

INNOVATION BRIDGE PORTAL SHOWCASING SOUTHERN AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT



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The Innovation Bridge Portal (IBP), an initiative of the Department of Science and Innovation, supported by the Department of Small Business Development South Africa, in partnership with the World Bank Group, Thinkroom and national counterparts in Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia would like to cordially invite you to participate in a series of hybrid events to showcase young entrepreneurs from the five countries.

The revamped IBP and Entrepreneur Community was launched in May 2022 as a digital regional entrepreneurship community to assist underserved entrepreneurs in facilitating access to relevant business support services and increasing their opportunities to access early-stage finance, markets, and innovation. The IBP also envisions strengthening collaboration and networking across the national ecosystems and increased opportunities for private-public partnerships.

Over the past year, a flagship initiative of the IBP has been to partner with the Thinkubate Academy, which enabled the cohorts of young entrepreneurs to receive bespoke solutions to help in their early-stage business development. This was achieved through completing online learning and receiving practical support from mentors to prepare for pitch readiness. A total of 115 entrepreneurs from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa have benefited from the program to date, and the top 35 entrepreneurs will be showcasing their ventures through pitch events from 9 May – 12 May 2023, with a winning pitch selected per country.

The hybrid (in-person and online) events will be hosted by the respective national counterparts in each of the five countries. We anticipate the participation of entrepreneurs, business support organisations, investors, academia, and other ecosystem actors from across the region.

THE DETAILS OF THE EVENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Namibia

Tuesday 9 May 2023: 9:00 – 12:00 (SAST/CAT): co-hosted by the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board at First Floor, Investment House, Cnr Garten Street and Dr A.B. May Street, Windhoek, Namibia.

Eswatini

Wednesday 10 May 2023: 9:00 – 12:00 (SAST/CAT): co-hosted by the Royal Science and Technology Park, Eswatini, First floor, UN House | Somhlolo Road, Mbabane, Eswatini.

Lesotho

Thursday, 11 May 2023: 9:00 – 12:00 (SAST/CAT): co-hosted by the Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub, a program of the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project at Letseng Diamonds House, Second Floor, Corner Kingsway and Old School Road, Maseru 100, Lesotho.

Botswana

Friday, 12 May 2023: 9:00 – 12:00 (SAST/CAT): co-hosted by the Botswana Digital and Innovation Hub at the World Bank Office, Time Square, 134 Independence Avenue, Gaborone, Botswana.

South Africa

Friday, 12 May 2023: 13:00 – 16:00 (SAST/CAT): co-hosted by the Department of Science and Innovation and the Department of Small Business Development, at CSIR International Convention Centre | Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, Pretoria, South Africa.

Make sure to join online and celebrate our young entrepreneurs!

<https://qkt.io/IBP500PitchingEvent>