

# Innovate Now seeks mobile solutions for people with disabilities

Innovate Now, Africa's Assistive Technology Accelerator, is seeking applications from innovators across the African continent who are dedicated to developing mobile based technologies designed to assist people living with disabilities.



Bernard Chiira, director at Innovate Now.

The UK Aid-funded programme, which is run by Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub and Amref Enterprises Limited, hopes to accelerate 12 startups in its second cohort, with a focus on solutions that will leverage mobile technologies to enable persons with disabilities access information and navigate daily life with independence and dignity.

The second intake's theme – Mobile and Assistive Technology (AT) – is in response to research indicating that mobile technology can increase access to assistive technologies, information, digital products and services for people with disabilities. This is especially true in Africa, a rapidly digitising economy where numerous basic services and products are available via mobile phone in countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria.

“The mobile device and associated mobile technologies have tremendously improved access to information, goods and services for people from all walks of life, including persons with disabilities.

Innovate Now Cohort 2.0 aims to support ventures that are leveraging this disruptive technology to improve functioning, independence and wellbeing of persons with disabilities in Africa," noted Bernard Chiira, director at Innovate Now.

According to a study on [mobile disability gaps](#) published by the GSMA, mobile phone ownership among persons with disabilities is high, with approximately 82% of adults with disabilities in Kenya owning a mobile phone for example.

Although persons with disabilities are less likely to own a mobile phone than non-disabled persons, those with access to mobile devices perceive the handsets to be useful for accessing features such as education and financial services.

"The independence and wellbeing of persons with disabilities is critical. Assistive technologies are central to ensuring that persons with disabilities can continue to thrive. It is my desire to see innovations supported by Innovate Now turn into big businesses that will not only make mobility easy, but create employment for our people," said Senator Isaac Mwaura, chair of the Innovate Now Board.

### **Apply now!**

Applications for Cohort 2.0 can be submitted online via <https://atlinnovatenow.com/apply> until 8 June 2020. Innovate Now is also inviting submissions for mobile technology-based innovations that seek to provide solutions to help persons with disabilities during times of crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Selected finalists will participate in a rigorous three-month virtual startup acceleration programme that will run from July to September 2020, during which they will have access to the Innovate Now Live-Lab Network where they can engage persons with disabilities in the product development process. The participants will also have access to mentorship from experts.

At the end of the programme, the startups will present their innovations to a select audience of investors and world-leading institutions with the aim of scaling them to reach the populations that need them most.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>