



SMART VILLAGES

New thinking for off-grid communities worldwide



cambridge
development initiative

The Smart Villages Energy Innovation Challenge 2016

We want to hear about how **your**
rural **energy access** programme
has acted as a **catalyst** for
economic and **community development**

Guidance for Applicants

UPDATED: 15th March 2016

CONTENTS

The Basics	2
The Challenge	2
Entrance Criteria	2
Competition Outcomes	3
How to Enter	4
1. Your information.....	4
2. Applicant background.....	4
3. Your idea.....	5
Qualities of a good idea	
Pathway from idea to business plan.....	5
Application process and rules	6
Application process.....	6
Key Dates.....	7
Competition Rules.....	7
Feedback.....	8

THE BASICS

The Questions	The Answers
Who?	Teams of up to three current students or recent graduates from an East African University or higher learning institution
What?	An innovation business idea competition for academic credit, mentorship and prize money
When?	Applications accepted 16 March – 16 April 2016 Training and pitching competition 27 July – 17 September 2016
Where?	Entrants from throughout East Africa, training and finals to be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Why?	To give motivated young entrepreneurs an opportunity to develop business skills, build their network, meet peers and win start-up capital for business ideas powered by off-grid energy

THE CHALLENGE

Technological innovations for providing electricity services to rural villages have recently started to change the landscape of off-grid energy across the world, especially in East Africa. Access to affordable new forms of energy opens doors to a whole range of new social enterprises where the business delivers positive social impact for the user.

Villages across East Africa are gaining access to off-grid energy. We challenge you to come up with an idea for a social business powered by off-grid energy.

This competition seeks to find and support aspiring young entrepreneurs who have ideas for businesses that are made possible by off-grid energy access.

Examples of possible areas to consider include (but are not limited to):

- Mobile-phone-based businesses
- Innovative methods of agriculture processing or storage
- Waste management and sanitation
- Ideas for improvements to education or healthcare

ENTRANCE CRITERIA

Individuals and teams of up to three people may apply for this competition. Applicants must be:

A current student* or recent graduate (within two years) at an East African university or higher learning institution

Students across all areas of study are invited to apply. This is a youth entrepreneurship competition and applicants must be 30 years or younger

to apply. Gender balance may also be considered during assessment. As teamwork is a key element to the success of a business, priority will be given to teams of two or three people ahead of individuals. Individuals may apply and may be chosen if their idea is particularly promising and scores highly across other selection categories.

** Current students may be eligible to receive practical training credit. Students from outside Ardhī, DIT and UDSM will need to contact their universities directly to confirm.*

COMPETITION OUTCOMES

Up to five finalist teams will be chosen to progress through a seven-week business training programme based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to develop and test their idea, build it into a full business plan and receive academic credit for practical training. In the final week of the training, finalists will pitch their business plan to a panel of judges for a chance to win 3000 USD in prize capital to help implement their idea.

Business training will be led by The Cambridge Development Initiative (CDI). The CDI is a student-led NGO from the University of Cambridge in the UK with a proven training methodology for early-stage business development, which will guide finalists through market research and prototyping in off-grid communities based on an approach called the Human-Centred Design (HCD) framework. This will allow teams to refine their

product or service, as well as the business model, in direct interaction with end customers. The CDI wants each participant to become familiar enough with the framework so that they are able replicate it themselves in future entrepreneurial ventures. This personalised coaching will be channeled into a business plan and pitch, which is the main output of the competition.

Furthermore, in closely facilitated workshops, the CDI will help finalists build core business skills and prepare their pitches as well as equip them with a versatile and useful entrepreneurial skillset. Input from collaborating organisations including GVEP, Practical Action, COSTECH, and The Smart Villages Initiative will help ensure the course is at the cutting edge of the off-grid energy space.

