TECHCON 2016
INNOVATION MARKETPLACE

WHAT IS THE MARKETPLACE?

Students and young professionals around the world are forging new solutions to global development needs. By applying novel approaches to Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (STIP), these innovative projects challenge existing assumptions and advance our understanding of what works in global development. The Innovation Marketplace, hosted by the U.S. Global Development Lab, will showcase the talent of students and young innovators who are using STIP to tackle global challenges.

The Innovation Marketplace will take place on November 10th –12th on MIT’s campus, as a feature of the Higher Education Solutions Network’s (HESN) TechCon 2016. Throughout the course of the competition, individuals or teams of students, young professionals, or postdoctoral researchers will have the opportunity to gain exposure, build support for their innovative product, service, or research, receive technical feedback, and practice their pitching skills. Although all accepted applicants will be able to attend TechCon, one winner from each category will go on to receive the grand prize after the final round.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Innovation Marketplace is a three-round competition, where the main portion of the competition functions like a science fair or poster session, but with each booth comprised of you and your project. To capture the full range of innovation in global development, the competition will have two categories — ‘research’ and ‘products & services’. A research project must have data collected by the time of application, while products & services must have an existing prototype or model.

TechCon attendees will invest “Development Dollars” in the innovative projects they find most promising. The candidates in with the most Development Dollar investments in each category will be interviewed by a panel of technical judges. The judge's selected teams will then deliver three minute pitches to TechCon attendees and make the case for why their project is unique and transformative. A final round of popular voting by the audience will select an overall winner from each category based on these pitches.

The innovation showcase was an amazing opportunity to present the work that we’ve been doing… We were awarded a grant which provided a great opportunity to receive guidance, expert feedback, and challenged us to think through our model. In a lot of ways, the positive feedback and visibility from the innovation showcase was a springboard for moving forward and encouraged us to actively pursue this work.

— Amit Gandhi, MIT PhD candidate and past Innovation Marketplace winner
WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

Cash and in-kind prizes will be awarded to the top innovations in each category. In addition, the material you will create throughout the course of this competition can prove useful as you seek further support for your project. Our team will provide feedback, skill building opportunities, and chances to connect with others in your field during and leading up to this event. This competition is designed to support both novice and practiced innovators alike.

For more information, visit tiny.cc/InnovationM or email techcon@usaid.gov.

WHAT DO I NEED TO ENTER THE COMPETITION?
Visit tiny.cc/InnovationM for links and guidelines.

1. Create a profile on the Global Innovation Exchange:

   The Global Innovation Exchange (www.globalinnovationexchange.org) will be the central hub for participants to post information on their research or product/service. Not only will this make it easier to centralize your application materials, but by creating your account, you will be able to use the Exchange to apply for other funding opportunities, connect with teams working on similar issues, and draw inspiration from other existing innovations.

2. Upload your material

   **Research:**
   Upload a draft abstract to the Exchange that outlines your research question in terms of background, existing knowledge gaps, research question and approach, preliminary data, and its potential to be applied within global development.

   **Products & Services:**
   Submit a 30 second to 2 minute draft video that shares what the innovation is, why you designed it, and how it’s going to change the lives of its target population. You must have a prototype of your innovation before applying. For simplicity, we suggest you upload this video or multimedia presentation to Vimeo or YouTube and then submit the link, but you can also upload to the Exchange directly.

3. Hit send

   Finalize your application by filling out the registration form. From there, your application will be judged according to the rubric guidelines. Please make sure that your Exchange profile and abstract/video fulfill these criteria. You can find all documents and links at tiny.cc/InnovationM.