

SA Innovation Summit to host Swiss-South African Pitch Battle

The first digital version of the SA Innovation Summit will host the Swiss-South African Pitch Battle on the SAIS2020 Virtual365 Edition stage. The contest will be held from 29 September to 2 October.



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The challenges of social distancing provided the summit an opportunity to cater to a bigger global audience and the event plans to leverage on the benefits of going digital.



SA Innovation Summit 2020 goes virtual

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The SA Innovation Summit is a major public gathering on the South African calendar, showcasing, connecting, capacitating, and originating the best start-up talent from Africa to the world. It has done so for 13 years and made billions of Rands worth of deals possible for African entrepreneurs.

How the contest will work

Ten Swiss and 10 South African start-ups will compete against each other in front of a global audience and investors to gain exposure in the South African market.

Twenty teams will be divided into four groups of five. Finalists will be narrowed down to one finalist from each group who will move on to a Q&A session in round two, where only two finalists will be chosen to move on to round three. The remaining two finalists will battle it out for their respective country with a one-minute pitch.

All 20 start-ups will be loaded onto a gamification app called Pre. Attendees will invest PreMoney (mock-money) into the start-ups and give them valuable, real-time feedback as the pitch battle unfolds. The final champion will then be decided by public votes and investments on the Pre app.

Partnerships formed to make contest possible

Audrey Verhaeghe, chairperson of the SA Innovation Summit, says: “Let the battle begin. Going digital has enabled many new possibilities.”

This is all made possible through the partnership between the SA Innovation Summit, the Technology and Innovation Agency (Tia), the University of Basel, and Venture Labs as part of the Swiss South African Business Development Programme.

Tia is a national public entity that serves as the key institutional intervention to bridge the innovation chasm between research and development from higher education institutions, science councils, public entities, and the private sector, and commercialisation.

For the past nine years, and in partnership with the University of Basel and the Swiss Embassy in South Africa, the Swiss South Africa Joint Research Programme has supported hundreds of entrepreneurs and innovators to progress the business and market readiness levels of their projects.

“The Swiss South Africa Business Development Programme allowed us the opportunity to restructure our business and to articulate our value proposition. The participation and mileage received from the PitchFest enabled us to attract funding from Tia and other institutions. We are still realising the benefits from our participation,” shares Bandile Dlabantu of Khepri Innovations.

The Swiss Embassy and its partners are embracing digital platforms such as the SAIS2020 Virtual365 Edition to build on ten years of entrepreneurial and innovation collaboration between Switzerland and South Africa.

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