

PwC announces Top Ten finalists in Vision to Reality Awards Competition

PwC has announced the Top Ten finalists in its Vision to Reality Awards competition. The Top Ten finalists will have the opportunity to showcase their innovative companies and gain access to leading advisors and a direct route to seed and venture capital.

The Top Ten finalists were selected from a shortlist of 25 finalists last week. Announcing the Top Ten, PwC Partner in Charge of the Western Cape, Danie Fölscher, said: "PwC sees the solving of important problems in society as part of its purpose as a global organisation. Supporting entrepreneurship and innovation facilitates growth in our economy which is what is urgently necessary to solve the problem of poverty and joblessness in South African society.

"We would like to sincerely thank all of the outstanding businesses that entered this year's awards and applaud the tremendous contribution that they make to the South African economy. Together with our Top Ten finalists, they are a true testament to the entrepreneurial talent driving South Africa's economy forward."

The PwC 2014 Vision to Reality Awards Programme (in collaboration with the City of Cape Town, Wesgro, UCT GSB, the CITi Bandwidth Barn initiative and World Design Capital Cape Town 2014) encourages the best companies to step forward as role models and to inspire future technology start-ups. The programme, which was launched in January 2014, is designed to recognise and honour companies whose outstanding achievements have made them some of South Africa's most successful technology companies.

"Our independent panel of judges had a difficult task in nominating and narrowing down the list of the Top Ten Finalists who were selected on the basis of their vision, innovation, financial leadership, and entrepreneurship," says Fölscher.

"The panel of judges have also been extremely complimentary about the lead role PwC is taking in this arena and we are proud that the initiative has firmly entrenched PwC as a leader in this space," he adds further.

The finalists in the PwC Vision to Reality Awards competition are:

- ArcAqua (Pty) Ltd
- Energy Partners
- Entersekt
- Euphoria Telecom (Pty) Ltd
- GoMetro
- IT School Innovation
- Mellowcabs
- RedButton Mobile (Pty) Ltd
- Triggerfish Animation Studios

· wiGroup

The finalists were selected by the independent panel of judges in the technology and financial communities, which included Anita Nel, CEO of Innovus and Senior Director: Innovation and Business Development at SU; Laurent Probst, a Partner at PwC and Leader of the Research and Development Activities Unit of PwC Consulting in Luxembourg; Clive Butkow, the former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Accenture South Africa (formerly Arthur Anderson and Anderson Consulting); George Steyn, former MD of Pepkor (2005) – Steyn currently holds a number of directorships; Julia Fourie, who is currently in the final year of a three-year professional coaching course, and who headed up the development arm of South African wonder-boy Mark Shuttleworth's Thawte; Dr Nosakhare Griffin a lecturer at University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business; Chris Vermeulen, General Manager of the Bandwidth Barn (Pty) Ltd; Marc Balkin who joined Hasso Plattner Ventures Africa (HPVA) as Co-Managing Partner in 2008, and led investments in Luminous Software (subsequently sold to First National Bank Ltd), 22-Seven (sold to Old Mutual Plc) and Rubybox (sold to Media24.com) – currently serving on a number of boards; Max Oliva is co-founder of Impact Hub Network, Impact Hub Madrid and TeamLabs, and serves as a Director of Impact Hub Madrid; and Lindiwe Buthelezi, a venture capitalist at the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC).

The Top Ten companies will now proceed to the second round, attending a Mentoring and Judging programme on 16 and 17 September, and will make their final presentations to the panel of judges. The presentations will be evaluated based on innovation, financial performance, and strategic direction. The winner will be announced at the Awards ceremony on 18 September 2014 in Cape Town.

The awards offer a wide range of potential benefits. "These include, amongst others, stronger investor and customer relations, access to local corporates, a boost in employee morale, enhanced professional reputation, and in the process it is hoped they will be accelerated to the global market and ultimately be leaders in their respective industry," adds Tom Blok, Partner in PwC's Advisory Division based in the Western Cape.