the opportunity to demonstrate their technologies in deep-sea, real-world, rigorous testing at a yet-to-be announced location.

Launched in 2015, the Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE semi-finalists include teams with middle and high school students, university teams of undergraduate and graduate students, non-profits, start-ups, and professional scientists and engineers. Representing 13 countries across five continents, the Ocean Discovery XPRIZE semi-finalist teams' innovative approaches involve unique, hybrid systems that mobilize gliders and drones, underwater robotic swarms, autonomous underwater vehicles, robotics, artificial intelligence, and massive computing platforms. Once launched, these robots and vehicles use artificial intelligence to navigate and explore, gathering underwater data for retrieval following each mission.

More information on semi-finalist teams is available at: <https://oceandiscovery.xprize.org/teams>

