

Startup Support and Access to Markets Essential for Further Investment in African Innovation

Applications Now Open for the Telecel ASIP Accelerator, powered by Startupbootcamp AfriTech

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, December 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Over the course of 2021, African tech startups raised \$4.42 billion in funding - almost double the record-breaking \$2.4 billion raised in the previous year. "With investment in African innovation increasing, so too has the demand for hands-on support and access to markets from startups," says Eleanor Azar, [Telecel Group](#) Executive Deputy and Director of the Telecel Group [Africa Startup Initiative Program \(ASIP\)](#).



ASIP, SBC, and DER/FJ celebrating the success of Cohort 1

To scout, skill and scale the next generation of early-stage African tech startups, the Telecel ASIP Accelerator Program, powered by [Startupbootcamp \(SBC\) AfriTech](#) has opened applications for its next cohort. ASIP Accelerator is seeking the most impactful 'African solutions for African challenges' across key industry verticals including AgriTech, Supply Chain, IoT & Connectivity, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, CleanTech, RegTech, and Fintech.

Once selected, the top 10 participants will spend three months undergoing intensive coaching through expert-led masterclasses covering scaling fundamentals from the business model canvas, and lean methodology, to fundraising. The program will take place in Dakar, Senegal, culminating in a Demo Day where startup founders will pitch their disruptive solutions to a broad audience comprised of media, investors, corporate partners, and industry stakeholders. Startups will also have access to a proprietary tailored coaching platform, Accelerator Squared, which offers a complete library of content, group workshops, one-on-one mentoring, and collaborative sessions with Entrepreneurs in Residence, along with invite-only discussion forums with founders from around the globe. This is in addition to customised support from

experienced mentors and dedicated Entrepreneurs-In-Residence. The 10 startups will also receive benefits valued at more than \$750,000, including credits from AWS, Google Cloud Services, and many more, together with an \$18,000 cash stipend from ASIP.

"This program is an opportunity for early-stage startups to build a solid foundation and set up their businesses for success. We will help you make some tough decisions, create a sustainable business model and access the right people and resources," shares SBC AfriTech's Founder-In-Residence, Oshone Ikazoboh.

Azar also explained that Telecel will provide the participating startups with access to markets through their mobile services in 30 countries across the continent. "Telecel Group is also continuously seeking other partners in addition to our existing ones such as AWS, Google, Microsoft, and the United Nations International Trade Centre (ITC) to find more ways to support and push the whole ecosystem forward for the benefit of the startups."

The Accelerator Program is the first to ever be based in and focused on Africa, thanks to a partnership with the Délégation Générale à l'Entreprenariat Rapide des Femmes et des Jeunes (DER/FJ), an institution under the authority of the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal and launched by President Macky Sall in 2018 to support entrepreneurship. To date, DER/FJ has mobilised more than \$150 million to drive entrepreneurial activity in Senegal. DER/FJ's main incubator, the 'D-Hub', will be the ASIP program's main campus for the next three years.

The key stakeholders and partners involved in the Program convened a rigorous reflection and planning process earlier this month hosted at the offices of Amazon Web Services in Paris, France. In attendance were the leadership teams of Telecel Group, Startupbootcamp AfriTech, DER/FJ, AWS, and the United Nations. The Honourable Minister Papa Amadou Sarr attended the meeting and reiterated the Senegalese government's unwavering support for the program and its intention to foster public partnerships for the ecosystem. The strategy session recapped Cohort 1 and set the stage for Cohort 2, with a special focus on customer discovery discussions, key challenges and future target areas.

"The work Telecel Group is doing with the African Startup Initiative Program is not only relevant and useful, but it is also extremely timely as we see an exponentially growing interest in African tech innovation and the digital entrepreneurs who make it happen," concludes Martin Labbé, Tech Sector Development Coordinator at the United Nations ITC.

Apply today at bit.ly/ASIP-Apply or for more information, go to bit.ly/ASIP2022. Applications close on Friday, 28 January 2022.

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