

23. December 2021

Fireworks of innovative solutions from Africa for Africa in honour of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

With 330 applications from 38 African countries, the forward-looking Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa is off to a flying start. Launched by the Austrian Federal Chancellery together with partner organizations, the million-euro Award shines a spotlight on Africa's enormous entrepreneurial potential.

Amidst all the diversity of countries, topics and teams, there is one common goal: to improve health and well-being for all people in Africa through digital innovation. In addition to the prize money to the tune of a quarter million for each, the three winning teams will receive targeted coaching and hands-on support from a strong international network of experts for further development.

Harnessing Africa's full innovation power to meet the UN's 2030 Agenda

Applications range from nearly market-ready projects to already established solutions focused on the third UN Sustainable Development Goal: health and well-being („SDG3”).

Elhadj As Sy, Chairman of the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Award Jury is very pleased with the quality of the submissions:

"We are very pleased that the Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa lives up to its name as a pan-African award. We received excellent applications from entrepreneurs across all five regions of the continent who have one thing in common: innovative digital solutions to improve health and well-being."

The many, often young, talents of the populous continent demonstrate the creative potential of the booming start-up scenes across Africa. The goal now is to identify the most promising solutions in terms of effectiveness and feasibility. Submissions are spread across essential health services (48%), improvements to healthcare supply chains and vaccine delivery (17%), prevention and prophylaxis (17%), financial protection through mobile money and microinsurance (11%), access to mental health and other support (7%). The applications thus cover a broad range of the UN 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal on Health and Well-Being ("SDG3").

The diversity is reflected in the geographic distribution. 144 companies from West Africa applied for the Pan-African Innovation Award. Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and thus the most important driver for the healthcare sector, presents itself as the leader. East Africa, on the cusp of becoming a service-oriented economy, is sending out a strong signal and, with 110 applications, is showing great innovation

potential. 21 companies applied from the South African region - a region with a focus on telemedicine. North Africa is represented by 11 healthcare solutions, followed by Central Africa with 10 innovative submissions. In addition, 34 companies with subsidiaries in Africa and headquarters in North America or Europe applied.

Digital innovations boost the future of Africa's health and well-being

The Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, together with the Austrian development organization ICEP, has formed a support network of dedicated business people, investors and mentors who effectively support social entrepreneurs and further promote networking between Europe and Africa.

Bernhard Kowatsch, Head of the partner organization World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator, continues: "With the Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa, we are bringing promising social entrepreneurs with a sustainable business model and an excellent innovative health solution before the curtain. We look forward to comprehensively and actively supporting the most promising innovations and scaling their social value."

Million-euro funding opportunity for social entrepreneurs via a multi-stage selection process

The selection process for the best social entrepreneurs focuses on the composition of the teams, the innovation and traction as well as the business model, in particular the financial sustainability, the scalability as well as the expected social impact.

Over the next two months, experts will identify the most promising nine social entrepreneurs from the wealth of applications. On board are representatives of the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, the World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The winning teams have the chance to win 3 x 250,000 euros, mentoring, concrete networking opportunities with investors and broad international attention. The next milestones towards the final three are a five-day bootcamp in February and the pitch in front of the renowned jury in May 2022.

Factsheet, timeline, photos, infographics and videos on the Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa are available in the [Media Corner](#) of the website.

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