



## **AFRICA NETPRENEUR PRIZE OFFICIALLY OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS**

*The Prize aims to spotlight entrepreneurs across Africa from both technology-driven and traditional industries with a special focus on small enterprises, female entrepreneurs, and those doing work to improve local communities*

**NAIROBI, Kenya – 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2019:** The application process for the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI) is officially open to African entrepreneurs from all countries, sectors and age groups. The ANPI is a prize competition founded by the Jack Ma Foundation that will award US\$10 million and recognize 100 African entrepreneurs over the next 10 years.

The Prize aims to support and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs who are building a more sustainable and inclusive economy for the future. Every year, 10 finalists will be selected to compete in a finale pitch competition that will be broadcast across the continent. All ten finalists will gain access to the Netpreneur community of African business leaders to leverage the community's shared expertise, best practice and resources.

Alibaba Group Executive Chairman Jack Ma first created the prize after he made his first trip to Africa in July 2017 and was inspired by the energy and entrepreneurial potential of the young people he met. The Prize is open to entrepreneurs from all industries, and Ma especially encouraged those running small businesses, those making a difference in their local communities and female entrepreneurs to apply.

Global leaders Graca Machel, Chair of the Graca Machel Trust Board and Ban Ki-moon, Former UN Secretary-General and Co-chair of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens serve on the ANPI advisory board. The Jack Ma Foundation has teamed up regional partners: Nailab (continental and Eastern Africa), 22 on Sloane (South Africa), Nine (West Africa), and Rise Up (North Africa) to promote the Prize in their respective regions. The partners will mobilize entrepreneurs across the continent through grassroots outreach.

Graca Machel praised the Prize's inclusive approach and focus on female entrepreneurs. "I especially encourage powerful women entrepreneurs to apply. It is up to you to be the heroes that will usher the continent into the next stage of development, growth and prosperity. Good luck to all applicants and I look forward to your contributions in taking Africa to higher heights."

Nailab Founder and CEO Sam Gichuru called for applicants to consider a visionary approach towards creating all-inclusive solutions to the continent's challenges. "This is a unique prize that is looking to inspire and reward heroes in both technology-driven and traditional businesses. We hope that all of the applicants will be able to use this opportunity to break through the barriers that have been holding them back."

Applications will be open online from March 27 to June 30. To apply and for more information about the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative, please visit: [www.netpreneur.africa](http://www.netpreneur.africa).

**Ends//**

### **NOTES TO THE EDITOR:**

#### **About Jack Ma Foundation**

Jack Ma Foundation (JMF) is a charitable organisation founded in 2014 by Jack Ma, Executive Chairman of Alibaba Group. The foundation's aim is to promote human development in harmony with both society and the environment, while its mission is to work towards a world of bluer skies, cleaner water, healthier communities, and more open thinking. From education to environment, to public health and personnel development in philanthropic sector, the



foundation intends to awaken social consciousness and responsibility to cultivate an innovative and sustainable model for a better world.

#### **About Nailab**

Nailab is an **accelerator** that offers a “**Launch out**” program for **entrepreneurs** and “**Launch in**” program for those seeking employability in the digital economy. Through programs lasting 3 - 6 month long, the accelerator has designed initiatives that help cater to personal and or business transformations, ensuring an increase in knowledge in both soft and technical skills as well as access to opportunities such as seed and growth funding or market access. With its main focus being the support of entrepreneurs that are looking to optimise the use of technology to deliver better services and products, Nailab works with different organisations from Government, development aid, foundations and corporates that are youth centric to help design programs aimed at catalysing innovations, entrepreneurship and job creation.

#### **About 22 on Sloane**

22 On Sloane, is a legacy project of the Global Entrepreneurship Network Africa (GEN Africa) and home to the largest startup campus on the continent. The organization seeks to nurture the development of new industries by supporting disruptive startups. 22 On Sloane receives support from world leaders and a network of more than 15,000 partner organizations which support the growth of many businesses

#### **About NINE**

NINE is Nigeria’s largest network of Incubators supporting the growth of entrepreneurs. NINE comprises of a dynamic team of young and talented Nigerians across a wide sector discipline with social impact investing mindset and innovation as a goal to sustainability and adaptability in today’s world.

#### **About RiseUp**

RiseUp is the creator and organizer of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region’s largest entrepreneurship event, RiseUp Summit. RiseUp is a platform that connects startups with needed resources from across the continent. The annual conference attracts over 6000 participants.