



**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND
SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**Call for Nominations:
COMESA Innovation Awards**

Background

The year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary celebration of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It will also be a little more than a decade since the formation of the African Union, which seeks to promote “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena”. Consequently, the African Union Heads of State declared the year 2013 the Year of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance.

Thus to celebrate the Year of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has launched COMESA Innovation Awards scheme to recognize and celebrate individuals and institutions that have used science, technology and innovation to further the regional integration agenda.

This is expected to facilitate and celebrate African narratives of past, present and future that will enthuse and energize the African population and use their constructive energy to accelerate a forward looking agenda of Pan-Africanism and renaissance in the 21st century. It provides a unique opportunity, and comes at a moment when Africa is on the rise, and must therefore build its confidence in its future. The exponential growth in scientific and technical knowledge in the 21st Century also provides great opportunities for Africa to solve its critical challenges related to meeting basic needs, participating in the growing economy, addressing ecological and climate change problems and improving governance.

Recognizing this, the Secretariat of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has embarked on a new path to technological innovation. The approach seeks to focus on promoting the harnessing of existing technologies and using them to create new enterprises that export to regional and international markets. To achieve this, the COMESA Authority is planning to mobilize resources mostly from the private sector to promote innovation in the region. The aim is to harness, nurture and grow the innovative capacities of the youthful population in the region.

It is worth noting that over the past decade COMESA helped its 19 member states reduce trade barriers and increase trade flows. In 2000 intra-COMESA trade in goods was US\$3.1 billion. The figure stood at US\$19.3 billion in 2012. The goal is to increase intra-COMESA trade volumes to US\$42 billion by 2017 to enhance the quality of life of the people in the region through exploitation of the existing knowledge in the World in producing goods and services.

To achieve this target COMESA has agreed to focus on an aggressive program to foster the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It is envisaged that SMEs would serve as the vehicle for harnessing existing technologies and using them to enhance industrial production and commerce. The SMEs would need to be

technology-based and possess high potential for growth. However for this to happen, there is a need for seed capital to promote this approach and the creation of an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship to prosper. The COMESA innovation award is the first step towards creation of the regional Innovation fund. The fund when in place will be used to promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the region to tap the innovative capacities of the youth.

To realize this goal, COMESA Council of Ministers instituted the COMESA Innovation Awards at its 31st Meeting held in November 2013 in Kampala Uganda. The aim of the COMESA Innovation Award is to recognize and celebrate individuals and institutions that have used science, technology and innovation for practical applications to further the COMESA regional integration Agenda and significantly improve the quality of life of the people in the region. The prizes shall be awarded annually on the occasion of the COMESA Heads of States and Governments Summit and presented to the winners by the hosting Head of State.

Nominations

There will be an open nomination process but individuals or institutions will not be allowed to nominate themselves. The call for nomination will be run in all the 19 COMESA Member States and the award ceremony will take place during the Heads of State and Government Summit scheduled to take place in DRC Congo in October 2013. The deadline for submissions is **31st August 2013 at 00.00 hours Central Africa Time. All the submissions must be in English or French.**

Nominations should be submitted directly to the COMESA secretariat. Nominations can be sent via [e-mail](#) or by post to the COMESA Secretariat at the address provided below. No particular form or format is required, and the nomination can be supported by any additional supporting documentation such as letters, publications, and bibliographical information. That helps distinguish a nomination. Receipt of all the nominations will be confirmed by e-mail.

Awards Judging Panel

A five member technical evaluation panel chaired by a member of the innovation council shall be constituted by the COMESA Innovation Council to assess the submissions. The panel will make recommendation to the judging panel.

The COMESA Secretary-General upon the advice of the Innovation Council will establish a 10-person judging panel. The names of the winners will be submitted to the COMESA Council of Ministers for consideration before submission to the Heads of States.

Who can apply?

Initially the eligibility will be restricted to the COMESA region. Submissions are invited from individuals, groups of individuals or institutions, enterprises (including SMEs) that have come up with new product(s), new method(s) of production, new ways of improving technology, opening of a new market, new ways of doing business, conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials or half-manufactured goods, and implementation of a new form of organization among others

Categories

Submission shall be made under the following categories:

- a. Youth (up to age 35 years)
- b. Women
- c. Individuals or Groups
- d. Organizations /Institutions

Selection Criteria

The award will be for an innovation that has the potential for a long-term and significant impact. The impact of the innovation may be technological or economic in nature, and preferably should have created a broad or globally recognized benefit for the society. Examples of some factors that could support an award are significant cost savings or revenue generation, proven commercialization and implementation in industry, direct/indirect beneficial impact on the industry, and long term benefits to the industry and/or society.

Further, the following will be considered for the evaluation of the submissions:

- a. Significant contributions to the development of regional trade and integration
- b. Benefit to COMESA member state(s)
- c. Creativity and novelty of the idea (commercial viability, patent or potential for patenting)
- d. Contribution to job creation and poverty alleviation
- e. Positive impact on human development and quality of life, and
- f. Contribution to the development of the green/blue economy in the region.

The Judging panel reserves the right not to proceed with any nominations if they do not satisfy the criteria and meet the standard for this award.

Awards

The award will include a trophy and/ or cash prize. The awards will be given at the COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit to be held in DR Congo in **October 2013**.

Notification

Finalists and nominees will be notified of the Innovation Council decision via e-mail.

Contacts details

Nominations: can be submitted via e-mail to COMESA Secretariat at innovation@comesa.int or Via Courier to COMESA Centre, Ben Bella Road, P. O. Box 30051 Lusaka - ZAMBIA Tele +260 211 229725/32

General Inquiries: Contact Fred at: Tele +260 211 229725/32 or e-mail at fkongongo@gmail.com