ITU Launches Third Young Innovators Competition

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has launched the third edition of its annual Young Innovators Competition. The competition offers talented social technopreneurs a platform for presenting their ideas to industry leaders at ITU Telecom World 2013, to be held in November 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as potential access to up to USD10,000 worth of funding, mentorship and ongoing support.

Open to 18 to 26-year-olds worldwide, the Young Innovators’ Competition is looking for innovative solutions using cutting-edge technology to one of six Global Challenges developed in partnership with specialised UN agencies and leading private sector players:

- Improve employment opportunities for young people and migrant workers
- Reduce food and water wastage at individual and retail level
- Facilitate access to public services for the elderly
- Improve natural disaster prediction and response
- Improve road safety for both drivers and pedestrians
- Protect sensitive personal data and inspire the creation of local digital content

The challenges reflect the most urgent spheres of life where ICTs could have a significant and wide-ranging impact. The competition seeks pragmatic, market-oriented, scalable solutions making use of connected technologies, such as augmented reality, mobile apps, 3D printing or geospatial tracking.

Submissions

Submissions may be either in the form of a concept, well-researched or documented ideas which have not yet been implemented, or a start-up, which is already up and running but in need of funding to take it to the next stage.

Applications can be made by simply completing the application form and sending it to young.innovators@itu.int with “2013 Young Innovators Competition” in the subject line.

Ten finalists selected by a committee of experts will win the chance to attend ITU Telecom World 2013, the platform for high-level debate, networking and knowledge-sharing, as well as an ICT showcase, which will take place from 19 to 22 November in Bangkok, Thailand, on the theme “Embracing Change in a Digital World”.

Finalists will work with ITU partners from both public and private sectors to develop their initiatives and refine their solutions within the global market in the run-up to ITU Telecom World 2013. At the event itself, they will enjoy mentoring and pitching sessions, workshop training on entrepreneurial skills, opportunities to meet and network with leading ICT players, and the chance to showcase their projects on a dedicated showfloor pavilion. Prize money in the form of seed funding will be awarded up to USD10,000 to implement and bring to scale winning start-ups, and up to USD5,000 to realise winning concepts.

This competition for young ICT innovators represents a wonderful occasion to uncover creativity, innovation and talent in solving serious challenges that impact upon us all, said ITU secretary-general Hamadoun I. Touré. The ITU looks forward to supporting and fostering new, creative thinking and fresh ideas and showcasing them on the world-class stage at ITU Telecom World 2013 in Bangkok.

The deadline for initial submissions is 30 June 2013.

For further details and the application procedure, please see here. You can also visit the Young Innovators Facebook page or contact the organisation directly.

About ITU
International Telecommunication Union is the United Nations specialised agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. The agency allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strives to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.