

**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND
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COMESA INNOVATION PROGRAM

**2021 CALL FOR INNOVATIONS TO BE EXHIBITED AND
PRESENTED AT THE EIGHTH COMESA ANNUAL
RESEARCH FORUM**

Deadline for submission 30th April 2021

I. BACKGROUND

The COMESA Innovation Awards was launched in 2013 to celebrate the Africa Union 50th Anniversary. The Awards are aimed at recognizing and celebrating individuals and institutions that have used science, technology and innovation to advance the regional integration agenda. The inaugural Innovation Awards were successfully given at the 17th Summit of the COMESA Heads of States and Government held in February 2014 in Kinshasa DR. Congo and the second was given at the 18th Summit in March 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This year COMESA has advertised for call of papers under the theme; “RETHINKING TRADE AND DOING BUSINESS IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC”). The selected papers will be presented at the Eighth COMESA Annual Research scheduled for August 2021.

The virus which began as a simple localised outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019 quickly propagated across the globe, threatening the existence of humanity, global economic integration, value chain supplies and human mobility in general. As of 12th January 2021, nearly 89 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections had been recorded around the globe with more than 1.9 people having succumbed to the disease (World Health Organization, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the global economy into a deep recession comparable only to the 2008 global financial crisis and the Great depression of the 1930's. COVID-19 pandemic though a health crisis has devastating economic and social effects. On the supply side, infections reduce labour supply and productivity, while lockdowns, business closures, and social distancing also cause supply disruptions. On the demand side, layoffs and the loss of income (from morbidity, quarantines, and unemployment) and worsened economic prospects reduce household consumption and firms' investment (Chudik et al., 2020).

Economic disruptions caused by COVID-19 have resulted in an unprecedented collapse of international trade in 2020 (UNCTAD, 2020). The International Monetary Fund, projected that, world trade volume of goods and services will contract by 10.4 percent in 2020 and grow by about 8 percent in 2021. The subdued trade volumes reflect in part, possible shifts in supply chains as firms reshore production to reduce vulnerabilities from reliance on foreign producers. While all countries are expected to suffer large drops in exports and imports, tourism- dependent economies will experience larger declines due to restrictions of travel and consumers fear of contagion. Oil exporters have suffered a severe terms-of-trade shock with the decline in oil prices.

In line with the Annual Research Forum theme, COMESA calls for innovation concepts to be show-cased and presented during the Forum. The focus of the 2021 Innovation Concepts will be on new products, new methods of production and new ways of improving doing business technology. Also included in the criteria is methodology of opening new markets, new ways of doing business, conquest of new sources of supply of raw materials and implementation of a new form of commercialization among others. Although the Innovation Concepts are geared towards all innovators in Member-States, the 3 main

target groups are SMEs, youth and women.

SMEs: COMESA has established an aggressive program to foster the development of technology based new enterprises. It is envisioned that SMEs would serve as the vehicle for harnessing existing technologies and use them to enhance industrial production. However, SMEs are expected to be technology-based with high potential for growth. Thus, the need to recognize and reward SMEs that contributes to the achievement of this goal.

Youth: COMESA seeks to harness nature and grow the innovative capacity of the youthful population in the region for sustainable economic development. The youth will be challenged to harness science and technology to create wealth and employment. Through this they can provide innovative ways of solving challenges facing the region such as food security, Covid-19, access to basic education, healthcare, energy, climate change and industrialization among others.

Women: Women have traditionally been under represented in the fields of science and technology. Consequently, COMESA will focus on women and like the youth challenge them to harness science and technology to come up with innovative ways of solving challenges in the region.

II. CRITERIA

The COMESA Secretariat would like to invite innovation concepts from individuals who fit the following criteria

Categories:

1. Young (35 and below male and female)
2. Woman (Open to all Females)
3. SMEs (SMEs that meets the definition of SMEs of a COMESA member state)
4. Group (open to all collaborative efforts)
5. Institution (Open to all institutions of any kind)

Eligibility

Only the following categories can submit the innovation concepts:

- Citizens or long-term legal residents of member states,
- Teams of less than four members with at least one citizen of a member state.
- Teams of 5 or more with at least 3 citizens of a member state.
- A non-citizen member team will be considered if all its team members legally reside in and the project is based in a member state.
- SMES who are based in and operate in member states,
- All institutions who are based in and do a substantial amount of business in member states

Criteria

Each submission will be scored on the following aspects:

- Novelty/Significant advancement in the field
- Social Impact (actual or potential)

- Economic impact (actual or potential)
- Patentability

The Call

COMESA now invites individuals and Groups to submit their innovations. The innovations will be competitively evaluated and the top two in each category invited to the Eighth COMESA Annual Research Forum to be held in August 2021. During the annual Research Forum each of the selected Innovator will have an opportunity to showcase his/her innovation throughout the one-week event and will present the innovation to the annual research forum. The annual Research Forum is attended by Government Officers, Academia, Policy Think Tanks, Development Partners and the private Sector. The 10 selected innovators will be notified by 30 May 2021.

Funding for participation

COMESA will fund the participation of the innovators in the research forum. The funding will cover a return economy air ticket, accommodation and a daily subsistence allowance.

Submission

All the submissions must be in English or French, the innovation concepts are to be submitted **by 30th April 2021** electronically to e-mail bmusengele@comesa.int with a copy to jkibiru@comesa.int or by Courier or registered mails to COMESA Secretariat.