

AB InBev, BanQu to empower Africa farmers with blockchain technology

AB InBev Africa and BanQu Inc have teamed up to uplift smallholder farmers; expand financial inclusion and empowering more people across Africa. Through a non-cryptocurrency blockchain platform, the partners intend to provide an economic identity for people around the world, especially for those working at the tail end of supply chains and who are economically disconnected.



Maza Wanawake Kwanza Growers Association via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

AB InBev and BanQu's partnership dates back to August 2018, when BanQu and AB InBev launched a successful pilot project in Zambia. Successive roll-outs in Uganda, India, and Brazil have since taken place, making Brazil the fourth market where BanQu will assist AB InBev in reaching the global brewer's 2025 sustainability goals.

The technology enables farmers in the AB InBev value chain to have a line of sight of their barley, sorghum and cassava sales, and receive cash through a mobile money solution.

Since the second implementation was unveiled earlier this year in Uganda, through Nile Breweries Limited, 1,200 farmers have signed up on the BanQu blockchain platform. These farmers now have access to full accounting information, such as sales price, volume sold, and payment – with this information made available via SMS. They also have records that they can take to the bank, allowing them access to credit and form a verifiable economic identity.



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Another benefit to AB InBev's smallholder farmers, which has recently been made available by BanQu, is the integration of mobile money, which means that farmers do not have to walk around with cash that could be stolen, and can, instead, store money, pay bills or send remittances online directly through the free, secure platform.

AB InBev's Solutions Africa director of innovation and analytics, Sameer Jooma, explains that BanQu's solution can be applied to almost any industry. "Most people have a rudimentary understanding of blockchain because it is the platform that enables bitcoin transactions. What BanQu has done, as the world's first company to offer this solution, is to take this technology and expand it beyond cryptocurrency. After all, what is being moved is information, because even money can be distilled down to data now."



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"Through developing the world's first and only non-cryptocurrency blockchain platform, BanQu connects people to global supply chains, enabling them to do business with brands, organisations, and governments," says Ashish Gadnis, BanQu co-founder and CEO.

Defining financial positions

Gadnis adds: "Almost 2.7 billion people across the globe don't have access to credit or other banking services, because they don't have what we call an economic identity – the data record of their financial position. BanQu seeks to solve this dilemma by providing auditable financial records, which are bankable, allowing more people to participate in the global economy."

The partnership also gives AB InBev Africa better visibility of farmers in their supply chain, and the group can easily see how much, and when, a farmer was paid, as well as track produce from the farm to the brewery through geo-location tags.

Now that the farmer is connected, AB InBev Africa can also connect with farmers to ensure that they receive the training and resources they need.

Jooma add: "Over the last year, through BanQu implementations, we have touched more than 4,000 farmers in our supply chain in four markets across the world. Through this work, we are helping to create an economic identity for our farmers, which enables them to access financial services. This will ultimately allow farmers to grow their business and improve the livelihoods of their families and communities."

AB InBev has also invested in BanQu, advancing an undisclosed amount to ZX Ventures, the company's global growth and innovation group, in June 2019. "Our investment in BanQu is an investment in our future through empowering our farmers," concludes Jooma concludes.