Press Release
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For Immediate Release

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AFRINIC, APNIC and Lacnic Secure AUD $1.5 Million Sida Grant to Promote Internet Innovation in Developing Economies.

Sweden supports Seed Alliance grants and awards initiatives in Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. New African small grants program, FIRE programme, to receive special support.

The Seed Alliance today announced a grant of AUD 1.5 million from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support Internet innovation projects in developing economies.

The grant, over three years, allows the expansion of current awards and small grants programs implemented by alliance members, FIRE managed by AFRINIC, FRIDA managed by Lacnic and ISIF Asia managed by APNIC. The program extension will focus on promoting Internet access, openness, inclusion and rights, in addition to collaborative efforts designed to promote capacity building and networking among the partners.

“Supporting the Seed Alliance allows us to play a role in enabling people living in poverty to take an active part in the development of the Internet to benefit them and their wider communities,” commented Jens Karberg, program manager at Sida responsible for ICT for Development.

Investment in development in the form of small grants and awards can represent a highly effective means of stimulating innovation and technology adoption at a local level. The grants and awards encourage people to develop smart ideas and put them into practice, in a way that is responsive to local needs. By encouraging the rapid dissemination of successful ideas, the grants and awards also create a positive chain reaction of adoption and adaptation, leading to wider benefits.

“We have seen many high profile examples of Internet development, such as the proliferation of community wireless networks in remote areas, which can create a mistaken perception that innovation no longer requires support,” said Paul Wilson, APNIC Director General. “On the contrary, there are more opportunities than ever for communities to benefit from new technologies, but new ideas often still need support, as do the people who create them.”

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The Sida grant provides additional support to the FIRE program in Africa. "Africa is a region that is steadily growing in terms of technology penetration," added Adiel Akplogan, AFRINIC CEO. "For this growth to be sustainable, we must encourage innovation so that technology can be used to address and solve issues that the population faces every day. The Sida donation to the Seed Alliance allows us to mitigate the risks usually associated with direct investment in development oriented research and innovation."

Raúl Echeberría, Lacnic CEO, also expressed similar sentiments. "Having Sida's contribution and support enhances the FRIDA Program's ability to contribute to the development and innovation of ICT in Latin America and the Caribbean. We are very excited about being a part of the Seed Alliance".

Potential grant or award applicants or sponsors can apply via their local initiatives:

- FIRE In Africa: http://www.fireafrica.org/
- FRIDA In Latin America and the Caribbean: http://programafrida.net/
- ISIF Asia In Asia Pacific: http://isif.asia/

Notes to Editors

About the Seed Alliance

AFRINIC, APNIC, Lacnic and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada have collaborated since 2010 to support Internet innovation for development purposes. This collaboration was formalized as the Seed Alliance in March 2012 thanks to a generous grant from the IDRC, the contributions from three Regional Internet Registry partners (AFRINIC, APNIC and Lacnic), the Internet Society, and generous regional sponsors including the DotAsia Organization.

The three regional small grants and awards programs that form the Seed Alliance are the:

- Fund for Internet Research and Education (FIRE), managed by AFRINIC
- Information Society Innovation Fund for Asia (ISIF Asia), managed by APNIC, and
- Regional Fund for Digital Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean (FRIDA), managed by Lacnic.

FIRE, FRIDA and ISIF Asia aim to contribute to the development of the Information Society in their respective regions by funding projects (through small grants) and by recognizing and rewarding innovative approaches in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (through awards). Regional variations of these funding mechanisms allow each program to respond to local expectations and requirements.

For more information about the Seed Alliance, contact seed-alliance@apnic.net

Media Contacts

FIRE: Vymala Thuron, Marketing and PR Manager vymala@afrinic.net