

Winners of Space-Tech Earth Observation Innovation Challenge announced

Launched in September 2020, the winners in the Space-Tech Earth Observation Innovation Challenge have been announced. The initiative, convened by the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), and ZA Space in partnership with RIIS, Maxar, FNB, SA Innovation Summit, and Anza Capital, aimed to develop early-stage tech startups that utilise downstream applications of African space technology in the agriculture, insurance, retail and sustainability and conservation industries.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

The space technology industry is one of the fastest-growing markets in the world, representing a \$7bn opportunity; however, only 0.5% of investments in space technology globally goes toward African companies. The space technology sector can play a role in most, if not all, of the various UN Sustainable Development Goals through cost-effective and up-to-date data and insights. This represents a massive opportunity for vibrant and innovative entrepreneurs to contribute towards growing the space industry.

Business development training

Attracting submissions from across Africa, the top 15 finalists were then selected to participate in a two-week virtual business development training programme that enabled them to strengthen their business solutions for the grand finale, a virtual Space-Tech Challenge pitching den where the top three winners were selected by a panel of judges.

The prizes include:

- Four-month online incubation and virtual mentorship, and ongoing access to a peer to-peer network through the TechTribe Accelerator.
- First place winner: SecureWatch Premium 5GB valid for three months to the value of \$12,500.
- Second place and third place winners: SecureWatch Premium 2GB valid for three months to the value of \$5,000.

The winners of the challenge are as follows:

First place:

Hydro Blu - Joash Kisten, South Africa

Second place:

[Smart AgrIoT](#) - Jabu Madlala, South Africa

Third place (tied):

[HeHe](#) – Crepin Kayisire, Rwanda

[FieldDev Group Nigeria](#) - Nduka Okpue, Nigeria

The next iteration of the Space-Tech challenge in 2021 will be geared towards promoting new entrants and entrepreneurs across the industry value chain. The programme will aim to demystify the space industry for entrepreneurs and civil society by bringing them together with relevant stakeholders, government agencies, and commercial organisations to shine the light on the impact space technology could have on the future of Africa.

There are further plans under way for a Space Infrastructure Hub (SIH) in South Africa which will also play a role in developing the space-technology ecosystem by providing the appropriate platforms for developing new skills whilst leveraging the current areas of expertise in South Africa.

For more information on the Space-Tech Innovation Challenge, [click here](#).

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