[ENGLISH]

AfrIdea Frequently Asked Questions

**What is AfrIdea?**

AfrIdea is a regional innovation mechanism supported by the U.S. Department of State and Pact to source and grow innovative solutions that address challenges in communities across Francophone Africa due to COVID-19. AfrIdea seeks ideas from young entrepreneurs and innovators from Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and Togo, who have are passionate about making change. Special attention will be given to ideas that involve technology and demonstrate women’s leadership. Promising innovators will be selected to participate in a 3-day idea-a-thon in Conakry, Guinea, in June.\*

To apply for AfrIdea, applicants need to submit their idea on the IdeaScale innovation platform between February 15 and March 31. The top 36 ideas will be notified on April 16 and invited to travel to the idea-a-thon event and be paired with mentors who are experts from around the world.

At the idea-a-thon, participants will form new teams with participants across the AfrIdea countries and will work together to strengthen their original concepts. Concluding the idea-a-thon all participants will have a chance to apply for seed funding up to $10,000.

**I have submitted my idea; what happens next?**

The idea-sharing phase lasts until March 31. While we collect ideas from the community, applicants are encouraged to engage with other users on the platform. Applicants may read the ideas submitted from other participants and add comments to their concepts. If you like the idea, vote for it by clicking the “up arrow” or by adding a comment.

For ideas that show merit, we will reach out to those participants between April 9 through April 12 to request more information. If you have been selected as a finalist to participate in the Idea-a-thon in June, we will send you the invitation link and give you further details. If you are not selected, we will be in touch to let you know about other ways to get involved.

**Can I apply if I am not in one of the AfrIdea countries?**

No, AfrIdea is limited to young entrepreneurs and innovators living in Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and Togo. For those who do not live in one of the four designated countries, you are welcome to join our AfrIdea Facebook and LinkedIn pages. If you are interested in being a partner, please email afridea@pactworld.org.

**Is there an age limit for AfrIdea?**

Yes, AfrIdea is open to youth of all genders between the ages of 18 to 35.

**Can I apply as part of a group?**

You should apply as an individual, but people who are members of the same group or organization are all welcome to apply. New multidisciplinary teams will be formed once ideas are curated and invitations are accepted by the finalists. It is important to note that if selected to participate in the idea-a-thon event in June, the purpose will be to encourage the development of new ideas that will spark innovation and wider collaboration through newly formed teams.

**I don’t have a computer; can I still join?**

Access to either a smartphone or a computer is required for the idea-a-thon. A computer is recommended but not required.

**Should I come with ideas I’ve already thought out?**

Yes, AfrIdea is designed to advance the development of solutions to identified problems. The purpose of the idea-a-thon is to come together to examine a solution in more detail and refine your concept as a group.

**How will ideas be selected?**

Selection consists of a panel of 3-5 multidisciplinary evaluators who will assess the ideas based on the following factors i) the solutions ability to address an identified problem, ii) level of innovation, iii) potential for large-scale impact, iv) use of technology, and v) propensity to empower women. In a situation where there is a tie, the evaluators will take into consideration the level of engagement from the community on each idea. They will look at how high the idea ranked with the other innovators, and if the owner of the idea participated on the platform.

**Will each idea have its own team at the idea-a-thon?**

While AfrIdea is selecting 36 innovators to participate in the program, only 12 ideas will be showcased at the idea-a-thon—three from each country. The owner of the idea will be the team lead and partnered with the other AfrIdea innovators who have similar concepts but could benefit from being on a team. For this purpose, no prize money will be given at the Idea-a-thon. Instead, after the event, all 36 participants will have the opportunity to submit their revised idea for a chance to win up to $10,000.

**Will we get any support during AfrIdea?**

Mentors will provide close guidance to teams throughout the duration of AfrIdea. Mentors are experts in certain areas who will be supporting teams with either content or technical expertise while developing solutions to the proposed challenges.

**Can you tell me more about the funding?**

Funding will be available for promising innovations which are generated as a result of participating in the AfrIdea project. Which ideas receive funding will depend on a number of factors – including the nature, feasibility and execution of the solutions, the commitment of participants throughout the entire innovation process and more. We encourage young people to take part regardless of the funding aspect of the program – as you will also get access to expertise, extend your network, and join a community that will help you advance your ideas

\*Due to COVID-19 safety and health guidelines, the idea-a-thon may be a virtual event instead.