

# TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS



## 2020 Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)

*Digital transformation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs  
– Digital development, partnerships and funding*

6-7 October 2020, 12:00 – 15:00 CAR (Virtual meeting)

with preparatory break-out sessions on 5 October 2020 (12:00 – 13:30 CAT time)

## CONTRIBUTION BY Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, Zambia

**TITLE:** ZICTA ICT Innovation Programme

**EXPECTED DURATION OF PRESENTATION:** [5 minutes]

**CONTACT:** [Name, e-mail, phone]

❖ **Africa Regional Initiatives:** [Select the Regional Initiative(s) relevant for your contribution]

[Yes/No] AFR Regional initiative 1 – Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa

[Yes/No] AFR Regional initiative 2 – Promotion of emerging broadband technologies

[Yes/No] AFR Regional initiative 3 – Building trust and security in the use of telecommunications/  
information and communication technology

[Yes/No] AFR Regional initiative 4 – Strengthening human and institutional capacity building

[Yes/No] AFR Regional initiative 5 – Management and monitoring of the radio-frequency spectrum  
and transition to digital broadcasting

❖ **Related ITU development thematic:** [Select the thematic area(s) relevant for your  
contribution]

[Yes/No] Networks and digital infrastructure

[Yes/No] Cybersecurity

[Yes/No] Emergency telecommunications

[Yes/No] Environment

[Yes/No] Digital policy and regulation

[Yes/No] Capacity development

[Yes/No] Digital services and applications

[Yes/No] Digital inclusion

[Yes/No] Digital innovation ecosystems

[Yes/No] Statistics and data for evidence-based decision making

❖ **Year(s) of implementation:** [Select the year(s) for which your action/project/initiative is  
relevant]



## TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

[Yes/No] 2018	[Yes/No] 2019	[Yes/No] 2020	[Yes/No] 2021	[Yes/No] Others
---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	-----------------

❖ COVID-19 response related initiative: [Please indicate if your action/project/initiative is relevant for COVID-19 response]

[Yes/No] COVID-19 response related initiative

### Background

The ‘ZICTA ICT Innovation programme’ is an initiative that has been implemented by the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) since 2016 and is focused on providing business and technical development support services to ICT related entrepreneurs, start-ups and innovators. The support provided is designed to facilitate the development of innovations into commercially viable ventures that can also contribute to socio-economic progress. The programme was developed as an initiative to implement the Authority’s mandate, as prescribed in section 6.2 (h) of the Information and Communication Technologies Act No.21 of 2009 to promote research, development and the use of new and appropriate technologies in the sector. In addition to this, the programme was developed in order to respond to the increasingly high number of ICT-related innovations that were continuously presented to the Authority by various innovators.

The successful implementation of the programme is supported by effective partnerships with the University of Zambia (UNZA), Zambia Centre For Accounting Studies (ZCAS) University, National Technology and Business Centre (NTBC), Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC), Jacaranda Hub, Bongohive Innovation Hub, Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO), Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), IHS Towers, Stanbic Bank Zambia Ltd and recently Airtel Networks Zambia Limited among others. The roles of these cooperating partners in the implementation range from supplementary funding, procurement of technical devices and other support services such as consultation services and training of innovators, offtake of Projects, business linkages, material support including coaching and mentorship opportunities. The programme leverages on a nascent ecosystem with various participants as well as complements the efforts of the few existing innovation hubs. The participation of innovators has national coverage targeting youths and selections is based on innovativeness, business potential, technical feasibility and anticipated social impact. In the last two years, the programme provides support to commercialise the innovations.

### Proposal [max 400 words]

ZICTA intends to strengthen its cooperation with existing partners on the programme as well as broaden its scope of collaboration with various institutions. More specifically, the Authority is looking to make international collaborations in the region to increase its scope of support to the innovators enrolled on the programme and leverage on best practices. As the country’s ecosystem is nascent, this collaboration could link local innovators to innovators outside the country but also leverage on experience of other markets. This experience could potentially inform a national strategy for innovation and entrepreneurship in ICTs.

The Authority is also looking to extend the scope of support under the programme to incorporate support services towards Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises aimed at promoting their growth and profitability. This has been necessitated by the fact that, although there is a rise in the number of institutions providing support services to start-ups at ideation and early stages, most MSMEs remain unsupported. This leads to a high rate of business discontinuance among these businesses as their challenges are unaddressed. It is therefore envisaged that through this support MSMEs shall have the opportunity advance their businesses to growth and maturity stages and possibly



## TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

expand to international markets. The rationale is mainly around the MSME having an established proof of concept and have high likelihood of achieving greater impact in employment and revenue growth.

In addition, the Authority wishes to undertake capacity building for women entrepreneurs that will be aimed at providing basic technical skills to women entrepreneurs in order to empower them to leverage on ICTs such as social media in their businesses. This initiative is in a bid to ensure that vulnerable groups such as women and girls are not left behind in this fast moving digital space where ICTs have become an essential tool in the effective provision of all necessary goods and services.

As the programme evolves and the critical mass of innovations is growing, the programme is envisaged to grow in size and scope. In this regard, the medium term plan is to extend the programme presence to other locations outside the national administrative capital as well as enhanced the available tools such as computers and laptops to support increased numbers. In addition, as more innovations rely on short codes as well as virtual hosting space, the programme would like to enhance the scope of resources available for innovations.

**PLEASE SUBMIT THE CONTRIBUTION BY 15 SEPTEMBER TO [ITU-RO-AFRICA@ITU.INT](mailto:ITU-RO-AFRICA@ITU.INT)**

