

Winners of Water 4 Africa competition announced

This year, Water 4 Africa saw the use of crowd sourcing, via Standard Bank's IdeaScale platform, to attract people from Africa and around the world to put forward suggestions on solving Africa's water supply dilemmas.



© Teerawut Masawat – 123RF.com

"Crowd sourcing is a powerful tool to gather innovative ideas and identify practical solutions to address issues such as clean water and its conservation," says Jayshree Naidoo, innovation thought leader at Standard Bank. "In the case of Water 4 Africa, we are exceptionally pleased about the number and quality of submissions received from innovators and social entrepreneurs across the globe."

Water 4 Africa challenged entrants to address issues in six major areas. These were:

- Groundwater, for which the emphasis was on ideas that would help ensure that communities gained long-term access to clean water.
- Sanitation, where the challenge was on identifying ways that sanitation could help increase access to clean water.
- Purification, which concentrated on simple solutions that people could use to treat water.
- Filtration, with a focus on how available water could be turned into potable water.
- Solar, as a means of leveraging the power of the sun to purify water.
- Other innovative solutions that addressed the main campaign topic.

An added incentive for entrants was the significant cash prizes to be awarded. A panel of judges recently weighed in on the submissions to identify winners in the following three categories:

- Late stage (deployed solutions, ready for scale) - one prize of \$10,000.
- Mid-stage (tested solutions, ready for first deployment) - one prize of \$5,000.
- Early stage (new and promising concepts) - three prizes of \$2,000 each.

Since the competition opened in December 2014, hundreds of entries were received and evaluated. Those that rose to the top for their potential to practically influence the preservation of water resources and win the prizes are:

- SpaTap, an eco-friendly hand washing and showering bottle shower. This Australian entry won the late stage prize to enable its inventors to expand their business to Africa.
- The MAJI 1200 from Zimbabwe is a mobile, solar-powered water purification system won the mid-stage prize.
- Jim Murphy was awarded one of the early-stage prizes for his solar-powered cart which enables water to be easily transported in rural areas.
- The Water, Sanitation and Health Hygiene (WASH) project from Tanzania, which focuses on behavioural change in WASH practices at education level, is another early stage concept winner.
- From Uganda, the Basic Safe Water and Sanitation Management Programme, which also provides essential education, earned one of the early stage accolades.