Competition Outcomes for Finalists

- Training** Learn how to conduct market research, interrogate your idea, validate prototypes, build revenue models, and develop core business skills including public speaking, leadership and teamwork
- Funding** Understand how to access funding from local sources.
Pitch to win 3000 USD in prize capital to help implement your idea.
- Certification** Earn practical training academic credit
- Network** Build a professional network of peers and potential mentors, partners and funders

HOW TO ENTER

This section provides practical guidance on how to complete an application form to enter the competition. If you are selected as a finalist, your name and a high level description of your idea may be made public through the Smart Villages and/or DAREnterprisers website websites, social media channels or other publicity materials. More detailed elements of your idea will not be made public without your consent and part of the entrepreneurial training during the competition will clarify which information you should publicise and which information should be kept confidential. Any questions can be directed to competition@e4sv.org.

1. Your information

Please read this guidance document before submitting an application.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and the other team members if you are entering as a team.

Business Title

Please give your business a title, for example 'Village Healthcare at Home.' Smart Villages will use this title when referring to your application, so do give it some thought! An individual or a team may submit different applications for different ideas, but only one application per team or individual will be able to progress to the development phase.

Full Name

Please enter the name of the primary contact for your application.

Email

Please enter the email address you would like us to use for communications related to this proposal and Smart Villages information. In order to keep you informed about Smart Villages, we would like to add your contact details to our network to tell you what we're working on

in Africa and other parts of the world. Please indicate if you would not like to be included in the network.

Phone number

Please enter a contact telephone number. We will not share your phone number with other parties.

Current Country/Location

This competition aims to support new entrants into the East African entrepreneurial space. Applicants must be based in East Africa and must speak fluent English as all training will take place in English.

Should you be selected for the development phase of the competition, you will be required to attend the CDI's DAREnterprisers training course in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for seven weeks (29th July – 17th September 2016). For appropriate applicants, travel and accommodation expenses will be paid for as part of the training. Pocket money and food expenses will not be covered.

2. Applicant background

Date of birth

Please enter your date of birth in the requested format. Applicants 30 years old or younger may apply for the competition and details will be checked against your passport. If you require a passport to travel to Dar es Salaam for the seven week training period, please ensure this is valid before applying.

Gender

Please indicate your gender. Gender balance of the overall programme may be considered when selecting the DAREnterprisers 2016 participants.

University, field of study and year of study or graduation

Please indicate your university and field of study in the fields provided. From the pull-down menu, please choose year of study (for example first year, second year, etc) and/or year of graduation (for example 2015). A separate field is provided in case you would like to provide extra explanation.

Applicant background

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you believe you will get out of this training and competition. You don't need to repeat information listed in other areas of this application. This will have a significant impact on your selection as a finalist. (maximum 150 words)

3. Your idea

In this section please describe your idea for a business that could run on off-grid energy and that would benefit East African villages beyond the reach of the electricity grid. Examples of possible areas to consider include (but are not limited to):

- Mobile-phone-based businesses
- Innovative methods of agricultural processing or storage
- Waste management and sanitation
- Ideas for improvements to education or healthcare

Idea description (maximum 50 words)

In a few sentences, provide a very brief description of your idea for a business that runs on off-grid energy. Rather than focusing on the problem, use this section to concisely explain your business idea. If your application is chosen as one of the finalists, Smart Villages may publish this description as part of the competition publicity.

Idea explanation (maximum 250 words)

Provide a more detailed summary of your idea. This explanation should include:

- the specific problem your idea is trying to solve (50 words)
- the solution you are proposing, how it is new and why it will work (100 words)
- how your solution would positively impact a community (100 words)

DAREnterprisers is a programme intended to support the growth of social businesses. The products or services developed by the businesses accepted into the programme must have some positive social impact for the end customers. These could include businesses that help improve education or healthcare, create jobs, solve social problems or address other positive unmet needs in off-grid communities.

Qualities of a good idea

Pathway from idea to business plan

A good idea always starts with a specific problem you are trying to solve or an unmet need you are trying to address. The CDI will work with finalists to help develop promising early stage ideas into real-world social businesses with some of the following qualities.

Principles of good solutions include:

- affordability both across the lifetime and at the point of purchase
- simplicity of maintenance and use
- flexibility to the conditions of the user, both in use of the product and in payment
- leveraging existing technologies or business approaches in a new way

At the application phase, the hurdle is about the big idea and the essence of the solution. Finalist chosen for the training and development phase will work with the CDI to develop a full scale business plan, asking the more complicated questions:

- how will your idea be affordable for the end user?

