

# Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative ‘Make-IT in Africa’

## Digital for Agriculture (D4Ag)

<b>Project name</b>	Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative ‘Make-IT in Africa’
<b>Theme</b>	Digitalisation for Agriculture (D4Ag)
<b>Commissioned by</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
<b>Project region</b>	Kenya and Nigeria
<b>Implemented by</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
<b>Duration</b>	2017 - 2020

### About Make-IT in Africa

The Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative ‘Make-IT in Africa’ promotes digital innovation for sustainable and inclusive development in sub-Saharan Africa. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements this project on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of BMZ’s Digital Africa Initiative.

In close collaboration with more than 20 corporate and financing partners, social enterprises, hubs and networks, ‘Make-IT in Africa’ contributes to a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs in the digital sector – to enable better access to finance, markets and skills.

### The Challenge

Agricultural transformation in Africa is needed to increase crop yields and boost food security, while also helping to increase incomes for smallholder farmers and contribute to rural development.

New technologies can help farmers get tailored support and accurate information so they can optimise farming practices for higher yields, connect with suppliers of high-quality products, seed and fertiliser, as well as access new markets.

AgTech start-ups hoping to offer these much-needed services, however, face difficulties in accessing a sufficient number of farmers to create a profitable business model, particularly considering the small transaction sizes. This also makes it difficult for

them to gain sustainable traction on the market, let alone find investors or collaborate with other players in the value chain.

Make-IT in Africa has recognised digital platforms as a logical path to improve market access for AgTech start-ups. Emerging innovators can reduce costs of expansion while accessing larger numbers of farmers who can, in turn, benefit from a full range of end-to-end services with the potential to improve their livelihoods.

### Vision & Aim

D4Ag aims to improve conditions to help AgTech start-ups scale digital solutions for the agri-food sector.



**Expand opportunities:** Improve the platform landscape to help AgTech start-ups reach new markets and customers.

D4Ag is committed to invest in platform operators to expand their functionalities and reach, as well as to promote digital solutions with other value chain actors. Start-ups benefit from opportunities to scale their digital solutions, while bundling services that are easily accessible and offer added value to farmers.



**Build capacity:** Help start-ups and platform operators integrate better.

D4Ag develops the capacity of platform operators and start-ups to integrate their solutions technically, agree on profitable business models for both sides, and understand the rules and regulations of their collaboration. Start-ups as well as platform operators are empowered to pursue and endorse mutually beneficial partnerships.



**Broker partnerships:** Facilitate collaboration between platform operators and start-ups.

D4Ag seeks to create partnerships between platform operators and start-ups based on an identified need or pain point from farmers. A structured engagement process is tailored to the involved parties’ interests, while creating a joint product vision leading to impact, uptake and viability.



**Jan Schwaab**

Programme Coordinator  
Tech Entrepreneurship  
Initiative  
«Make-IT in Africa»  
jan.schwaab@giz.de

## Concrete Measures in Kenya & Nigeria

### Improve and expand functionality of existing platforms

D4Ag supports existing platforms to expand their reach, functionality and services, enabling them to be more useful and accessible to farmers.

Support for the Viazi Soko platform of the National Potato Council of Kenya, for example, will enable the registration of 25 000 new farmers onto their platform as well as improve their service offering, such as providing advisory services or facilitating access to quality inputs, with better data and new functionalities.

### Capacity building for start-ups and platform operators

In order to help start-ups better integrate with platform providers, D4Ag provides capacity building on technical interoperability, business models, and legal frameworks.

Start-ups lack the needed development skills to fully leverage the potential of being interoperable with platforms and struggle to identify adequate business models to secure sustainable revenue streams while integrating with platforms. D4Ag provides training and expertise to advise start-ups on these challenges. Playbooks are created to ensure trained skills are put to practice in real use cases.

Platform operators often miss the huge business potential of opening up their platforms to 3rd parties, and they lack the knowledge to build the required architecture and incentives to integrate with start-ups. D4Ag therefore organises trainings and provides individual coaching to platform operators to build the necessary technical infrastructure, to adhere to set legal standards, and to offer attractive but viable business models to collaborate with start-ups.

### Brokering partnerships between start-ups and platform operators

Beyond capacity building, D4Ag brokers real connections between platform operators and start-ups to foster the integration of their services.

For example, GIZ is supporting Mercy Corps in a structured engagement process to connect platform operators and start-ups. Based on an identified need for farmers, Mercy Corps assists both parties in jointly defining their value proposition, outlining mutual product offerings, settling on revenue sharing arrangements, defining roles and responsibilities, as well as regulating data sharing protocols. As a result, product roadmaps are created that build the foundation for the integration of services between platform operator and start-ups.

## Impact in Stories

Make-IT has supported 35 AgTech start-ups in Africa since 2017.

Make-IT increased the international visibility of digital solutions in agriculture in Africa through featuring them in the "Digital Innovation Made in Africa" publication. AgTech start-ups from across Africa also benefited from better access to markets and finance through participating in accelerator programmes and international study trips.

One example to date is AgroCenta, an AgTech platform for small farmers in Ghana, which won the WSA award in 2017 and received €650,000 in investments in 2018. This technology platform aims at making small farmers more profitable, while working towards the goals of zero hunger and gender equality.

Implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
  
Tech-Entrepreneurship-Initiative Make-IT in Afrika  
Dag Hammarskjöld Weg 1, 65760 Eschborn, Germany  
  
T + 49 (0) 6196 79 2102  
make-it@giz.de  
www.make-it-in-africa.org

Responsible Dr Jan Schwaab

Date: 25.03.2020

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Division 112 Digital technologies in development cooperation

Addresses of the BMZ offices  
BMZ Bonn  
Dahlmannstraße 4  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 (0)228 99 535-0  
F +49 (0)228 99 535-3500  
poststelle@bmz.bund.de  
www.bmz.de  
BMZ Berlin  
Stresemannstraße 94  
10963 Berlin, Germany  
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0  
F +49 (0)30 18 535-2501