

APPS4AFRICA 2012

The United States Department of State will sponsor “**Apps4Africa 2012**,” a contest for African innovators to develop mobile, web, and desktop applications (apps) that help African youth overcome obstacles and challenges to finding employment. The **Africa Bureau’s Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs** will direct the competition, with the participation of **U.S. Embassies in Africa, Appfrica International** (Appfrica), and other partners.



Why the Department of State is Promoting Apps4Africa

The United States seeks to engage emerging African innovators, entrepreneurs and young leaders as partners in promoting economic opportunity, development, and mutual understanding. This project will underscore the U.S. Government’s emphasis on the role and importance of economic development and market forces in U.S. foreign policy, as well as the U.S. commitment to reach out to young leaders who represent both the present and future of Africa.

Objectives of the Competition

In this project, the U.S. Government hopes to energize African participants to develop innovative software applications that promote job creation and employment opportunities, address the challenges faced by job-seekers, help connect them with businesses looking for talented employees, or otherwise facilitate and promote economic opportunity for youth by:

- Generating discussion among stakeholders to address the local challenges and opportunities that exist for young people seeking jobs and for businesses seeking employees.
- Bringing together technologists, entrepreneurs, youth and local business owners to develop collaborative, practical apps that present solutions to the problem of African youth employment and economic opportunity.
- Promoting the use of technology as a means of youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, and as a springboard to economic and employment opportunities.
- Highlighting successful young African technology entrepreneurs and business leaders as agents of change and role models for African youth to emulate.



U.S. Department of State



How African Innovators Can Participate

As with last year’s “**Climate Challenge**” competition, Appfrica will run the contest. In the coming months, Appfrica will announce details via the Apps4Africa website (**Apps4Africa.org**), traditional, and new media, including competition criteria and deadlines. The contest is expected to run from **October 1 to December 21**. Appfrica will also organize regional, face-to-face brainstorming sessions in partnership with local tech hubs and U.S. Embassies in Africa. These person-to-person events have proven to be effective tools for mentoring, product development, and strengthening local networks.

How Winners are Selected

An independent panel of judges will select a continent-wide winner, as well as first and second place winners in each of three sub-regions: **West/Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa**. **Winners will be announced in early 2013**, and will receive cash prizes.

How Partners Can Add Value

Appfrica is actively seeking sponsors to underwrite prizes, provide mentorship and internships, sponsor activities during and after the competition, and provide support to help sustain the networks and initiatives that emerge from the contest. The U.S. Department of State encourages partners to help grow the Apps4Africa competition into a robust, self-sustaining, year-round program that supports African innovators and entrepreneurs in a comprehensive manner. If your organization is interested get in touch at **partnerships@appfrica.org**.