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Fintech AFRICA MAGAZINE

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Regulatory Hurdles And Opportunities in

CRYPTO ADOPTION IN AFRICA

-Tech Talk with Digital Stokvel Platform Team

EDITORIAL

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this edition of Fintech Magazine Africa, where we explore one of the most dynamic and evolving conversations shaping Africa's digital economy – Regulatory Hurdles and Crypto Adoption in Africa.
As the continent continues its journey toward financial inclusion and digital transformation, cryptocurrencies have emerged as both a promising innovation and a subject of intense regulatory scrutiny. While digital currencies offer new avenues for financial empowerment, cross-border transactions, and wealth creation, the lack of clear and harmonized regulatory frameworks poses significant challenges to their widespread adoption.
In this edition, we delve into the critical role of regulators in balancing innovation with consumer protection, highlight how different African countries are approaching crypto regulations, and spotlight fintech innovators navigating this complex landscape. From the rise of stablecoins to the intersection of crypto and financial inclusion, we explore the opportunities and roadblocks shaping the future of digital currencies across the continent.
As the fintech ecosystem evolves, collaboration between regulators, innovators, and policymakers will be key to unlocking the full potential of cryptocurrencies in driving Africa's digital economy forward.
Join us as we unpack the regulatory dynamics, share expert insights, and spotlight the voices shaping the future of crypto adoption in Africa.
Enjoy reading!

Warm regards,
Ajetunmobi Olumayowa

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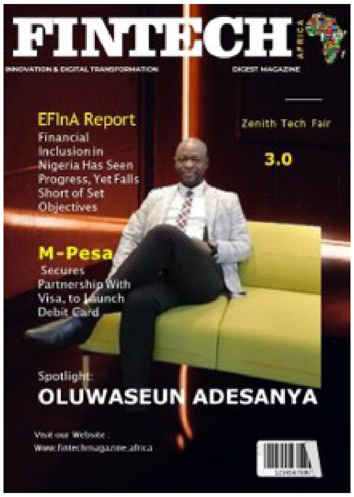

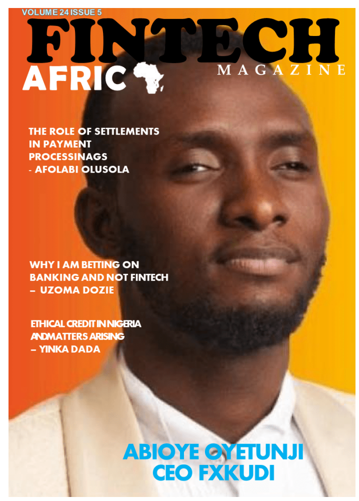

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Egyptian Fintech Khazna Raises $16M to Expand into Saudi Arabia and Pursue Digital Banking License

Egyptian fintech company Khazna has secured $16 million in pre-Series B funding, bringing its total investment to over $63 million. The company plans to use the funds to apply for a digital banking license in Egypt and expand its operations into Saudi Arabia.

Bridging the Financial Gap in Egypt

Founded in 2019, Khazna provides financial services tailored to low- and middle-income workers who lack access to traditional banking. The platform offers salary advances, digital payments, and micro-loans, helping workers manage their finances with greater flexibility.

Currently, more than 500,000 users rely on Khazna's services, with 100,000 employeesreceiving their salaries directly through the platform. The company's long-term goal is to integrate loans and insurance into payroll systems, making financial management easier for workers.

Focus on Credit and Profitability

Khazna has concentrated on credit solutions for payroll and pension recipients, as well as unsecured loans for gig workers. This strategic focus has led the company to achieve profitability, according to CEO Omar Saleh.

Saleh said.

In addition to credit services, Khazna offers bill payments, buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) options, medical insurance, and rent-to-own products. However, the company faces a key challenge: its inability to accept customer deposits, making lending operations more expensive. To address this, Khazna is working towards securing a deposit-taking license from Egypt's Central Bank, which introduced a regulatory framework for digital banks in July 2024.

Expansion into Saudi Arabia

Beyond Egypt, Khazna is setting its sights on Saudi Arabia, where demand for consumer finance solutions is growing. Unlike BNPL-focused players like Tabby and Tamara, Khazna is focusing on medium-term credit solutions, including earned wage access (EWA), payroll-backed lending, and pension-based credit.

A major driver of this expansion is the strong economic ties between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, with nearly three million Egyptians living and working in the Kingdom.

This presents an opportunity for Khazna to offer cross-border financial services, including credit and foreign exchange (FX) solutions.
Additionally, Saudi Arabia's capital markets have influenced Khazna's strategy. The Tadawul stock exchange, one of the most liquid in the region, has seen multiple IPOs in recent years. Khazna aims to generate 40–50% of its revenue from Saudi Arabia within the next four years, positioning itself for a future public listing on Tadawul. Saleh emphasized that this move would provide early-stage investors with a clear exit strategy through an IPO.

