

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 Africa, to receive special support

Internet Governance Forum, Baku, Azerbaijan, 6 November 2012



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.”

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".

Examples of previous projects funded by the Seed Alliance partners include:

- *A health emergency information system in the Philippines.* An emergency information system that uses SMS technology and Google Maps during disasters and periods of infrastructure failure to gather and disseminate vital information. This model has been used successfully in a number of emergency situations between 2010-2011.
- *Wireless access to information services for indigenous communities in remote, rural remote parts of Colombia.* This pilot project saw the design and implementation of a low-cost open source wireless network in a remote rural area of Colombia, including training, content and services to support the indigenous population's existing social and cultural activities.
- *A Telehealthcare System in Pakistan.* This health database leverages the high penetration of mobile devices in Pakistan to allow Lady Health Workers to share patient information using SMS technology, track the incidence of disease, and establish the appropriate course of treatment with the support of specialists.
- *Remote experiments to support online learning at the Universidad do Sul de Santa Catarina, Brazil.* Access to laboratories to conduct experiments is crucial for science and biology students however these are not available at all Brazilian educational institutions. Leveraging the Brazilian government's initiative to provide schools and universities with computer centres and broadband access, this project enables students to perform experiments and to participate in laboratory sessions remotely, greatly enhancing the quality of their education.

In addition to activities already being conducted in each region, the Sida grant will allow the regional programs to:

- Expand reporting and monitoring to gain a deeper understanding of available funding and capacity-building tools.
- Provide increased support to prospective applicants from isolated communities in preparing projects and proposals.

- Allocate scholarships to former grant and award recipients, to help them further develop their projects, build capacity and reach sustainability.
- Continue to organize events within the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meetings to enable award winners to showcase their projects, share their experiences, and participate in discussions about the future of the Internet.
- Strengthen the new FIRE Africa program, based on lessons learned from the FRIDA program and ISIF Asia.

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.



Registro de Direcciones de Internet para **América Latina** y **Caribe**
Registro de Endereços da Internet para **América Latina** e **Caribe**
Latin American and **Caribbean** Internet Addresses Registry

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