



African Conservation Challenge

Fostering meaningful, non-confrontational debate and discussion to support community rights and lived realities in Southern African conservation.



Summary of the problem

Historically, rural voices have been either missing or largely ignored in much of the debate and decision making around the management of natural resources, particularly wildlife, in Africa. It is widely acknowledged, however, that the involvement of local people is critical to successful conservation outcomes. This Challenge seeks to support the development of an online platform that will engage a variety of stakeholders. These include government officials, conservation leaders, members of the public and, crucially, local communities living close to protected areas or whose land is wildlife habitat, to ensure trusted, respectful, verified and non-confrontational debate on critical issues that affect them, and the policies and programmes of the wider conservation sector.

The overall objective is to help communities take their rightful place as equal partners in policy negotiation, development and implementation processes and to amplify their voices to ensure informed decision-making at national, regional and international levels that reflects the demands and rights of rural people to manage their wildlife. It is believed that an online forum based on the concept of 'verified identities' of all participants will help foster authenticity, trust and raise confidence among participants that they are engaging with genuine Southern African community members in their own words, based on their lived realities and experiences as equals at the table.

It is envisaged that this forum will be part of a wider online resource which will be used to share and educate a wide range of stakeholders on issues of conservation and natural resource management in the region. Two of Yoti's key partners in this effort will be Resource Africa and the Community Leaders Network, a network of leaders from rural communities in Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe who are involved in Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).

Further background reading on the engagement of local communities in African conservation efforts can be found in this excellent [paper](#) published by National Geographic Society and African People & Wildlife. Another useful paper by Chemonics and Arizona State University is available [here](#). There's plenty more online.

The challenge

As part of its Social Purpose Strategy, Yoti will manage the running of a Conservation Challenge to support the development of a trusted online forum where these critical debates can safely take place. The Challenge will be open to web developers across Africa, and promoted through partners such as AfriLabs, the primary membership organisation for innovation labs in the region. African organisations (or individuals) will be invited to submit a short proposal outlining the proposed functionality and layout of the website.

We appreciate that under normal circumstances the developer would have at least one conversation with their client before firming up a proposal. As a result, entries submitted for this Challenge will be considered preliminary ideas only, and will be judged as such. The final site design and functionality will be determined following discussions between the winning entry, and Resource Africa and Yoti. First and foremost we are looking for interesting, compelling proposals based on the information provided.

By way of initial guidance, your entry might include some or all of the following:

- Support for Yoti's digital identity solutions to help verify identities of forum members. For the purposes of this Challenge, you can assume that all participating community members will own, or have access to, a smartphone and an Internet connection. There will not be a need for them to have official identity documents for the purposes of this Challenge. See our [Developer pages](#) for details of how to integrate our solutions.
- Private and public member profile pages are needed to encourage openness and transparency. Not all of the information entered in a profile will need to be publicly shared, but the data does need to be captured.
- Support for multiple discussions, and the allowing of rich content such as audio, video and photos to be uploaded.
- Full moderation and content management tools in a secure admin area.
- A section to support education and awareness-raising efforts for conservation and natural resource management efforts in the Southern African region.

- The ability to run surveys and polls among forum members.
- Newsletter-style functionality utilising channels such as email, SMS and WhatsApp to keep members up-to-date on activities, announcements, etc.
- An eye-catching, friendly and accessible design which also renders well on mobile devices.

The Challenge prize will be **\$15,000** (and include support from Yoti's integrations team) to help the winner build, test and roll-out the platform. Resource Africa will take ownership of the final product, and be responsible for management and upkeep. Yoti will cover hosting, website registration fees (if applicable) and any other website-related fees for the first year.

Digital identity and online communities

Online communities allow anyone, anywhere to join in debate and discussion, opening up conversations to the widest number of people and their viewpoints and opinions. One of the challenges, however, is to keep conversations civil, polite and respectful. As we know all too well with social media, conversations can quickly become aggressive, rude and divisive. We believe that, in some instances, knowing who you are speaking to, or at the very least knowing that they are real, unique living individuals (and not made up accounts designed to stir up hatred, for example) can foster more respectful discussion.