- how will end users operate and maintain any technology involved?
- how will you scale the idea to thousands of off-grid communities?

By the final pitching session, you will be able to answer these questions and explain your idea and full business plan to a panel of experienced judges who will choose the overall winners.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND RULES

Application process

Phase one - Idea generation and application

The entry phase of the competition opens on 16th March 2016

- Complete the application form with your details and your proposed idea
- Submit the final application form via <http://e4sv.org/competitions> before 12pm on 16th April 2016. Unfortunately applications submitted directly via email or other channels cannot be reviewed by Smart Villages.
- Shortlisted candidates will be notified by email and will have a follow up interview with the CDI to determine finalists who will be offered a spot in the DAREnterprisers training course and competition
- Finalists offered a spot in the training and competition will be notified by the end of May 2016

Assessment criteria for phase one will include:

- Concept and Product Feasibility (is it a valid or promising business idea?)
- Market and Commercial Feasibility (is it a realistic proposition?)

- Innovation (is there something about the idea that hasn't been tried before?)
- Sustainability (in terms of the business and the environment?)
- Team (can the applicant(s) deliver on the idea proposed and benefit from the training?)

Phase two – Training and development

Finalists win the opportunity to develop their idea with the support of the CDI. During the seven-week DAREnterprisers course based in Dar es Salaam, the CDI will work with finalists to trial and refine their ideas. The focus will be on developing the product or service in direct interaction with communities in peri-urban, semi-rural areas around Dar es Salaam.

The programme will include two series of CDI workshops, one focused on developing entrepreneurial core skills, such as pitching creativity and confidence, the other providing business skills, including marketing and revenue models. Local mentors stand ready to contribute their technical expertise throughout the process. At the end of the training period, finalists will pitch to a panel of judges at a conference that will also function as a networking event creating opportunities to meet new potential partners, investors and peers.

Key Dates

Date	Event
Mar–Apr	Submissions open for the Smart Villages Off-grid Energy Challenge
May	Up to five teams selected as finalists
Jul–Sep	DAREnterprisers business training course in Dar es Salaam
September	Finalists pitch to judges at the Dare to Change Dar conference
October	Winners receive prize capital

Competition Rules

Rules – General

This is a competitive process for identifying ‘innovation solutions,’ primarily aimed at entrepreneurial skills development for the participants.

The contest is open to motivated entrepreneurs, age 30 years or younger, who are currently attending an East African university or who have graduated within the past two years.

The competition is divided into two phases and a final judging event.

Rules – Phase one

Each application is reviewed against the same set of assessment criteria.

Following scoring, short-listed candidates will be notified to schedule an interview with CDI representatives. Following interviews, a review panel will make a final assessment of the top scoring applications to choose the finalists to invite to the training and development phase. Some applicants may be put on the waiting list in case finalists cannot attend.

Applicants not selected to continue will be informed by email.

All panel documents and ranking sheets are confidential and will not be shared following the assessment process. The judges’ decision is final.

Rules – Phase two

Phase two of the competition involves working closely with the CDI to refine your idea into a full business plan.

All members of the finalist teams must attend the training in Dar es Salaam. If all team members cannot attend the full training phase, an alternative team may be awarded their place in the competition.

Participants in the DAREnterprisers course must attend at least 80% of the classes between 29th July and 17th September to be eligible to pitch for prize capital at the Dare to Change Dar conference.

Rules – Competition Finals

A final pitching session will be held at the Dare to Change Dar Conference on 16th September in Dar es Salaam to choose the competition winners.

All team members must be present in Dar es Salaam to pitch to the panel of judges at the final session.

In case a member of the judging panel should for whatever reason not be able to attend the finals, Smart Villages will appoint another judge in their place to select the winners.

Winners will receive 90% of prize capital within six weeks of the final pitching event. The remaining 10% will be due on the one year anniversary of the final pitching event, pending submission of a report on how their efforts over the past year developed.

Feedback

Please let us know how you heard about us and how you think we could reach more potential competition entrants in the future. All competition related communications can be directed to competition@e4sv.org.

Best wishes and good luck!