

Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative ‘Make-IT in Africa’

Digital innovation for sustainable and inclusive development – Q2/2020

Project name	Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative ‘Make-IT in Africa’
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tunisia
Implementing Organisation	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	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. The 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 their Digital Africa Initiative.

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

The Challenge

Many tech entrepreneurs from Africa still struggle to make the leap to international market maturity. There is a lack of access to capital, markets, suitable personnel and a digital infrastructure. In order to be successful, entrepreneurs need a functioning entrepreneurial ecosystem consisting of reference customers, investors, funding agencies and training partners. However, many ecosystems are fragmentary, and tech start-ups lack important contacts, adequate financing and opportunities for further development.

Our Approach

As we look towards the future, digital entrepreneurship is the driving force for global economic growth and poverty alleviation. Entrepreneurs have the potential to modernise the economies and societies of their countries, discover innovative solutions to development challenges, and create new opportunities for employment. Make-IT therefore promotes digital innovation for sustainable and inclusive development, focusing on entrepreneurs running early growth phase start-ups and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in five African countries through providing:

Better access to finance – by establishing a pan-African investment pipeline for tech start-ups, better information about financing opportunities and matchmaking start-ups with finance partners. Our collaboration partners include funds, investor networks, development banks and foundations.

Better access to skills and talent – by establishing a benchmark for partners in acceleration, hand in hand with innovation hubs, training institutes and other intermediaries of entrepreneurship promotion.

Better access to markets – by establishing business-to-business and public-private partnerships to provide exposure and matchmaking opportunities on a local and international level. This includes study tours, trade fairs, B2B events, etc.

Better collaboration within the entrepreneurial ecosystem – by encouraging multi-stakeholder dialogue, knowledge sharing, and capacity development for and between partner institutions, associations and other intermediaries.

With the partners of the **Make-IT Alliance**, we also focus on:

- **Investment pipelines**, such as a joint start-up pool where investors can share offers with entrepreneurs
- **Online deal rooms for pitches and matchmaking** for tech start-ups and investors
- **Joint accelerators** (e.g. with Airbus, Merck, etc.) to allow for joint innovation of start-ups and corporates
- **Developing a mentorship pool** (with VC4Africa) to enable mentor-driven financing and learning
- **Pan-African knowledge sharing** for innovation hubs and intermediaries (e.g. at Transform Africa, i4policy)





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Impact in Numbers

Since 2017, Make-IT has supported tech start-ups in their early growth and scaling phases and strengthened public and private intermediaries of the entrepreneurial ecosystem through providing:

Better access to finance

Investment Guides have been published for Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cote de Ivoire, Rwanda and Kenya. The guides aim at helping digital enterprises to understand and navigate the variety of financing options in their national markets. Through Make-IT activities, **683 digital entrepreneurs** made use of needs-based matchmaking with investors.

Better access to skills and talent

Make-IT created the “**Online Education for Start-ups**” platform, offering free online courses. Since 2017, **736 entrepreneurs** have used it to complete online courses to enhance their skills.

Better access to markets

More than **397** digital enterprises from 24 African countries have been promoted by Make-IT and its partners, and they created more than **4673** jobs, around 48 per cent of these jobs were for female employees. Supported tech start-ups generated an average annual turnover of 135 000 €.

Through **28 study trips to Europe**, **194** start-ups were able to show their innovations to potential business and finance partners, and successfully establish B2B and B2G cooperations.

18 Make-IT supported start-ups entered into innovation partnerships with IBM, SAP, AIRBUS and Merck. Another **16 start-ups** have won international competitions.

Better collaboration within the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Make-IT has supported **56 actors** of the innovation ecosystem in their capacities and activities to improve the framework conditions for digital enterprises. **20 key stakeholders** from public and private sectors in each supported ecosystem improved their collaborations, creating a stronger and more supportive environment for digital entrepreneurship. **More than 60 ecosystem meetups** strengthen the cooperation of financiers, companies and associations in the local ecosystems of 5 countries and pan-African.

Organisational development of four national and international networks of innovation hubs and start-up supporters (e.g. Ghana Hub Network, Innovation Support Network Nigeria, Tunisian Startup Association, AfriLabs and others) with well over 1,000 members.

Policy consulting for five governmental project partners in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tunisia, e.g. national guidelines for innovation and entrepreneurship promotion in Nigeria, Tunisian Startup Act, etc.

Policy consulting strengthens pan-African and international processes, e.g. Smart Africa Blueprint Task Force "Start-up and innovation ecosystem", EU AU Summit / Digital Economy Task Force, etc.

Impact in Stories

Chekkit protects citizens: from counterfeits to COVID-19

Chekkit, a young start-up based in Lagos, Nigeria, fights counterfeit products in order to protect consumers' safety. Chekkit provides blockchain-based product authentication, consumer intelligence and supply chain tracking solutions. Founded in 2018, it first focused on pharmaceuticals but has expanded into other areas and has registered over 80,000 authentications.

After participating in the Joint Start-up Programme Make-IT in Africa and Merck in 2019, Chekkit emerged as the only team from Africa selected for the Merck Global Accelerator programme in 2020. CEO Dare Odumade elaborates, “This marked a critical milestone for our business, as we learnt valuable lessons on how to practically scale our business through sessions led by seasoned mentors.”

Just recently, in March 2020, Chekkit was one of eight companies selected by the Africa CDC and Co-Creation Hub to receive grants for solutions that help combat the spread of the novel coronavirus. Chekkit's public engagement platform enables users to sign up for daily COVID-19 alerts and other information.

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