

## 9 entrepreneurs pitch ideas to investors at (IoT)<sup>E</sup>

SquidNet, the licensed Sigfox IoT network operator in South Africa, recently hosted the finale of its first entrepreneurship programme called (IoT)<sup>E</sup> - IoT to the power of E, where nine entrepreneurs had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel of potential investors.



The objective of the programme is to enable entrepreneurs to enter the world of the internet of things (IoT) and become part of the broader ecosystem.

“The success of IoT hinges on the local ecosystem,” says Phathizwe Malinga, acting CEO of SquidNet. “International products can make implementing IoT unaffordable for many companies, particularly SMMEs, therefore we have to stimulate local innovation to develop local solutions. That is exactly what we aim to achieve through the (IoT)<sup>E</sup> programme.”

### Three key development areas

The programme focused on three key development areas, which was device development, software and analytics, and business skills to enable the entrepreneurs to not only come up with innovative ideas and solutions but also to guide them in the process of taking their products to market.

A workshop and series of webinars gave the entrepreneurs the opportunity of engaging with various IoT industry experts.



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Gabriella Mulligan 5 Jun 2018



Through SqwidNet, Sigfox's IoT network currently reaches 85% of the population in South Africa. Its proposition comprises low-cost, long-range, low-power modules and devices that serve IoT data in a secure and cost-efficient manner to application and service providers.

### Solutions

The solutions presented included a carbon monoxide measurement tool, smart irrigation device, a personal tracker that acts as a personal safety device and a cashless vending machine to name a few.

"This is just the first step for these entrepreneurs in making their innovative ideas a commercial reality and we believe there will be several follow up discussions based on the reaction of the panel.

"We plan to continue running this programme so that we can enable as many entrepreneurs as possible to enter the exciting world of IoT. In doing so, we believe we can stimulate local innovation, allowing us to find solutions to local problems," he says.

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