

2020 MEST Africa Challenge expands target, extends deadline

In light of this uncertain time, MEST is expanding the 2020 MEST Africa Challenge to target a larger number of tech startups in need of funding. This means the application deadline for the 2020 MEST Africa Challenge has been extended to 13 May 2020. Additionally, each country final will take place in its own week, during which MEST will be curating and creating conversations and resources specific to their particular local contexts.



“We realise that the MEST Africa Challenge and funding opportunities for African tech startups are now more important than ever,” says Jorn Lyseggen, CEO of MEST.

“MEST is committed to support the African tech ecosystem through these difficult times. Through the MEST Africa Challenge, we will help promising startups across the continent get visibility, access to networks, and funding”.

Participating entrepreneurs will take part in country-wide competitions where they’ll pitch virtually to a panel of expert judges. Finalists from each country will go on to compete on a global stage in front of entrepreneurs, investors, corporate partners and ecosystem players for the chance to win \$50,000 in investment from the MEST, and the opportunity to join the MEST incubator community.



MEST Africa Challenge now open

3 Apr 2020



For the second year running, the online competition will stand strong in partnership with leading technological giant and headline partner, Microsoft. They will be key to the success of the MEST Africa Challenge as it goes virtual.

When asked about the collaboration, Chris Lwanga, senior director of partnerships for Microsoft Africa, said, “Innovation is the birthright of every human being. We believe in empowering every person and organisation, like MEST, to do more through our Microsoft for startups program.”

In 2018, the inaugural MEST Africa Challenge saw over 700 applications from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. Forty semi-finalists made it into regional pitch competitions in Accra, Lagos, Nairobi, and Cape Town, and Nigeria-based cloud accounting company, Accounteer, was the first year's winner. In 2019, three startups, Kenya's WayaWaya Ltd, South Africa's Snode Technologies, and Ghana's Oze, tied for first place; all three winners were offered \$50,000 in equity investment and \$25,000 worth of products from Microsoft.

“Africa has a fragile and vulnerable tech ecosystem. Support for tech entrepreneurs on the continent is crucial in these challenging times. MEST's more than a decade long commitment to the Africa tech scene is unshaken by Covid-19, and through The MEST Africa Challenge and its other programs, MEST is tirelessly working with the belief that Africa will become one of the world's most exciting hotbeds for innovation and tech startups,” concludes Lyseggen.

This year, the MEST Africa Challenge is expanding its reach from five target markets to nine. Tech entrepreneurs in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Sénégal, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania are encouraged to apply before 13 May 2020.

Apply here for the [2020 MEST Africa Challenge](#)

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