

Orange African Social Venture Prize returns in 2013

Following on from the success of the first two programmes run in 2011 and 2012, Orange, the telecommunications corporation, has launched the third Orange African Social Venture Prize. The project promotes social innovations in support of developments that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).



Orange, which is present in 18 African countries and boasts over 70 million customers, is seeking to become a major player in the economic and social development of every one of these countries.

The group has decided to contribute to the development of the local markets for new technologies through its 'Orange for Development' programme and to propose innovative solutions which meet the needs of the local population. In this context, and as part of its innovation strategy as well as its Corporate Social Responsibility policy, that the group has decided to launch the Orange African Social Venture Prize.

The call for projects has received more than 1,000 applications over the past two years, a figure that reflects a true entrepreneurial spirit and the potential for telecommunications on the African continent.

Encouraging the use of ICTs for development

This year, the Orange African Social Venture Prize will once again reward three entrepreneurs or start-ups offering products or services that make innovative use of ICTs to meet the needs of people on the African continent in fields as varied as healthcare, agriculture, education, energy, industry and trade.

For example, the prize-winning projects in 2012 involved mobile technology used to assist traders in food products in Ivory Coast (Vivuus Limited), a system launched in Kenya to improve the treatment of waste (Takachar) and the creation of an e-commerce site to allow people in the Senegalese diaspora to shop online for their families in Dakar.

This year, internet users will once again be able to vote online for their favourite project using the Orange portal in Africa www.StarAfrica.com. The project voted "online favourite" will be submitted directly to the jury along with the other finalists' projects preselected by the experts and will therefore have the maximum possible chance of being among the three winners of the 2013 Awards. In 2012, the Egyptian start-up "Innovative Electronic Employment Platform" won the prize with more than 50,000 votes.

Supporting social entrepreneurs

Orange has committed to providing financial support and placing its expertise at the service of the entrepreneurs who win the competition. In addition to prize money ranging from 10,000 to 25,000 Euros, the three winners will also receive support from professional entrepreneurs and ICT experts for a period of six months. In another new initiative this year, the project submitted by the winner of the first prize will be patented by Orange in the country where it is deployed.

Who can take part?

Any entrepreneur aged 21 or over, or company that has existed for less than three years at the time of the competition, regardless of nationality, can enter the awards free of charge. The projects submitted must have plans to deploy their service in at least one of the African countries where Orange is present and make innovative use of information and communication technologies to contribute to improving the living conditions of people in those countries.

Applications may be submitted between 14 May and 20 September 2013.

For more, go to www.starafrika.com.

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