For Research & Education Networking

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## Call for Proposals to Participate in the First UbuntuNet Alliance Women Hackathon

UbuntuNet Alliance for Research and Education Networking is a membership organisation of National and Research Education Networks (NRENs) in Eastern and Southern Africa, covering all the countries in the region. The Alliance is implementing the AfricaConnect3 project co-funded by the European Union and the beneficiary NRENs. The AfricaConnect3 project seeks to unlock the potential of education and research through increased access to digital infrastructures and technologies for African education and research institutions.

**Background and Rationale**

The Alliance serves as an **enabler** for conducting collaborative research and provision of quality higher education by providing access to the global knowledge community, global digital education and research resources, and cutting-edge applications and infrastructure. The mission of UbuntuNet Alliance is to develop and grow a thriving sustainable community of NRENs and partners within Eastern and Southern Africa, enabling and **strengthening collaboration** and **innovation** among Research and Education Communities.

Research and education are two core objectives in academia, opening doors to new theories, ideas and products that shape society. These new products, also known as innovations have revolutionized the way we live, and most especially improved our livelihoods. However, the full potential of research and education is yet to be realized due to many challenges. Technology has been cited as one of the tools used to enable students to interact or engage with the study material, enabling them to improve their learning experience and to understand new frontiers of knowledge.

As is usual, at this time of the year, the Alliance will hold our annual conference in Kampala, Uganda from 26 – 27 October 2023. The conference will be preceded by a hackathon from 23 – 25 October. This is a one-of-a-kind women hackathon, which not only addresses the innovation gap, but also gender balance, that is much needed in software development on the African continent.

**Aims, Theme and Key Focus Areas**

We are looking for 20 passionate women developers, (organised in teams of four per team) from the Ubuntunet Alliance region of East and Southern Africa, who will participate in a hackathon alongside the [UbuntuNet-Connect 2023 Conference](#).

**Theme**: Innovate for Research and Education

**Key Focus Areas for projects**

- **Innovations for 21st century education:** All over Africa, there is a need to improve the way learning happens both in and out of a school, especially in the post pandemic era. Moreover, the reliance of education on technology has continued to increase and awareness of such technologies is key.

- **Innovations for improving uptake of research and its outputs:** This involves innovations, which help in stakeholders becoming aware of and accessing research outputs to improve policies and practice. Research uptake involves dissemination of research findings, Capacity development to understand research outputs, increased Influence (social

influence), Incentives and creation of enabling environments among others.

- **Innovations for improved collaboration:** Innovations, which bring together multiple stakeholders in research projects. Collaboration technologies include those which assess the diversity of teams (experiences, roles etc), help in the mobilisation of teams and assess performance and contribution of teams and individuals in order to provide impactful research.

**Why participate**

Participants will get the following benefits: -
- Certificates of participation for all participants.
- Modest awards will be given to the winner as well as the first and second runners up.
- Opportunity to attend the UbuntuNet-Connect Conference physically in Uganda [the pearl of Africa].
- Possibility of internship opportunities with National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) under the UbuntuNet Alliance.
- Linkage to the industry.
- Opportunity for Mentorship.
- Possibility of funds to accelerate the idea.
- Opportunity to attend the Conference and get to network with participants in research and education networks from Africa and beyond.

**How to Apply**

To participate, you are required to organize yourselves into a team of four and submit a single concept note that reflects the collective effort of all members. Collaborate as a team to develop and submit a single concept that reflects the collective effort of all members. The concept note should not be more than 2 pages [font times new roman size 12 single spacing], excluding the cover page. It should ideally contain an introduction, a background (or Relevance), proposed objectives (leading to development of an ICT solution), methodology (that is based on the software development lifecycle and contains necessary technologies), programming skills of team members, previous experience, links to developed work. The cover page should have the topic and team member details (names and email address, phone number). The concept note shall be submitted online using link.

**Deadline for submission**: August 10, 2023.

**Eligibility**

- Only Female participants should apply
- Participants should be students or graduates not more than 5 years
- The call is only eligible to residents of UbuntuNet Alliance member countries. You may find the UbuntuNet Alliance member countries [here](here).

**Selection Criteria**

The concepts will be assessed based on the following criteria:
- Proposed idea solves a problem and fits within the theme
- The idea being proposed is innovative
- The team should have necessary programming skills to implement the proposed idea
- Feasibility of the proposed idea

**Communication to successful applicants**: By August 31, 2023.

***NB: Travel and accommodations costs of the successful teams will be covered by the Alliance.***

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