

Microsoft to accelerate the growth of 10,000 African startups

 By [Imran Salie](#)

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The startup ecosystem in South Africa and the African continent is growing tremendously. This rapid growth mixed with the advancement of digital technologies across Africa means that there is an abundance of opportunities for entrepreneurs to establish their own successful small businesses.



Left: Lionel Moyal, commercial partner director, Microsoft South Africa, Right: Kunle Awosika, managing director, Microsoft Africa Transformation Office | image supplied

However, some SMEs need assistance and guidance, and Microsoft has pledged to accelerate the growth of 10,000 African startups, and fast-track investment in Africa's startup ecosystem over the next five years.

Yesterday, 1 December, Microsoft, through its Africa Transformation Office (ATO), hosted a meet-up for startup founders and entrepreneurs as one of its initiatives to achieve its goal of accelerating startups on the continent.

Startup founders who attended the online event had the chance to network with fellow entrepreneurs and hear success stories from Q-Hop and BancX.

Technical sessions during the event included workshops on accelerating product innovation at scale, fundraising during times of global financial crisis, how and why to consider geo-expansion, and how to benefit from GitHub Sponsors. Attendees also learned more about the benefits of being a part of Microsoft's Founders Hub.

The Founders Hub

Microsoft's Founders Hub was launched in Africa in 2021 under the ATO. The self-service hub provides access to a wide range of resources, from tools like Microsoft Azure, GitHub and Microsoft 365 to go-to-market and business support.

This includes opportunities for startups to sell to Microsoft's corporate and enterprise customers. Microsoft also supports startups in geo-expansion activities, where they can scale up by selling in new countries or regions.

Access to funding

Microsoft also announced that it has established alliances and partnerships with venture capital investors that facilitate access to \$500m in potential funding.

"Microsoft has already established partnerships with several key venture capital investors, including Banque Misr, Global Venture Capital and Get Funded Africa, and the intention is to grow this network in the next five years to increase funding and enable them to scale up and drive economic growth.

"Microsoft has supported a growth partnership with South African partner Technvst to provide 30 African startups with access to customers and market expansion opportunities. Other South African-based startups, including Finclusion, The Awareness Company, Anisoptera, Omnicient and WalletDoc, have engaged with Microsoft on additional growth and market opportunities," the company said.

Microsoft has created partnerships with accelerators and incubators across Africa, including Grindstone, Greenhouse, FlapMax and Seedstars to provide industry-based startups with access to markets, technical skills and funding opportunities.

Lionel Moyal, commercial partner director, Microsoft South Africa, addressed the media: "South Africa is well established as one of the top four startup ecosystems on the continent and is leading the way for successful exits with more than one-third of the acquisitions across the African tech space since 2015. Microsoft is committed to nurturing and supporting our proudly South African startups through engagements such as today's meet-up."

"There is huge potential for Africa to become a thriving hub of digital innovation on the global startup landscape. Our ambition is to see an explosion of local invention and innovation that will contribute positively, not just to Africa's digital economy, but to global society," said Kunle Awosika, managing director of Microsoft Africa Transformation Office.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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