

#



/ [NEWS \(/NEWS\)](#) / [PRESS RELEASE \(/NEWS/PRESS-RELEASE\)](#) /

SMARTSTART: PROUDLY PRESENTING THE 5 WINNING YOUNG INNOVATOR TEAMS

SmartStart: proudly presenting the 5 winning Young Innovator Teams



Friday, 2nd June 2017

Phnom Penh, 28th May 2017: Five teams of young tech innovators won 4,000 USD each and 6 months of continued start-up support yesterday, after their business ideas were deemed the most promising at the Final Pitch event of Smart Axiata's inaugural SmartStart program.

Following months of expert advice from Smart and industry personalities, the 15 teams that were shortlisted from the first phase of the program presented their business ideas to a distinguished panel of judges consisting of **Thomas Hundt**, Chief Executive Officer of Smart; **Kanishka**

Wickrama, Chief Financial Officer of Smart; **Zoë Ng**, Managing Director of Raintree; **Malypoeur Plong**, Founder of Stops Near Me and **David Sok Dara Marshall**, Partner of Mekong Strategic Partners.

The 5 winning teams are all that remain from the 30 original groups of university students having entered the program. They will now enter a 6 month incubation period where their business plans will be further shaped and molded into viable business ideas. The team that shows the most progress will be rewarded with a trip to Singapore to visit the likes of Google, Facebook and Microsoft to gain further valuable tips and advice.

One of the judges, **Zoë Ng**, Managing Director of Raintree, commended all the competing teams for their hard work and ideas: “The level of commitment has been amazing to see. I'm very proud of the five exceptional teams that impressed myself and the other judges with the diversity of their ideas and their determination to turn their plans into reality. I look forward becoming a real customer of them soon. This is a very interesting time to be involved in technology innovation in Cambodia. These students are a testimony of the quality of young talent stepping up to the challenge.”

The five winning teams are:

1. **Go Soccer** web application that allows users to book futsal fields anywhere in Phnom Penh.
2. **Prestige** a service created in order to offer gift consultation, wrapping and delivery.
3. **Spare** a digital platform that allows individuals to search for space and connect them with space owner.
4. **Be First** a mixed platform that allows users to learn basic Khmer by repeating phonics/sounds while learning the cultural etiquette.
5. **SopheakMongkol** a digital platform that enable engaged couples to connect with vendors to organize a wedding.

Pov Sokhom from Prestige said that reaching this stage was a huge moment for his team. “I never thought that I and my team would get so far. We knew we had a good idea, but the support we have received has shown us how to make it even better and the judges clearly agreed. Thank you to my friends, family, university and everyone involved in SmartStart for allowing us making huge steps forward towards achieving our dream and getting so much closer to bringing our idea to fruition. This was certainly a life changing experience for all of us and I will encourage more friends to join next year!” said **Sokhom**.

Smart launched its “SmartStart: Young Innovator Program” in February 2017. This program, endorsed by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of Cambodia (MPTC) aims at inspiring, enabling and growing technology-related business ideas among Cambodian university students, offering financial and technical support along the way.

The initial 30 teams were whittled down to 15 following a 2 day Hackathon at the end of April. In mid-May the teams took part in a week-long “Technopreneurship Challenge” in Battambang, where they received direct training and advice to help prepare their business plans for the final pitch.

Thomas Hundt, CEO of Smart congratulated the 5 winning teams and was highly impressed with the level of competition so far: “All of them have proved me right that Cambodian students are very talented. All the 15 teams have excited the crowd during their tech innovation pitching today

are an inspiration for the nation. Smart is proud to be part of their digital journey. Together with our partners, we will be with them during the next 6 months to help them establish their startups. We will consider further investments into the most progressive startups as well.”

“Smart believes the young generation is the future and we want to unlock and develop their untapped ingenuity. I am very positive that this annual program will continue to generate more ICT talent and resources towards achieving a digital Cambodia,” added **Thomas**.

The event was also attended by His Excellency Dr. **Hang Chuon Naron**, Minister of MoEYS and His Excellency Dr. **Kan Channmeta**, Secretary of State of MPTC. During the closing speech by the Minister, His Excellency Dr. **Hang Chuon Naron** congratulated all the winners and encouraged all participants to use this experience to achieve greater heights: "I would like to congratulate all the participants for making it this far. All of you are the future of the country as ICT plays a major role in our entry into the 4th industry revolution. I encourage you to continue being motivated to develop your digital dreams with Smart and would like to commend all the parties involved in putting this great program for the university students of Cambodia together."

