Enter the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation

South African engineers and those from other sub-Saharan countries are invited to enter the fifth edition of the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation. The deadline for entries is Monday, 23 July.

The Africa Prize, founded by the UK's Royal Academy of Engineering, is a six-month training programme which helps engineers become entrepreneurs through funding, bespoke mentoring and comprehensive business training. Judges have provided more than 1,200 hours of support to candidates since the prize was established – valued at more than £630,000 (roughly R10m).

"The skills you get from the Africa Prize last a lifetime and help you reshape and rethink your business," says inaugural Africa Prize winner Dr Askwar Hilonga. Hilonga's NanoFilter business has expanded across Tanzania, with support from international NGOs and organisations, making a lasting impact on people in the region by providing innovative water filtration systems to communities.

Training in business plan development and marketing

The 16 candidates shortlisted for the prize will receive training to develop business plans and market their innovations. The group is coached on structuring their business plans, communicating effectively, focusing on customers and approaching investors with confidence. Training includes two on-site week-long sessions, and regular coaching during the six-month period.
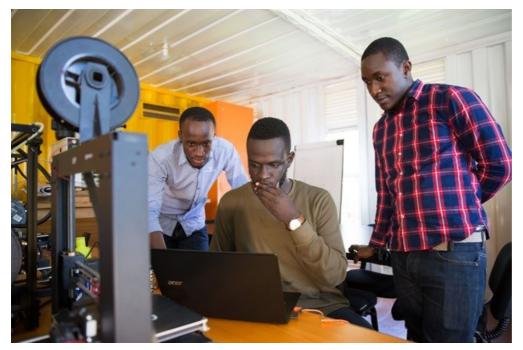
Engineers from all disciplines are invited to submit innovations with a social, economic or environmental benefit. Entries must be early-stage innovations which have the potential to be scaled-up and are ready for commercialisation.

The prize selects a shortlist of innovators from across the continent. It is the biggest prize dedicated to engineering innovation, and provides a unique package of support, including funding, comprehensive business training, and bespoke mentoring. Candidates also get access to the Royal Academy of Engineering's network of high profile, experienced engineers and
experts, and their networks.

After six months of training, selected finalists present their innovation to judges and a live audience, before a winner is awarded £25,000. Runners up receive £10,000.

Amplifying Africa's technological strength

"Engineering drives development and social change and has the potential to significantly improve quality of life," says Africa Prize judge Rebecca Enonchong from Cameroon. "African engineers are already advancing technology in fields ranging from health and agriculture to education and energy. Developing entrepreneurial skills among those innovative engineers is the key to showcasing and amplifying the continent's considerable technological strength."

Brian Gitta's Matibabu - a device which tests for malaria without drawing blood - won the award previously.

The fourth winner of the Africa Prize was announced in Nairobi, Kenya on 13 June. Ugandan software engineer Brian Gitta won the award with his innovation Matibabu, a device which tests for malaria without drawing blood. Previous winners of the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation are Tanzanian Dr Askwar Hilonga, creator of the NanoFilter; Cardiopad founder Arthur Zang from Cameroon; and Godwin Benson from Nigeria for the education app Tuteria.

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