

DETTA launches social technology challenge

Following on from its successful first round of funding for social entrepreneurs in 2017/18, the Diageo Empowerment Trust South Africa (DETTA) has kicked off a new round of funding in 2019.



This new funding initiative will take the form of a challenge focusing on the use of technology to solve major social challenges in the country, says Sinethemba Mafanya, manager at DETTA.

“We will be engaging early-stage social entrepreneurs who not only aim to make money while doing social good but who are also using technology in innovative ways to do so,” he says. “Our target is start-up projects that are less than two years old or embryo projects that have been conceptualised by somebody who is in a corporate position and needs seed capital to take the plunge.”

There are three challenge areas: **Grow Nation**, defined as technology solutions for the agricultural/ rural sector; **Make Nation**, technology such as robotics and 3-D printing for the manufacturing sector; and **Tech Nation**, classic technology-based solutions such as mobile apps and Internet of Things.

Mafanya says that the Grow Nation sector is of particular interest because it targets a sector with considerable potential and yet which is relatively underdeveloped. In addition, social technology initiatives can be piloted in existing DETSA projects supporting sorghum farmers in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

DETTA is working with several partners in creating this challenge. Nosco, which specialises in designing platforms for corporate innovation, has designed a platform on which shortlisted candidates can interact with each other and develop their ideas, while Urbian will develop digital prototypes for shortlisted candidates. The Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) will provide entrepreneurship training and mentorship.



Creating a new generation of entrepreneurs

Sinethemba Mafanya 14 Dec 2017



Process

Applicants to submit their ideas on www.socialtechstartup.co.za, before 25 February 2019. An initial shortlist of 30 will be selected during March by a high-profile panel of judges.

The panel will include Adam Cragg, founding partner of Quake Capital, which makes seed level investments in new and early stage ventures across a wide range of industries; Richard Rose, CE, Multi-Mandate Funds at Edge Growth, whose Edge Venture Fund invests in innovative, scale up businesses in South Africa; Jesper Muller-Krogstrup, CEO, Nosco Denmark; and Marieme Jemma, Founder of lamthecode, an award-winning tech entrepreneur and a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

The judges will then select a final shortlist of 15. This group will participate in the GIBS entrepreneur leadership programme; in addition, the top five applicants will also benefit from an opportunity to visit entrepreneurial hotspots around the world with GIBS. The top five will also be eligible for up to R1 million in funding to take their ideas to the next stage.

“Social entrepreneurship is all about harnessing the efficiencies and drive of business to achieve social good—we are aiming to take that a step further by adding in the power of technology,” Mafanya concludes.

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