

Global Impact Competition SA winner revealed

Nick Walker is the winner of SingularityU's first Global Impact Competition (GIC) in South Africa for his work on creating a stem cell bank for curing HIV/AIDS. Nick is currently an innovation scientist for Next Biosciences.



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Rand Merchant Bank was the primary sponsor of the South African GIC, launched in February 2016, and as such enable Walker to attend Singularity University's 10-week Global Solutions Program (GSP) in Silicon Valley later this year. On returning to South Africa after the GSP, Walker will have the opportunity to develop his project, supported by the Singularity global alumni network.

Focus on the global challenges

The SingularityU South Africa GIC was open to applicants throughout South Africa with a focus on the global challenges of learning, energy, environment, food, health, prosperity, security, water, space, disaster resilience and governance. The other finalists in the top five will have access to the Business Accelerator programme offered by First National Bank, the retail and commercial franchise of FirstRand Limited, which will provide business support and individual guidance for three months.

The individuals and their projects are, in no specific order:

- Bernelle Verster – Smart Wetlands
- Neo Hutiri - Technovera
- Pieter Botes – I'm not Plastic
- Wolfgang von Loeper – MySmartFarm

The winners were selected from 48 entries and judged by: former FirstRand chief executive and entrepreneur Paul Harris; RMB chief executive James Formby; Investec equity partner Anisha Gordhan; medical doctor and Infinitum Humanitarian Systems chief executive Eric Rasmussen; RMB Holdings and Rand Merchant Investment Holdings chief executive Herman Bosman; SingularityU GIC manager Regina Njima; and WEDI International executive chair Sharron McPherson.

Innovative thinking and entrepreneurship

"The [finalists] of the SingularityU South Africa competition all have two common attributes, both of which are major components of RMB's culture: innovative thinking and entrepreneurship," says RMB chief executive James Formby. "One

the reasons we chose to sponsor the competition was to encourage new ideas and technologies which, ultimately, could help to address some of the world's greatest challenges. There is great need for smart thinking in South Africa and this is a great platform to expose it while also enabling people to develop and deliver these worthy initiatives."

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