

Rabawa

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REPORT OF THE

2022

**BUSINESS
IDEAS**

COMPETITION

I. PRESENTATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPETITION

AfroSkills organises the Africa Business Ideas Competition (ABIC) annually to meet, identify and support innovative and entrepreneurial ideas from African students, entrepreneurs, and researchers. The competition takes place in English and French languages and focuses on entrepreneurship of the fourth industrial revolution. All sectors of activity are concerned: agriculture, agribusiness, energy, digital transformation, art and culture, nutrition, health, environment, and sanitation, mechanics, robotics, real estate, etc. Promising projects are supported for maturation and fundraising, through AfroSkills' Business & Innovation incubator called Rabawa, which means sharing in Hausa, one of the widely spoken language in Africa.



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Evaluation process and criteria

Each project was evaluated by three assessors. The final score taken as the average of the three evaluators' scores. The scoring was done online, through the evaluation section of the AfroSkills' events platform: <https://events.afroskills.org/en/>. The online system promoted transparency and enhanced the credibility of the evaluation results at each stage.

The evaluation was based on the following criteria to unveil project's viability, sustainability, and contribution to sustainable development:

- Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals
- The usefulness of the project
- The originality of the project
- Profile of the project leader
- The implementation plan

II. COMPETITION STAGES

The competition consisted of five main stages, including the call for projects, preliminary rounds, quarter finals, semi-finals and final. All stages from the quarter finals onwards took place during the African Skills Week, the "Grande Messe" for fostering knowledge and skills strategies on the continent, organised by AfroSkills from 7 to 10 December 2022.

a. Calls for applications

The call for applications ran for eight weeks from 10th August to 10th October 2022 on AfroSkills online events platform:

<https://events.afroskills.org/fr/>.

Out of the 120 qualified projects, the country of origin was specified for 98 (15 countries in total) and remained unspecified for 22 notwithstanding several calls to complete country information. The 120 projects fall under 13 sectors of activities.

Country of origin of the 120 projects

							
DRC 21 projects	Côte d'Ivoire 11 projects	Cameroon 13 projects	Senegal 06 projects	Mali 04 projects	Burkina Faso 06 projects	Chad 05 projects	Guinea 04 projects
							
Zambia 08 projects	Mauritania 03 projects	Niger 07 projects	Benin Republic 03 projects	Gabon 04 projects	Ouganda 04 projects	Republic of Congo 01 projects	Unspecified country 22 projects

Sectors of activities of the 120 projects

				
ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION : 27 PROJECTS	AGRICULTURE AND AGROINDUSTRY : 34 PROJECTS	HEALTH AND NUTRITION : 13 PROJECTS	RENEWABLE ENERGIES AND ELECTRICITY : 02 PROJECTS	TOURISM AND LEISURE : 04 PROJECTS
				
EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING : 06 PROJECTS	MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES : 03 PROJECTS	IT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION : 16 PROJECTS	BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP : 07 PROJECTS	LANGUAGES AND HUMANITIES : 01 PROJECT
				
FABRICATION AND CONSTRUCTION : 01 PROJECT	NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY : 03 PROJECTS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT : 03 PROJECTS		

b. The preliminary rounds

The 22 projects without country of origin were disqualified and dropped. They were not considered for the preliminary round. Only 98 projects were submitted to the evaluators and evaluation was done by video conference on Zoom platform. For four days, the evaluators exchanged with the candidates and scrutinised their projects. They selected the forty (40) best projects for the next stage, the quarter finals of the competition.



c. Quarter finals

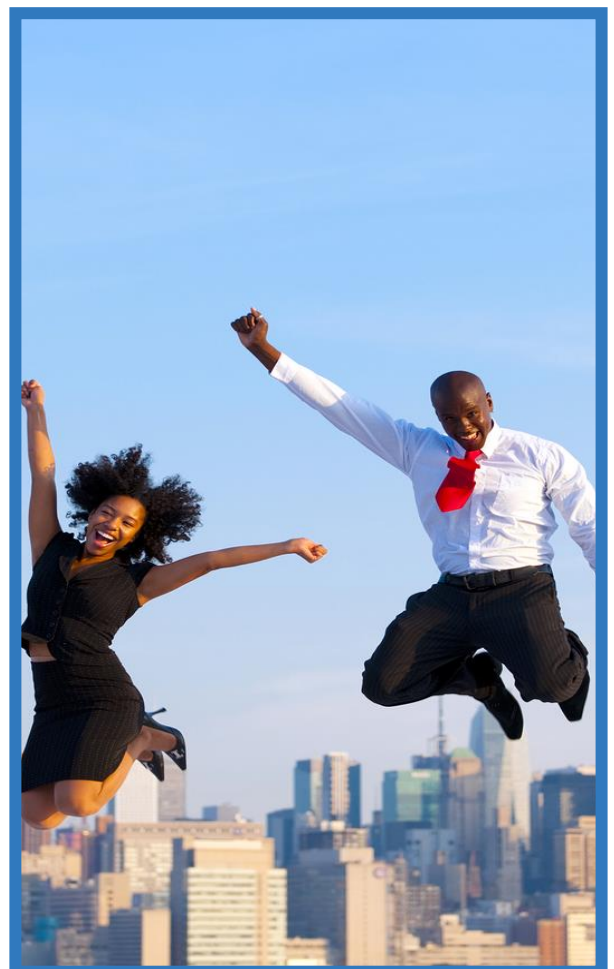
They took place during African Skills Week on 08th December 2022. New Evaluators re-evaluated the 40 projects, which were refined in their majority and based on the feedback received during the preliminary rounds. The twenty (20) best projects scaled through to the semi-finals.

d. The semi-finals

The semi-finals took place on 09th December 2022 during the Africa Skills Week, a day after the quarterfinals. The twenty (20) projects were submitted to evaluators different from those that evaluated them in the previous stages. The competition was increasingly tougher. The 10 best candidates scaled through to the final.

e. The final

The final of the Business Ideas Competition took place on 10th December 2022, the last day of the Africa Skills Week. The finalists were evaluated by a jury of four experts selected from the evaluators of the previous stages. The ten finalists presented and defended their projects through Q&A sessions from the jury and the public.



