

New competition launches to improve ease, enjoyment of African air travel

An innovation competition addressing the question 'What information, tools or technology will first-time air travellers in Africa need to make their journeys easy, successful and enjoyable?' has been launched by the UK-based SITA Air Transport Community Foundation, in conjunction with Wits University and the Tshimologong Precinct.



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The SITA Air Transport Community Foundation Innovation Award 2018 offers a prize valued at \$10,000 (about R110k) and will reward the best response to the challenge.

Itumeleng Dhlamini, partner engagement manager at the Tshimologong Precinct, says that Africa is predicted to grow faster than any other region over the next 20 years: "Taking this growth into account and the increasing penetration of mobile and digital technologies, SITA wanted to offer up the challenge to the people most likely to make up this new generation of air travellers."

She says that SITA, a world-leading air transport IT and communications specialist, has partnered with Wits University since 2015 to support students from Africa who need financial backing to succeed in their studies; and to add much-needed skills and expertise to the aviation industry through support for targeted academic disciplines.

Requirements and deadlines

The innovation competition kicks off this month and is open to Wits students and active members of the Tshimologong Precinct. Each team, comprising of 2 – 5 members, needs to submit an initial 2-minute video after attending a drop-in session on 27 March 2018 to better understand the issue, project and overall requirements.

The first deadline is 24 April, after which a shortlist will be announced on 2 May. Submissions can include a well-defined proof of concept; data modelling and recommendations based on data analysis; detailed research with recommendations for future activities; and the use of technology to address the issue.

Preliminary judging will take place in early July, after which final presentations and judging will be concluded at an award ceremony on 20 July.

“The aim of the SITA Air Transport Community Foundation is to provide ICT and education for learners in Africa, and to help build key skills for the next generation. We created this Innovation Award to highlight the challenges and opportunities for a continent that is seeing a changing demographic coupled with growth in technology and aviation. It will provide a unique perspective for these future travellers to consider each touchpoint of air travel – from booking to navigating airports, boarding, and arriving at their destination. We’re delighted to be working with Wits and Tshimologong to run this initiative,” says Amber Harrison, Director Corporate Social Responsibility at SITA.

For more information on the award, visit <https://sita.wits.ac.za/>

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