
Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Initiative

2011-2012 “I Dare” Business Plan Competition Announcement

- Give Your Idea a Future -

I. Competition Overview

A. Background

CRDF Global invites all eligible participants from Sub Saharan Africa and South, South East and Central Asia to participate in its first annual “I Dare” Business Plan competition. This competition is designed to encourage aspiring technology entrepreneurs to launch and grow a successful business through providing funding, mentorship and networking opportunities. First place award is \$50,000 (see Section IV, Awards, p. 3 for full details). Special award will be made to a team led by a female entrepreneur. The GIST initiative is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of State.

B. Goals:

1. Generate further interest in technology entrepreneurship in the region.
2. Identify and support the most promising new technologies and companies
3. Nurture new technology start-up development by facilitating mentorships with successful entrepreneurs.
4. Provide networking opportunities.
5. Provide a model for suitable business development strategies in the region.
6. Provide access to U.S. markets by organizing visits the U.S. for a selected group of entrepreneurs to establish direct connection with potential investors and partners.

C. Submission:

Deadline: January 24, 2012

Submission Website: www.gistinitiative.org/gist-programs/i-dare-business-plan-competition (see section VI, p. 4 for greater details)

D. Eligible Counties

Afghanistan; Albania; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Brunei; Burkina Faso; Chad; Comoros Islands; Djibouti; Gambia; Guinea; Eritrea; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Nigeria; Pakistan; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Tajikistan; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan

(See Section III below for further details on eligibility)

II. About CRDF Global & GIST Initiative

CRDF Global is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to international science cooperation and technical collaboration. With over 15 years overseeing international research funding programs in more than 30 countries, including extensive experience engaging innovators and entrepreneurs in Eurasia, the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, CRDF Global is implementing the GIST initiative to advance scientific and technological collaboration between the United States and nations in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA), Sub Saharan Africa and South, South East and Central Asia regions.

Through managing programs like GIST, CRDF Global is leading the way to science and technology-based development and commercialization.

For more information about CRDF Global, please visit www.crdfglobal.org. To find out more about GIST Initiative, please visit www.gistinitiative.org.

III. Eligibility Criteria

To participate in the competition, applications should meet the following criteria:

1. Proposed business ideas must focus on technology solutions in sectors such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), energy, health, agriculture or other related areas.
2. The team lead and at least one other team member must be the nationals of the eligible countries
3. The business idea must be implemented in one of the eligible countries
4. Each team can only enter the competition once, with one submission
5. Team composition adjustments are permitted before and during Round II, but no changes are allowed after the submission of full business plans.
6. To qualify for Best Women Entrepreneur team award, a team should have a female lead.

Entries that do not meet the above conditions will be disqualified by CRDF Global. CRDF Global also reserves the right to disqualify any entry at any stage of the competition.

IV. Awards

“I Dare” GIST Business Plan competition winners will receive awards as follows:

- Winning team (1 team): \$50,000
- First runner-up (1 award): \$25,000
- Second runner-up (1 award): \$10,000
- Best Female Entrepreneur team (1 award): \$15,000

All competition winners will receive their awards in the form of CRDF Global grants and be subject to CRDF Global’s award and grant reporting requirements. Competition semi-finalists will receive personalized coaching, training on business and marketing skills, and positive public exposure through available social media networks. In addition, they can use the GIST Network (www.gistinitiative.org) to form partnerships – within or outside their country – to further advance their technology ideas toward commercialization. All competition applicants will be encouraged to remain active GIST Network members and take advantage of the resources the network offers to peers, promising technologies, innovative business tools, training and mentorship resources, and other funding opportunities available across the region.

V. Competition Timeline

A summary of the important dates for the competition are as follows, details below:

“I Dare” Business Plan Competition	Starts	Ends
Submission	November 1, 2011	12:00 Am EST (GMT-5), January 24, 2011
Review, Round I Semifinalists’ selection	January 24, 2012	February 14, 2012
Entrepreneurship Workshop in Cairo, Egypt	March 16, 2012	March 17, 2012
Full Business Plan Submission	March 17, 2012	April 11, 2012
Round II results announcement	May 8,2012	May 8,2012
Round III Oral Presentation/Award Ceremony in Beirut, Lebanon	June 21,2012	June 21,2012

The competition will be conducted in three phases:

Round I. November 1 – January 24, 2012: Eligible applicants will be invited to submit a short executive summary and application.

Round II. By **February 14, 2012** a total of 20 teams will be selected to participate in a two-day Entrepreneurship Workshop in Cairo to be held on **March 16-17, 2012** (conducted jointly with MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Business Plan Competition). The selected teams will have an opportunity to work with mentors on their business plans. Applicants will be asked to submit full business plans by the deadline of **April 11, 2012**.

Round III. By **May 8, 2012**, 10 teams will be selected to present in front of a panel of judges at an Oral Presentations/Award Ceremony to be held in Beirut on **June 21, 2012**. Applicants will receive coaching sessions on delivering their business pitch. 4 winning teams will be announced on the same day during the Award Ceremony.

