

SA Startup Nation Challenge launched

AfricArena has teamed up with the SA SME Fund to launch the SA Startup Nation Challenge. This is an exciting opportunity for South African tech startups with distinctive products, unique technologies and ambitious founding teams to be scaled up.



AfricArena 2018 Challenge Winners

The AfricArena sourcing team will work closely with its network of partners to identify the country's most promising entrepreneurs and the top 12 companies will pitch at AfricArena Tour events taking place in Cape Town at Workshop17 on Tuesday, 3 September 2019 (the eve of the World Economic Forum), and in Johannesburg the following week on Tuesday, 10 September 2019 at Workshop17.

Five finalists will qualify and compete at the AfricArena Summit on 11 and 12 November 2019 at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town. The top three companies will walk away with several prizes, including a trip to Vivatech in Paris in May 2020 to showcase their offerings at the biggest European tech event of the year.

"We could not be more excited to work with the SA SME Fund team to enable more capital and market access for South African entrepreneurs, particularly black entrepreneurs who are still under-represented in the digital sector. Our partnership with South Africa's leading fund that supports tech startups - combined with our ability to provide access to international investors, corporates and events - will enable us to accelerate the success of South African entrepreneurs on the global stage," says Christophe Viarnaud, AfricArena founder and CEO. "We look forward to running the SA Startup Nation Challenge across the country and supporting high-potential entrepreneurs."

Recognising that technology is revolutionising Africa, and that the 4th Industrial Revolution represents a major growth creation opportunity for South Africa, the Government has pledged its support for the SA SME Fund, established by 50 corporates listed on the JSE. The fund was created to support the innovation ecosystem in South Africa through targeted action, strengthen the activity of local venture capital firms and serve as an enabler for the SME and tech sector.

South African-based AfricArena, which has established itself as a leading ecosystem accelerator across Africa since it launched in 2017, is anchored and endorsed by major international sponsors. These include BNP Paribas, La French Tech, Silicon Cape, Vinci Energies, AirFrance KLM, Engie, Sanofi, Saint-Gobain, Methys, City of Cape Town, Wesgro, Proparco, RCS, and Leroy Merlin along with several major investment networks such as EuroQuity, SAVCA, AVCA and ABAN.

“AfricArena has built a unique model by combining investor and corporate impact to accelerate the success of entrepreneurs in the tech sector at a pan-African level and with a well-recognised international reputation. We are looking forward to using this SA-born platform to support the mission of the SA SME Fund, which is to power up the venture economy and identify tech business with the potential to scale-up into high growth businesses,” concludes Ketso Gordhan, CEO of SA SME Fund.

Startups wishing to take part in the Challenge can apply at <https://portal.africarena.com/challenge/51>.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>