

SA Innovation Summit 2020 goes virtual

For the very first time in its 13-year history, the SA Innovation Summit (SAIS) will be taking place virtually on 30 September and 1 October 2020, connecting the startup ecosystem across countries and continents.



The SAIS Virtual 365 Edition is set to be a space to share experiences, think, create, learn and do. At its heart is the tech entrepreneur and this is reflected by a programme packed with competitions, demo days, exhibitions, pitch battles, panel discussions, master classes and workshops.

The Summit will also offer a Match and Invest platform to help startups meet with the most suitable new business partners – a crucial component for achieving the key event outcomes of deal flow and business growth. The platform allows businesses to profile themselves and ask for what they need in order to be matched with the right enabler, investor, corporate or entrepreneur to help them take their business forward. At last year's Summit, one in four attendees saw a monetary gain, while more than 60% were able to expand or improve their business.

What to expect

A cornerstone of this year's Summit is the Start-Up to Scale-Up track – a deep dive into what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur, with key insights and practical tools to help young African startups wanting to grow and expand their business beyond borders.

During panel discussions, fireside chats and think tanks, attendees will get to hear the first-hand experience of founders from across the continent who have built successful companies that are expanding their reach.

For entrepreneurs, this is an opportunity to learn about what the customer wants, optimising marketing and sales, implementing tools that can make a business more efficient, strategizing business expansion, and optimising new technologies for their business. Plus, they'll be equipped with practical toolkits.

Another key focus area is Tech on the Rise which will explore new technologies and how they are changing our world and our lives.

With the Summit being a celebration of innovation, it is also the perfect platform to shine a light on tech and tech-enabled startups from across the country and continent that are solving Africa's problems

On Demo Day, 20 female-led startups will pitch their business cases to potential investors. These women are part of Fem-In-Tech – a female-focused entrepreneurship development programme for South African women facilitated by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), in collaboration with the SA Innovation Summit, and run in the lead up to the event. Fem-In-Tech is aimed at empowering South African women in tech with the entrepreneurial and leadership skills to launch and grow their businesses.

A highlight of every Summit is the Africa Cup and this year will be no exception, with 12 startups disrupting traditional ways of doing business set to engage in an epic pitch battle in the Wizz Kids Pitching Den. The competition provides start-ups and early-stage companies in all tech-enabled sectors from around the world a space to compete for investment, showcase their products and services, gain market and media exposure, and secure support in the stages of scaling and growth.

Audrey Verhaeghe, SAIS chairperson, says "By pivoting our event and taking it online, we've had the opportunity to bring the global ecosystem together. To keep this going, we will be launching the SAIS Community, a platform offering year-long networking and matching, ongoing and regular virtual events and workshops, along with partner and start-up profiling as well as a marketplace."

Find out more at <https://innovationsummit.co.za>.

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