

GLOBAL INNOVATION THROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NETWORK HOSTED A LIVE PITCH COMPETITION AT THE APEC WOMEN'S ECONOMIC FORUM IN LA SERENA, CHILE

La Serena, Chile – The Department of State, in partnership with private and non-governmental organizations, launched the Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Network at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit and gistnetwork.org.

A startup that provides digital solutions for aid distribution is taking home the top prize at the [GIST APEC Catalyst Pitch Competition](#) in La Serena, Chile.

Sara Dhewanto from Indonesia has won first place. Her startup, Duithape, is an e-payment system aiming to provide clients (donors and lenders) with a cashless distribution system that enables massive, safe, efficient, and accurate payments to the unbanked with high accountability through the redemption of goods/ services at our network of distribution points.

The winners won USD 20,000 in cash prizes from Amazon Web Services. That includes the GIST First Prize winner, Sara Dhewanto, who has won USD 10,000.

The competition was part of APEC's Women in STEM events which specifically worked with startups that support women entrepreneurs, vulnerable communities, or rural communities.

Jackie Hind from the United States is taking home the second-place prize, which includes USD 5,000. Hind's startup is Plumb Pharmaceuticals which has developed a patented drug delivery platform called Advanced Quantload (AQL) which extends drug release from 72 hours to more than three months compared to current delivery systems.

Jessica Moldez Wu from the Philippines competed with her startup, Lesstics. She is going home with USD 3,000. Lesstics is a startup Moldez Wu co-founded to help the garbage problem in her city. They recycle single-use plastics and turn them into different reusable objects such as floor tiles, insulators, Lego Bricks, and many more.

Natalia Mykhalova of Weavair has won the Outstanding Science & Technology Prize, which includes USD 1,500. WeavAir built the world, first device that harnesses environmental, mechanical, and human metrics and predictive AI algorithms to manage high-value air conditioning systems, improve indoor air quality, save energy & streamline operations.

The Spirit of GIST Award went to Suki Chen, who received USD 500.

The event included featured startups from around the APEC economies. Through the competition, young entrepreneurs had an opportunity to elevate their pitches and showcase their startups.

The teams also learned how to pitch their business ideas to investors and potential partners—a critical skill for entrepreneurs.

All teams who participated were women-focused or women-led, and there was a preference for teams who had overcome economic hardship and/or identity as vulnerable community members.

During the 2019 APEC Chile, startup teams gave three-minute pitches, without slides, to a small panel of judges, followed by two to three minutes of questions.

Finalists from the public voting and review were given online and in-person coaching at the 2019 APEC Chile before competing in the GIST APEC Catalyst Pitch Competition.

A complete list of participating startups can be found by [clicking here](#).

The GIST APEC Catalyst Pitch Competition is one of several programs by the GIST Initiative that supports women founders and entrepreneurs from more than 130 emerging economies. GIST is the U.S. Department of State's flagship science and technology entrepreneurship program. To learn more about the GIST Initiative, [click here](#).

GIST Program Information

The Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Initiative held a live pitch competition during the 2019 APEC Women's Economic Forum in La Serena, Chile, September 30- October 4, 2019.

The GIST APEC Catalyst Pitch Competition included featured startups from around the APEC economies. Through the competition, young entrepreneurs had an opportunity to elevate their pitch and showcase the startups they were working on. Teams will also learn how to pitch their business ideas to investors and potential partners—a critical skill for entrepreneurs.