VI. Competition Guidelines

A. Submission Process

In order to participate in the competition, eligible teams must submit an electronic application that summarizes their business idea at www.gistinitiative.org/gist-programs/. The application should be submitted in English. The website will be open for registration and application submission starting November 1, 2011. The deadline for all submissions is 12:00 Midnight EDT (GMT-5), January 24, 2012. Applicants are advised to allow ample time before the deadline to submit their applications. This will ensure timely assistance by GIST program staff if there are technical issues with the submission.

Important note: Competition applicants will be automatically enrolled in the GIST Network web site (www.gistinitiative.org) and will need to agree to the conditions of use prior to becoming a full GIST Network member.

Upon initial screening by CRDF Global for eligibility and content appropriateness (at CRDF Global's sole discretion), the applicants will be notified by email whether their submission has been officially entered into the competition. On February 14, 2012, applicants will receive a notice about the results of Round I.

B. Evaluation Criteria

As noted above, the selection process involves three phases:

During **Round I**, applications will be evaluated based on the novelty, scalability, team composition and market relevance of their business idea. 20 teams will advance to Round II.

CRDF Global reviewers will evaluate applications using the following criteria:

1. *Business Strategy:* Do the applicants have a realistic plan? How clearly are technical and business goals described?

2. *Commercial Potential:* Will the business concept have commercial value? Will the project serve as the basis for a new or improved technology or science-and technology-based service or application?
3. *Understanding of Market and Customer Need:* How does this technology or capability address a market need? Do the applicants adequately describe the market?
4. *Understanding of Competitive Landscape:* Do the applicants have a realistic understanding of the market and potential competitors?
5. *Capability of the team:* Do the team members have the technical expertise and/or past experience that is required to meet the technical goals of this concept?
6. *Appropriateness of Resources:* Are the resources requested adequate?

During Round II, selected teams will be asked to submit full business plans. Business plans will be evaluated by a panel of international judges recruited through CRDF Global's extensive network, including successful entrepreneurs, practicing angel and venture capital (VC) investors, and seasoned technology commercialization professionals. By May 8, 2012, 10 teams will advance to Round III. The score received for the business plan will account for 50% of the final grade.

In Round III, selected 10 teams will be asked to present in front of an international panel of judges at Oral Presentation/Award Ceremony held in Beirut, Lebanon on June 21, 2012 jointly with MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Business Plan Competition. Before the ceremony, the teams will receive personalized coaching on delivering a business pitch presentation. The presentations will be judged based on the business proposition, presentation skills and Q&A skills. 50% percent of the final grade will be based on the quality and soundness of the oral presentation.

Final Grade = 50% Business Plan Grade + 50% Oral Presentation Grade

C. Export Control

CRDF Global complies with all U.S. laws and regulations and applicable international law pertaining to export controls and to the participation of foreign nationals or institutions in its activities. It is CRDF Global's policy not to conduct any transactions with U.S. restricted entities without appropriate authorization from the U.S. government, including licenses and other permits and restrictions. CRDF Global reserves the right to restrict the participation of any individual or institution in its programs.

D. Protection of Confidential Information

Applicants are responsible for identifying any written business confidential information contained in their application materials. If there is a valid need to provide any business confidential information after selection for Round II, such written information shall be clearly marked so that CRDF Global can, to the degree reasonably possible, protect it by restricting its exposure to authorized staff of CRDF Global, its funding and oversight agencies, and external U.S. and international business reviewers and judges retained by CRDF Global. Independent U.S. and international business reviewers and judges retained by CRDF Global, as well as all personnel of CRDF Global and its partner organizations, are required to

adhere to strict standards of confidentiality in the handling of all business confidential information contained in any written materials.

Any written materials containing business confidential materials should be clearly labeled “Business Confidential.” Reviewers and judges will be required to sign a standard and legally-binding non-disclosure agreement prior to receipt of any business confidential materials from an applicant or team. A copy of the template for this agreement is available upon request by corresponding with gist@crdf.org. Applicants may request that particular organizations or individuals, whose access to their proposals would compromise business confidential information, not be selected as reviewers. Such information must be disclosed to CRDF Global at the time any Business Confidential information is disclosed to CRDF Global during the competition.

E. Definitive Version of this Announcement

For explanatory purposes or for clarification, this “I Dare” GIST Business Plan competition announcement and associated documents may be translated into other languages. In the event of the existence of such a translation, the English language version shall serve as the definitive version determining the interpretation of any provision contained herein. In the case the CRDF Global has to amend or make corrections and clarifications to this announcement, applicants will be notified as soon as possible.

VII. Contact Information

Any and all questions and correspondence regarding this competition should be directed to:

Ms. Yuritz Acosta
E-mail: gist@crdf.org
Phone: +1-703-526-2328
CRDF Global
1530 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209

Applicants are requested to identify themselves or their team leader in all correspondence and put the phrase “I Dare” in the email subject line. CRDF Global at its sole discretion may choose not to disclose certain information in a response to any question or query, if in our view such details would affect the fairness or transparency of the competition or convey an undue advantage to an applicant. CRDF Global also reserves the right to disclose to all other applicants an answer or clarification to a question from an applicant in the interest of fairness, objectivity, and transparency of this competition.