



EMPIRE PARTNER FOUNDATION TECH HUB

data and urbanization hackathon

VCORE 1.8V

	2.2V	2.8V	2.9V	3.2V
JP8	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSE
JP9	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
JP10	OFF	CLOSE	OPEN	CLOSE
JP11	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSE	CLOSE

JP14	JP15	JP16	CPUCLK
ON	ON	ON	50MHZ
ON	OFF	OFF	60MHZ
OFF	OFF	OFF	66MHZ
OFF	ON	ON	75MHZ

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The Empire Partner Foundation Tech Hub hosted their first Hackathon over the weekend, bringing more than 30 young developers together to foster their innovation into cutting-edge solutions in order to address the various challenges of urbanization. The two-day Hackathon was hosted at the EPF Tech Hub headquarters in Illovo, Sandton on 7 & 8 November 2020 and launched the Foundation's flagship project – the Digital Gauteng City Region platform.

The event kicked off on Saturday and was well received. The diverse mix of developers included students, IT professionals and civil society. The theme for the Hackathon was Urbanization and how the use of data can address the challenges and opportunities posed by Urbanization in the region, hence the name 'Digital GCR'.



Mr Akivan Kemraj, CEO of the EPF Tech Hub provided some information on the Digital GCR platform: "General and easily accessible information about the Gauteng City Region has not been available in the region. This has resulted in frustration, poor planning and poor service delivery.

We plan to address this problem through the creation of a new Digital Gauteng City Region platform. The platform will bring together existing and new information, opportunities and useful information via an e-platform for the public good, including current planning challenges and poor service delivery. The platform will provide a digital ecosystem where innovators can deeply understand challenges in real-time in order to develop comprehensive, tech-focused solutions.

The first iteration of the Digital GCR platform will focus on the early-stage technology companies in the Gauteng City Region.

The reason for this is to stimulate the industry and form a community where innovation is abundant and collaboration is promoted. It will be challenging for us to digitise the Gauteng City Region alone, but with the collective efforts of the innovators in the region, we can accomplish this."

Sharing their vast knowledge to guide and inspire the developers were a panel of key individuals from the public and private sector, including Mr Xolile George, CEO of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Mr Reshaad Sha, CEO of BriteGaze, a leading Artificial Intelligence Fund, and Mr Tahir Sema, a Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young & Inspirational Activist. The unique collaboration between developers and civil society ensured that everyone at the event had a true context of the real-world challenges that stem from urbanization.





"You will continue to grow as developers, but you must always contribute to improving the country - making the country a better place for everyone. The solution lies with you as developers - you are going to change South Africa, and personally I am very happy and proud to be a part of this initiative" remarked Mr Tahir Sema as he addressed the developers.

The developers returned to complete their solutions on the second day. Each hour brought the five teams closer and closer to winning their share of the R20,000 cash prize sponsored by Itakane ICT, NMVE Capital and Afri-Tec Technologies.

It was finally time for each team to present their solutions and wow the crowd with their brilliance. The winners of the Hackathon, team GRAViTAS, built a unified platform for users to log incidents relating to water, waste and electrical incidents directly to the municipality. In addition to this, their platform also provides job opportunities to private contractors to address the incident while being subsidised by the municipality in an innovative 'Tinder your plumber' feature. The platform seeks to reduce the pressure on municipalities while providing opportunities to local plumbers and electricians. The platform also integrated a WhatsApp chatbot for users to interact with the platform easier.



The event sponsors were so impressed by the presentations and commitment by each team that they decided to immediately double the prize pool from R10,000 to R20,000, ensuring that every team left with a prize. First prize was R7000, second prize R5000, third prize R3000 with fourth and fifth place each leaving with R2500.

"We don't plan on this collaboration being a one-time thing. We want to see each and every one of you again as we embark on the journey to bring the Digital GCR platform to life. There will be many more hackathon events and we will ensure that our collaboration is sustainable for the long-term" said Akivan Kemraj during the prize giving session.

The EPF Tech Hub has committed to further collaboration with the developer community as they continue to build the Digital GCR platform. They have made an open invitation for new developers to join the community, aiming to have a minimum of 100 developers in the community by the end of 2021.

“The challenges that we experience in our everyday lives present key opportunities for the tech-community to come together, apply their skills and develop innovative solutions to create a world-class country. The EPF Tech Hub will give this community a voice and a platform to showcase their solutions to the world” says Akivan.

The event was a resounding success and the Empire Partner Foundation Tech Hub would like to thank everyone who made the time and effort to attend the Hackathon.



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