

## THE SMART SUSTAINABLE CITY

### EUROMÉDITERRANÉE UNVEILS THE WINNING START-UPS OF THE MED'INNOVANT AFRICA COMPETITION 2020-2021: **GreenNKool & Agropad**

The MED'INNOVANT AFRICA 2020-2021 awards ceremony, organised by the urban and economic development agency Euroméditerranée (EPAEM), was held on Thursday 8 April in Marseille (France) as part of the EMERGING VALLEY international summit, the major showcase for African Tech in Aix-Marseille Provence Métropole. After an examination of 183 applications and interviews of the five finalists by the jury on 29 March, two start-ups have been crowned for their innovative solutions. The Madagascar start-up GreenNKool, represented by its founder Marie Christina Kolo, won the Jury Award. The Jury's Favourite Award was granted to AgroPad, a Cameroonian start-up developed and managed by Erik Gyslain Tiam. Both of these creative innovators will receive a financial endowment and acceleration package from the competition's affiliated partners as well as excellent visibility and, most importantly, a fantastic opportunity to expand their market share in Europe!



### THE MED'INNOVANT AFRICA 2020-2021 WINNERS

#### JURY AWARD



#### "JURY'S FAVORITE" AWARD



Marie Christina Kolo – Founder and Coordinator of GreenNKool  
Erik Gyslain Tiam Dzembouong – CEO of AgroPad

### A resounding success for the second year of the competition

Euroméditerranée first set its sights on African innovators in 2018 by opening up its original MED'INNOVANT contest to international entrepreneurs. Motivated by the volume of qualified applications they received from the African continent, the Marseille-based developer launched the MED'INNOVANT AFRICA competition in 2019, targeting African start-ups and SMEs working on inspiring urban projects in favor of sustainable and resilient African cities. Over 130 applications were received, and 2 start-ups were singled out for prizes (SEN Or'Dur and PROMAGRIC). For this latest edition in 2020-2021, **183 applications** were submitted, 25% of which from young entrepreneurs from **27 countries** across the African continent. The competition attracted plenty of young business leaders from Senegal, Morocco, Cameroon and Benin. With this second edition of MED'INNOVANT AFRICA, Euroméditerranée reasserts its commitment to **support projects from African start-ups investing in innovative urban solutions**. The main theme of this year's contest was regional resilience.

“Against a backdrop of global economic and environmental crisis, it seems more crucial than ever to work together to come up with solutions for the planning and development of regions so they can have tools to overcome tomorrow's challenges.”

Hugues Parant, CEO of Euroméditerranée

## Personalised support for the winners

The jury for the 2020-2021 competition was composed of **affiliated partners who are looking to position themselves as local stakeholders working with the leaders of African Tech**: EMERGING VALLEY, AFD, AFRICAlink community of entrepreneurs, Accélérateur.M, CCI Aix-Marseille Provence (Aix-Marseille Chamber of Commerce) and FIDAL law firm.

After hearing the five finalists present their innovations on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, the jury awarded GreenNKool the **Jury Award** for its awareness-raising activity in the sorting and recovery of waste, as well as its work solution transforming used cooking oils into an environmentally friendly soap. GreenNKool operates on a principle of solidarity, distributing their solution to disadvantaged families in Madagascar who were hardly hit by the pandemic. The winning start-up will also receive **financial support worth €7,000** to help develop the business and **test out the innovation across a 480-hectare testing ground: the Euroméditerranée Eco-City in Marseille, France.**

In addition, the **Jury's Favourite Award** was handed to AgroPad whose agricultural innovation was judged as promising by the panel of experts. The Cameroonian start-up has set itself the mission of helping farmers accelerate production by developing a complete solar irrigation system that can be controlled from a mobile phone. The start-up will receive a **financial endowment of €2,500.**

### Jury Award



GreenNKool is performing awareness actions on waste sorting and reuse in disadvantaged communities in Madagascar. It provides different cultural and artistic activities as well as free courses and workshops, all about sustainable development. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the association came up with an eco-friendly soap made with used cooking oil. It is also developing an educational video game to raise awareness of handwashing in partnership with other organisations.

> GreenNKool's website:  
<https://green-n-kool.jimdofree.com/>

### Jury's Favourite



AgroPad is an agronomic company that enables farmers to irrigate their farms remotely thanks to a controller that can be switched by sending a text message. The controller works on photovoltaic solar energy and can supply a plant with the precise quantity of water and fertiliser (need, quantity and time) based on the humidity level, rainfall and type of plantation. AgroPad also posts a real-time weather forecast on its website.

> AgroPad's website:  
<https://agro-pad.com/>

In addition to financial support, the two winners will receive an **acceleration package**. The package includes a 4-weeks soft landing programme at Accélérateur.M in Marseille; a high-added-value programme with the Social & Inclusive Business Camp (SIBC) set up by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) along with a €1,000 grant; legal training from FIDAL law firm; a year's membership to the AFRICAlink business community and targeted sponsorship; mentoring from elected representatives in the chambers of commerce and industry in the winners' respective countries as well as a visibility campaign (press communications, social media, video interviews and more).

## Benefits in the form of coaching for the other three finalists

The three other finalists **MESSIBAT INTERNATIONAL**, **MAMIAM** and **SenVitale** will also receive a **coaching package** from the competition's affiliated partners to help them climb further up the ladder of success and to offer them a year's worth of visibility support.

MESSIBAT INTERNATIONAL is an SME based in Togo, Cameroon and Ivory Coast that builds affordable green housing from sustainable materials including clay, bamboo and timber. The Moroccan start-up MAMIAM promotes female empowerment for mothers through cooking. Finally, SenVitale, a young Senegalese start-up, is developing a universal health passport enabling health professionals to access medical data through QR codes.

The affiliated partners sat on the MED'INNOVANT AFRICA competition jury alongside Euroméditerranée:



### About Euroméditerranée

For the past 25 years, the Euroméditerranée Urban Development Agency has been designing, developing and building the future sustainable Mediterranean city right in the heart of the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis (south of France). Euroméditerranée received the "Éco-Cité" label in 2009 and has a 480-ha (1,200-acre) activity area that serves as a veritable experimental laboratory for testing innovative solutions, services and systems that will become an integral part of the smart and resilient sustainable Mediterranean city of the future.

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