At Yoti, we have solutions that can help foster these safer spaces. Our Yoti App, for example, allows people to create a digital identity on their smartphone based on their facial biometrics. At its simplest level, people can use just that to log into an account, allowing other community members the comfort of knowing they are dealing with the same person every time, and that person is unique and living, and real. That person does not necessarily need to share any other details about their identity, such as their name, age or a profile image. Basing registrations on the use of unique biometrics also stops people creating multiple identities and profiles on community sites. And people who do break the rules, or who are disrespectful, can be easily suspended and offered support to help them better understand, and adhere to, community guidelines.

As part of our Social Purpose efforts, we are interested in exploring the potential for digital identities to support safe spaces online, and how verified identities might help create safe, respectful, meaningful dialogue. This Challenge is one part of that wider work.

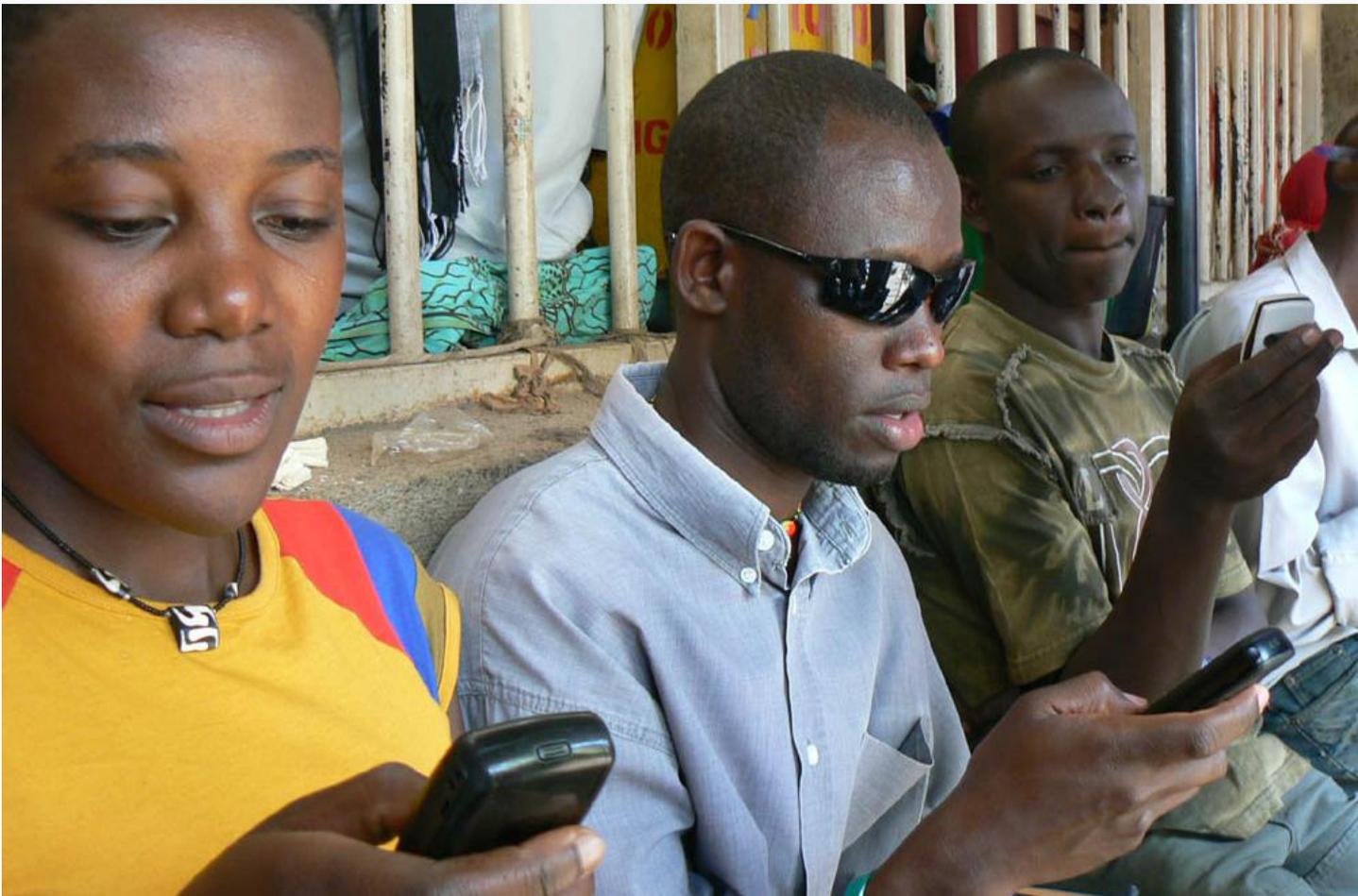


Entry criteria and submission guidelines

Anyone wishing to submit an entry to the Challenge will need to qualify as per the following Criteria, and follow the **Submission Guidelines**:

- The Challenge is open to any individual or organisation based anywhere on the African continent. Applications from anywhere else will not be accepted.
- The Challenge will run from 25th March to 30th May, 2021. Entries received after the closing date will not be accepted.
- The winning individual or organisation will be expected to develop the winning solution themselves, and not tender the work out to any other third party.
- The prize fund of \$15,000 must be used to support the development of the winning solution, and not be used for any other purpose. The prize will be paid in three installments. The first is due on commencement of the work, the second at an agreed half-way point, and the third on delivery of the final platform.
- Entrants must submit a written proposal, in PDF format and no longer than ten pages, outlining their thoughts of the project and the website solution they propose, using the information provided in this Challenge Paper as a guide. Entries must include details including initial design ideas, a list of on-screen menus, a site map and any other functionality deemed suitable.
- Additional pages, up to a maximum of five, can be submitted if there are screenshots, photos or other images considered necessary for us to understand the solution being proposed. Please only use these extra pages for images and graphics.
- Resource Africa will provide final content for the live site - text, images, videos or anything else deemed relevant or useful. For the purposes of any submission, feel free to use any holding text or imagery that you have.