III. THE AWARDS

- All the leaders of the projects that reached at least the preliminary rounds received a certificate of participation. This means, 98 certificates of participation in total were delivered to candidates.
- All the projects that reached at least the quarterfinals, 40 in total, benefit free access to the RABAWA incubator's acceleration program 2023, through which, they will be supported for maturation and fundraising.
- The owners of the best three projects (the laureates) received the three money prizes of the competition.



a. The laureates and their prizes



EUR 2,500

The project is about a smart water meter that manages and optimises water consumption for farms and industries. It allows the user to automatically pump and stop pumping water via a mobile application with or without internet and over a distance of up to 2 km for small farms and 7 km for industries and large-scale farms.



SOTILMA project led by
Samba THIOUBE and
Bineta DALLO



TRANSPLACA project led
by **Mrs Inès MUNGAZI**



EUR 1,500

The project is about converting plastic waste to diesel fuel through pyrolysis process.



EUR 1,000

The project is about using virtual reality to allow tourists to experience a destination in lieu of physically visiting it.



Kwasu Vr Tours project
led by **Vera KWASU**

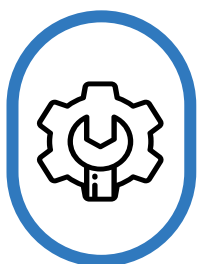
IV. MAJOR CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Because of its online and innovative nature, the first edition of the Africa Business Ideas Competition was very a challenging experience, both for the candidates and the organising committee.



Major challenges for the candidates were:

- Candidates were not comfortable with participating in an online competition, since for most of them it was the first time and they had not heard of AfroSkills before
- Since it was the first of its kind organised by AfroSkills, early birds questioned credibility of the competition.
- Limited and unstable internet connectivity hampered presentation sessions
- Little or no familiarity with using zoom and videoconferencing platforms in general prevented most of the candidate from showing the full potential of their projects during the presentation session.
- Limited knowledge of project development and requirements of each of its stages prevented most of the candidates to focus on key points that will quickly sell their projects or business ideas.
- Little knowledge of PowerPoint and its use to put together and give a presentation prevented some of the candidates to highlight the full value of their projects
- Issues with entering project information and uploading it to the event's platform prevented some candidates to provide all the required information that would qualify their projects or business ideas to the competition stage.



The organising committee faced the following main challenges:

- Learning how to fully use the event's platform and support the candidates through the competition process: the platform was still in its pilot testing phase. Some functionalities were yet to perform optimally, and others were not yet fully understood by all the members of the committee. The IT team needed to work round some processes to facilitate the access to candidates, evaluators and committee members, and work under high pressure to improve functionalities.



- **Lack of external sponsors:** Without preventing the competition from running smoothly, the lack of external sponsors led to revising the ambitions of the competition downwards. AfroSkills, in its mission to transform Africa with knowledge, has nevertheless taken up the challenge to ensure the credibility of the competition from its onset. We hope that future editions will benefit from the support of sponsors to amplify the scope and scale of the competition and strengthen its impact by scaling up the mobilisation and empowering of the entrepreneurship community in Africa.
- **- Absence of media partners:** The absence of media partners had a negative impact on the scope and scale of the competition. External media partners could have improved visibility of the competition and therefore, helping to attract more candidates and securing sponsors and other strategic partners. For the next editions, we are expecting media partners who share the values and vision of AfroSkills by contributing to the transformation Africa through knowledge and innovation.



V. MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED

- **With the Africa Business Ideas competition 2022, AfroSkills has mobilised young entrepreneurs and the entire business community in Africa and around the world:** The online nature of the ABIC 2022 revealed the growing interest in adoption and use of digital technologies across Africa: despite the facts that the competition was in its first edition and took place online, it mobilised more than 3000 people and attracted projects from 383 candidates.
- **The credibility ensued from the success of the 2022 edition augurs well for greater interest of the business community and other stakeholders in future editions:** It will favour a greater mobilisation of projects and business ideas' owners across the continent and the Diaspora, as well as the buy-in of sponsors, media partners and strategic partners.
- **Technically, the competition pressure-tested AfroSkills' events and knowledge platforms and proved their readiness for large-scale online events, exchange, and communication:** The platforms are now fully open for AfroSkills and the public to host their online conferences, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, and competition. They are accessible at: <https://events.afroskills.org/fr/> and <https://www.afroskills.org/fr/>

VI. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance the success of the forthcoming editions of ABICs, improvements are required in many areas amongst which, the planning and management of the event to facilitate stakeholders' mobilisation and contributions. Specifically, it will be necessary to :



- Launch the call for projects and business ideas at least six months before the final stage of the competition.
- Scale up and improve communication on the competition so that candidates and other stakeholders will be better informed and easily participate and contribute to the event.
- Capitalise on the community of users and the growing convening power of AfroSkills to reach out more stakeholders within and outside the continent and secure impactful sponsors, media partners and strategic partners.

- Produce users' guides and provide training and coaching sessions on the use of the competition platform for candidates, evaluators, and other users.
- Prepare candidates for using PowerPoint to put together and give a presentation
- Organise the competition in a hybrid (online and physical) format – the finals could be held physically in one of the beautiful African cities.



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