

Kenyan mobile agri-platform to receive a \$100,000 boost from Expo Live

Mobile agri-platform, Selina Wamucii, is set to receive a \$100,000 grant from global social impact programme Expo Live. The platform aims to improve Kenya's agricultural supply chain by enabling buyers and exporters to source fresh produce directly from smallholder farmers, even without access to the internet - shortening the supply chain, reducing food wastage and boosting farmer income by ensuring a greater proportion of fresh produce reaches the market.



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Selina Wamucii was founded in June 2015 by John Oroko and Gaita Kariuki, both of whom were born and raised in smallholder families. The company is named after the co-founders' mothers.

Oroko said: "Both Gaita and I saw the challenges faced by our parents so we studied to become engineers and decided to use our knowledge to help farmers. By enabling users to buy seedlings and better equipment, our platform is helping farmers to become self-sufficient.

"Some of our mango farmers have increased their incomes by 60%, allowing them to pay for medical bills and their children's school fees. We also see smallholders investing their money back into the farm to increase yields."

How it works

The solution digitises the entire supply chain without requiring farmers to have access to smartphones or the internet. Smallholder farmers can register on the platform by dialling a code from their mobile phones. Selina Wamucii then collects data relating to location, produce type, volume and projections to match farmers with the right buyers.

When large-scale exporters place orders, Selina Wamucii sources produce from farmers according to the location. The company contracts agents to collect and deliver the harvests, as well as to train and monitor registered farmers.

More than 3,000 smallholder farmers are registered with Selina Wamucii. The company said mango farmers who were previously earning \$100 per year are now making an average of \$160 per year.

Selina Wamucii will use the Expo Live grant to further develop its mobile platform and to acquire best practice and organic certifications to open up new markets and achieve even better prices for farmers. The grant will also be used to recruit an additional 2,000 farmers to the platform, enabling Selina Wamucii to more than double its acceptance rate for buyers' requests from the current 2.4% to at least 5%.

Funding innovation

Expo Live is Expo 2020 Dubai's innovation and partnership programme and has an allocation of \$100m to back projects that offer creative solutions to pressing challenges that impact people's lives or help preserve the planet – or both. Organisers are looking for projects that would not reach their full potential without its support.

Launched in January 2017, Expo Live has several programmes. The flagship global Innovation Impact Grant Programme provides up to \$100,000 per successful initiative, to be made available incrementally as the project meets ongoing conditions. Projects are also supported with business guidance and promotion and may have the chance to showcase their work to many millions of visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai.

Yousuf Caires, vice president – Expo Live at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “Selina Wamucii addresses all of Expo 2020 Dubai's sub-themes – opportunity, mobility and sustainability – by enhancing opportunities for farmers, reducing food waste by improving access to fresh produce, and contributing to a more sustainable agricultural industry.”

To date, Expo Live's Innovation Impact Grant Programme has attracted more than 2,300 applicants from 136 countries. Following a rigorous evaluation process, which included live presentations in Dubai, 70 grantees from 42 countries have joined Expo Live's community of Global Innovators, including these new members from the third cycle.

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