

Golden opportunity for SA startups

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Entrepreneurs seeking to launch digital solutions on the African continent are invited to apply for the Venture Incubation Programme - a partnership between telecommunications giant, MTN and the Solution Space based at the UCT Graduate School of Business.

Opportunity has come knocking for innovators and tech whizzes with the [Venture Incubation Programme \(VIP\)](#) officially opening applications for 2018. The programme has helped over 30 startups in the past two years and is run by the [Solution Space](#) and MTN at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (GSB), one of Africa's top business schools.

Valued at over R300,000, the programme offers startups mentorship, workshops and industry expertise to help develop new ventures and validate business models, as well as provide access to funding, networks, exposure and recognition.

"We call on digital startups from all over Africa who are looking to get a foot in the door to take advantage of this amazing opportunity," says Sarah-Anne Alman, manager of the Solution Space. She acknowledges that, "the first 90 days of a startup are the hardest and when entrepreneurs are least supported. This programme is geared to present entrepreneurs with all the tools needed to implement their ideas and bring them to fruition.

Alman also states, "The idea is to inspire, nurture and equip the next generation of entrepreneurs to build a better future for the African continent."

Since its inception in 2016, the VIP has supported various successful businesses like eating-out app [Feastfox](#) and chatting platform [Chat2Brand](#) as well as online emotional intelligence platform [Mygrow](#) and consumer neuroscience consultancy [Neural Sense](#).

As a proud partner of the VIP, MTN sees this partnership as an opportunity to spearhead the company's engagement with innovation driven startups as potential service providers and develop the ecosystem around MTN's digital service platforms.

Stephen van Coller, MTN Group VP: Digital Services, Data Analytics & Business Development says, "Innovative ideas and technology disruption are the way of the future and MTN is at the forefront of helping to pioneer solutions that impact and shape the future of the continent."

Van Coller adds, "The MTN Group is interested in startups that are contributing to sustainability on the African continent through digital solutions for commerce, health, education, agriculture, fintech, energy and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Ideal applicants for the Venture Incubation Programme are teams of a minimum of two entrepreneurs, comprising a founder or major shareholder, who are able to attend a 12-week programme, for approximately 30 hours a week at the Solution Space.

Applicants should already have initial concept development demonstrating a deep understanding of the market environment and potential problems. They should also pose a compelling solution that is innovation-driven and scalable. A minimum viable product ready to conduct early-market testing and further establish the product/market fit is an added advantage.

Alman adds, "we are looking for people who have commitment and passion. We want the doers, the movers, the makers and the creators to apply for this programme."

Applications for the Venture Incubation Programme close on 28 February 2018. For more information, please contact

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