

## Saint-Gobain Africa Challenge 2021 calls for entries

Saint-Gobain places open innovation at the heart of its strategy and it is for this reason they have joined forces with AfricArena, an African tech ecosystem accelerator and dealflow platform - to launch an open innovation challenge, targeted at e-commerce and/or fintech startups operating in Africa, specifically in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa.



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This innovation project has come at a time when digital commerce has accelerated in the continent faster than ever before. More and more businesses have adopted a digital approach to commerce and transacting online, allowing easier and broader access to markets.

For over 350 years, Saint-Gobain has been designing materials and solutions that have a tangible positive impact on people's lives. Being present in 18 countries in Africa, the Group works with local partners to imagine solutions which enhance an individual's quality of life, and address the social, societal and environmental challenges. Research and Innovation are at the heart of Saint-Gobain's strategy, and in line with this, the Group supports the development of Africa, by providing solutions tailored to local needs.

Saint-Gobain and AfricArena have previously partnered in numerous open innovation challenges since 2018. These challenges have sought tech solutions ranging from analysis tools to predict climate changes, to digital platforms to enhance the skills of workers.

Fintech has recently dominated the startup space in Africa, fuelling demand led innovation, which aligns with the ethos of Saint-Gobain. This is why the Group sees fit to once again partner with AfricArena to bring an open innovation challenge targeted at startups using ecommerce and fintech solutions. The Challenge is supported by NOVA, the external ventures arm of Saint-Gobain.

The Challenge seeks a product-market-fit solution already in place that serves as a:

- Marketplace, payment platform, community lay buy or savings (stokvels, tontine or equivalent) that enables consumers, particularly in informal markets, to tokenize vouchers redeemable in Saint-Gobain products at various DIY retailers.
- Startups operating in any of the above verticals must be based in any of these markets: Egypt, Kenya, and South Africa. The startups must have proved product-market-fit as well as market validation. In terms of venture maturity, this Challenge accepts applications from startups between Seed and Series A stage.

## **Prizes**

Three startups (each from the aforementioned markets) will be selected to pitch at the annual AfricArena 2021 Summit in Cape Town in late November - where they will showcase their solutions in front of Saint-Gobain executives as well as investors looking for world-class talent to partner with.

Before the Summit, the finalists will also participate in a full day of workshops (The Founders Bootcamp, in partnership with FSAT Labs) on pitching, engaging with investors and business development.

The winning startup (and potential finalists) will have the opportunity to work with Saint-Gobain businesses to deploy a POC solution. Furthermore, AfricArena will award each of the 3 finalist startups \$10,000 worth of Amazon Web Services credit.

## **Enter now**

Deadlines:

- Egypt: 27 August 2021
- Kenya: 17 September
- South Africa: 22 October

Startups that are interested in taking part in the Challenge can submit their application [here](#).

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