

Agri-tech startups the future of farming

The [AMPION Veture Bus](#), a seven day startup bootcamp with 40 participants from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, France and Germany and supported by the German Ministry for International Cooperation and Development (BMZ), aims to create ten agri-tech startups to provide innovative solutions to transform the agricultural sector in Africa. The bus tour started on 13 November in Windhoek (Namibia) and led through Ghanzi and Gaborone (both Botswana), Johannesburg, Bloemfontein to Cape Town (all South Africa).



In Cape Town, the 10 resulting startup teams presented their agri-tech solutions to an international jury of investors during AfricaCom, Africa's largest ICT conference. During the Venture Bus tour the participating entrepreneurs have been mentored by experienced serial entrepreneurs and investors, including training in design thinking and lean startup methodologies. Site visits on the route included commercial and communal farms as well as local technology hubs and innovation centers in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Ideas and business model developments have been shared and exchanged with the local startup communities during several stopovers.

Sustainably developing agriculture

Africa's economy is strongly dependent on the agricultural sector. 60 percent of all working Africans work in agriculture. However, the productivity is limited: up to 60 percent of all African farmers produce few or no products for trade. New technologies and digitisation are crucial to sustainably develop the agricultural sector and to improve lives in Africa. The African technology startup ecosystem significantly contributes to this technology advancement by developing and implementing innovative solutions. AMPION, in partnership with the BMZ, fosters the African startup ecosystem by supporting young African entrepreneurs and building agri-tech startups in Southern Africa.

The following startups created on the Venture Bus Southern Africa have selected as the winners by the investor jury:

e.Mkuyu: A digital education platform that closes the gap between unemployed African youth and career opportunities in the agricultural sector

Agri2Go: A digital platform that provides transparent, real-time pricing information for agricultural products in Africa

SheFarms: An investment platform for female African farmers that aims to reduce food scarcity and gender inequality in agriculture



These three winning startups receive access to the AMPION Fellowship program 2016; a six month incubation programme that supports startups with small seed funding and business know-how provided by entrepreneurship experts.

Fabian-Carlos Guhl, AMPION CEO, said: "Thanks to the partnership with BMZ we can build up the startup ecosystem in Africa with our local partners. Innovative solutions for the African agricultural sector improve the productivity and lives of millions of people. With our initiatives we want to contribute to the successful creation and implementation of these solutions."

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