- Please provide some information on you, or your company, as part of the entry, and a little background about why you have decided to enter this Challenge. Information on staff or individuals leading the work (should you be selected as the winner) will also be helpful to your submission.

- Completed entries (in single PDF format) should be emailed to social.purpose@yoti.com with the subject line 'Conservation Challenge Entry'. We will acknowledge receipt of entries within five working days. Only PDFs will be accepted - no other file formats will be opened, and no links to documents clicked. If you have problems sending your proposal, contact us on the above email address for help.
- Entrants agree to allow us to share their contact details with our Challenge Partners.
- The winner will be selected following reviews by Resource Africa and Yoti, and notified within one month of the Challenge closing date. Notifications will also be sent to those who were unsuccessful. We will happily discuss your entry with you if you were not successful and interested in understanding why.
- If you have any technical or administrative questions about the submission process, please send them to social.purpose@yoti.com



About Social Purpose at Yoti

Yoti is a company committed to social purpose. Whether that be gifting our identity solutions to non-profits, giving staff paid days off to support causes they care about or assisting humanitarian organisations with identity needs in the developing world, we like to think that doing good is at the heart of everything we do.

As part of our ongoing efforts the Social Purpose team have been busy carrying out research into digital identity needs, and speaking to experts around the world to get a sense of who is doing what, where. Two years ago, our findings resulted in the launch of a user-focused, evidence-based, award-winning Social Purpose Strategy, along with an updated section of the Yoti website. You can read more [here](#).

This Conservation Challenge forms part of those wider Social Purpose efforts.



Challenge partners



[Resource Africa](#) promotes people-centred conservation for thriving, resilient livelihoods. They advocate for people's rights to sustainably use their natural resources, respecting their cultures, worldviews, and knowledge systems.



[The Community Leaders Network](#) believes in a socially and economically resilient rural southern African people whose livelihoods are grounded in their rights to sustainably use their natural resources supported by international respect for their existing governance systems.



[AfriLabs](#) is a network organisation of 240 innovation hubs in 48 African countries. They support these hubs by building the capacity of their managers and staff, promoting local and regional collaboration and providing access to funding for their projects and startups.



[Conservation X Labs](#) is a technology and innovation company that spurs innovative solutions to stop the extinction crisis.



[Yoti](#) is a London-based digital identity startup, employing over 350 people, which is on a mission to become the world's most trusted identity platform.

