

# News release

## **Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation opens for entries**

*Innovative African engineers invited to enter prestigious award*

The Royal Academy of Engineering has announced the opening of the second Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation.

The Africa Prize, now in its second year, recognises ambitious and talented sub-Saharan African engineers from all disciplines. It aims to stimulate and celebrate innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting the importance of engineering as an enabler of improved quality of life and economic development.

Engineering innovators who work and live in sub-Saharan Africa and can provide a letter of support from a university or research institution are invited to enter.

Successful entrants chosen for the shortlist will receive extensive mentoring and training to develop their innovation and entrepreneurial skills, and the final winner will receive £25,000, while runners-up will be awarded £10,000 each. Entries close at midnight 29 June 2015.

Following entries from 15 African countries, the 2014-2015 Africa Prize finalists have been chosen from a shortlist of 12, and are preparing for their final presentations.

The finalists are:

- **Dr Askwar Hilonga** from Tanzania for his low-cost sustainable water filtration system
- **Ernst Pretorius** from South Africa for a fence-mounted security system
- **Musenga Silwawa** and team from Zambia for their spot fertiliser applicator
- **Samuel Wangui** and team from Kenya for Chura, a SIM-card-swapping service.

"The Africa Prize prompted me to reconsider my business plan and identify prototype functionalities I'd never thought of. I will always be grateful to the Royal Academy of Engineering for organising the Prize," said Ernst Pretorius, Africa Prize finalist and creator of the Fencesitter warning device.

"The mentorship programme and training have completely changed the business plan for my innovation," says Dr Askwar Hilonga, Tanzanian finalist and Nanofilters inventor. "I've found new sources of interest-free loans and seed capital, changed the way I see my customers and learnt to communicate with them better. The impact is much greater than I imagined."

The Africa Prize is an initiative of the UK's Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng), with support from the Shell Centenary Scholarship Fund, Consolidated Contractors Company, ConocoPhillips and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

"The four Africa Prize finalists represent a good cross-section of African engineering talent," said Africa Prize judge Stephen Dawson, a venture capitalist and chairman of Jacana Partners in the UK.

The eight other shortlisted innovators from the first Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation also received six months of mentorship and training. Their innovations are:

- An affordable multi-purpose degreaser/cleaner (by Justin Nwaogwugwu from **Nigeria**)
- A full-cycle sanitation service to reduce pollution to the environment and prevent diarrheal disease (by Samuel Malinga and team from **Uganda**)
- An industrial process and quality control system for the fluids manufacturing industry (by Dr Reinhardt Kotzé and team from **South Africa**)
- A mobile application for merchants and customers to make and receive card payments through their phones and tablets (by Ayodele Adigun and team from **Nigeria**)
- A mobile device application that teaches children how to read Shona (by Ian Mutamiri and team from **Zimbabwe**)
- A removable burglar-bar system for emergency exits from buildings (by Captain Abubakar Imam from **Nigeria**)
- Portable crushing machines for small and medium size mining operations (by Rujeko Masike and team from **Zimbabwe**)
- The mechanical pressing of bananas to produce enzyme-free clear banana juice (by Dr Oscar Kibazohi and team from **Tanzania**)

*Please note that all applications to the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation must be made in English, and that mentoring and training will be provided in English.*

**- Ends -**

#### **Notes for Editors**

For further information about the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation visit:  
[www.raeng.org.uk/AfricaPrize](http://www.raeng.org.uk/AfricaPrize)

### **About the Royal Academy of Engineering**

As the UK's national academy for engineering, we bring together the most successful and talented engineers for a shared purpose: to advance and promote excellence in engineering. We provide analysis and policy support to promote the UK's role as a great place to do business. We take a lead on engineering education and we invest in the UK's world-class research base to underpin innovation. We work to improve public awareness and understanding of engineering. We are a national academy with a global outlook. We have four strategic challenges: Drive faster and more balanced economic growth; foster better education and skills; lead the profession; promote engineering at the heart of society. Further information is available here: [www.raeng.org.uk](http://www.raeng.org.uk)

### **Judges of the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation**

#### **Chair of Judges: Mr. Malcolm Brinded CBE FREng**

Malcolm is Chair of the Shell Foundation, and a Non-Executive Director of BHPBilliton, CH2MHill and Network Rail.

#### **Judges:**

**Dr Liesbeth Botha**, former Executive Director, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa

**Stephen Dawson**, Chairman, Jacana Partners

**Professor Calestous JumaHonFREng**, Visiting Professor, MIT and Professor, Harvard Kennedy School

**Dr Moses Musaazi** from Makerere University and Managing Director of Technology for Tomorrow Limited, Uganda

**Dr Bola Olabisi**, CEO, Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network

### **Media enquiries**

For media queries, profiles of finalists, photos, videos or to attend the announcement in Cape Town, South Africa on 01 June 2015, please contact:

Anzet du Plessis

[anzet@proofafrica.co.za](mailto:anzet@proofafrica.co.za)

+27 83 557 2322