Follow the progress of the 5 winning teams via Smart’s newly launched Facebook page “Smart for Cambodia” www.facebook.com/smart4cambodia/ (<http://www.facebook.com/smart4cambodia/>) which was created to share Smart’s corporate responsibility activities and sustainable initiatives in Cambodia. For more information on and updates from Smart Axiata, follow Smart’s Facebook page www.facebook.com/SmartAxiata (<http://www.facebook.com/SmartAxiata>) or visit www.smart.com.kh (<http://www.smart.com.kh>)

SmartStart- Overall Program Recap Video



[Smart Axiata launches advanced weather intelligence service “Smart Weather” \(/news/press-release/smart-weather\)](#)

- > [SmartStart: proudly presenting the 5 winning Young Innovator Teams \(/news/press-release/smartstart-5team-final\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata launches advanced weather intelligence service “Smart Weather” \(/news/press-release/smart-weather\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata supports BarCamp Cambodia 2017-2018 to promote Tech and Startups throughout Cambodia \(/news/press-release/smart-barcamp\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata launches 5 Million USD Digital Innovation Fund to power Cambodia’s Digital Economy to the next level \(/news/press-release/smart-axiata-launches-5-million-usd-digital-innovation-fund-power-cambodias\)](#)
- > [Smart Sponsors Asia Foundation in TEKHUB Partnership \(/news/press-release/smart-sponsors-asia-foundation-tekhub-partnership\)](#)
- > [K-Pop Superstar Rain to stage Smart Mega Concert in Cambodia \(/news/events/k-pop-superstar-rain-stage-smart-mega-concert-cambodia\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata will inspire next gen Young Innovators with “SmartStart” \(/news/press-release/smart-axiata-will-inspire-next-gen-young-innovators-smartstart\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata pressing ahead with its award-winning 4G broadband services, strengthening its data leadership position in Cambodia \(/news/press-release/smart-axiata-pressing-ahead-its-award-winning-4g-broadband-services-strengthening\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata named Cambodia’s Mobile Service Provider 2016 \(/news/press-release/smart-axiata-named-cambodias-mobile-service-provider-2016\)](#)
- > [World Vision and Smart Axiata kick a Goal for Youth \(/news/csr-initiatives/world-vision-and-smart-axiata-kick-goal-youth\)](#)
- > [Apple iPhone 7 and 7 Plus go on sale at all Smart Shops \(/news/events/apple-iphone-7-and-7-plus-go-sale-all-smart-shops\)](#)
- > [Smart Axiata Awards University Scholarships to 10 Top Students \(/news/csr-initiatives/smart-axiata-awards-university-scholarships-10-top-students-0\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the latest news to your inbox

Email

Subscribe

Popular

[Plans \(/plans\)](#)

[Devices \(/devices\)](#)

[Promotions \(/promotions\)](#)

Services

[Life Insurance \(/services/insurance/life-insurance\)](/services/insurance/life-insurance)
[Smart Box \(/services/infotainment/smart-box\)](/services/infotainment/smart-box)
[Smart Loan \(/services/smart-ors-panh-ha/smart-loan\)](/services/smart-ors-panh-ha/smart-loan)

Find Out More

[Careers \(/careers\)](/careers)

[Store Finder » \(/store-finder\)](/store-finder)

[Coverage Checker » \(/coverage-checker\)](/coverage-checker)

[Contact Us » \(https://www.smart.com.kh/corporates-information#contact\)](https://www.smart.com.kh/corporates-information#contact)

[f \(https://www.facebook.com/SmartAxiata\)](https://www.facebook.com/SmartAxiata) [@ \(https://www.instagram.com/smartaxiataofficial/\)](https://www.instagram.com/smartaxiataofficial/)

[▶ \(https://www.youtube.com/user/SmartAxiata\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/SmartAxiata)

© 2017 Smart Axiata Co., Ltd. All rights reserved.

[Terms & Conditions \(/legal#terms-conditions\)](/legal#terms-conditions) / [Privacy Policy \(/legal#privacy-policy\)](/legal#privacy-policy)