Navigating Economic Challenges

Khazna's latest funding round was shaped by Egypt's economic challenges, including currency devaluation and increased investor caution. Between 2022 and 2023, Egyptian startups struggled to raise capital, leading to a slowdown in venture deals. Despite these hurdles, Khazna continues to expand, securing funding to strengthen its market position and drive regional growth.
With a clear focus on financial inclusion, credit innovation, and regional expansion, Khazna is positioning itself as a leading fintech player in Egypt and the Gulf region.

Access Bank Appoints Uche Orji as Independent Non-Executive Director, Strengthening Leadership and Governance

Access Bank Plc has reinforced its leadership by appointing Uche Orji as an Independent Non-Executive Director, following approval from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). This strategic move underscores the bank's commitment to enhancing corporate governance, diversity, and expertise at the board level.

With three decades of experience in investment banking, technology, and infrastructure, Orji brings a wealth of knowledge from his tenure at leading global financial institutions, including Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, and UBS. His leadership at the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) showcased his ability to manage large-scale investments, a skillset that will be instrumental as Access Bank continues its expansion across Africa.
Furthermore, Orji's expertise in artificial intelligence and deep-tech investments aligns with the ongoing digital transformation in the banking sector. His involvement in firms such as Titangate Capital Management and Ultrasafe AI highlights his forward-thinking approach to finance and technology.
By appointing Orji, Access Bank signals its dedication to strengthening corporate governance, risk management, and strategic decision-making. This move is expected to boost investor confidence and accelerate the bank's growth trajectory, positioning it as a dominant force in the African financial sector.

Nigeria's Mobile Money Transactions Surge to N71.5 Trillion in 2024 Despite Regulatory Hurdles

The latest data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement Systems (NIBSS) reveals that licensed mobile money operators, including PalmPay, OPay, and 15 others, processed transactions worth N71.5 trillion between January and December 2024.

This marks a 53.4% increase from the N46.6 trillion recorded in 2023, reflecting the growing adoption of mobile money services in Nigeria. Transaction volumes also saw a 23% surge, rising from 3 billion in 2023 to 3.9 billion in 2024, according to NIBSS data.

Expanding Market and Growing Smartphone Penetration

With smartphone adoption expected to rise, mobile money operators anticipate an even stronger performance in 2025. Currently, 17 companies are licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as Mobile Money Operators (MMOs). While these companies are part of Nigeria's larger fintech ecosystem—comprising over 200 fintech firms—only a select few hold mobile money service provider licenses.

Mobile money services allow users to initiate, authorize, and confirm transactions using mobile phones, facilitating seamless fund transfers from current, savings, or stored value accounts.

Regulatory Challenges and Temporary Suspension

Despite this impressive growth, the sector faced a temporary setback in April 2024 when the CBN ordered a freeze on new customer onboardingfor several fintech platforms, including OPay, PalmPay, and Paga, as well as non-MMO fintechs such as Moniepoint and Kuda Bank. The ban was imposed over concerns that these platforms were being exploited for illegal forex transactions linked to cryptocurrency trading.

Although the suspension lasted about a month, its impact on overall transaction volume was minimal, demonstrating the resilience and continued expansion of Nigeria's mobile money ecosystem.

Flutterwave Achieves $31 Billion in Transaction Volume For 2024

The year 2024 proved a landmark year for Flutterwave, the African fintech giant. The company's year-end report showcased impressive figures, including a staggering $31 billion in processed transactions.

This surge reflects not just growth, but a strategic expansion that has solidified Flutterwave's position as a key player in the global financial landscape. A core element of this success story is Flutterwave's expanding global footprint. New operations in Rwanda, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, and Mozambique broadened its African base, while aggressive expansion in the US, marked by securing 31 new Money Transfer Licenses and the rollout of the Send App in 49 states, underscored its international ambitions.

This drive for global reach is fueled by a clear mission: to connect Africa to the world and simplify cross-border transactions. Beyond geographical expansion, Flutterwave focused on technological innovation. Upgrades to its fraud detection system resulted in a remarkable five-fold increase in card transaction speed, translating to substantial cost savings.

The introduction of Direct Debit in Nigeria and a strategic partnership with OPay, connecting to its massive 40-million-user network, further diversified payment options and enhanced user accessibility. The true measure of Flutterwave's success lies in the impact it has had on its clients. Risevest's 93% customer journey completion rate during market expansion and Trove Finance's 100% success rate with bank transfers highlight the reliability and effectiveness of Flutterwave's platform.

December 2024 saw Flutterwave reach new heights, processing $500 million in transactions – its highest monthly volume to date. This peak, coupled with consistently strong performance throughout the year, underscores Flutterwave's robust growth trajectory and its potential to reshape the future of finance.

Nigeria's PoS Transactions Surge to Record N18 Trillion in 2024

The value of Point of Sales (PoS) transactions in Nigeria reached a record high of N18 trillion in 2024, according to data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS).

This represents a significant 69% increase compared to the N10.7 trillion recorded in 2023. The volume of transactions also saw an 8% year-on-year rise to 1.5 billion.

This surge in PoS usage is attributed to several factors, including persistent cash shortages at ATMs and the aggressive expansion of PoS terminal deployments by fintech companies.

PoS Terminal Deployment More Than Doubles

The number of PoS terminals deployed across Nigeria more than doubled in 2024, jumping by 129% from 2.4 million at the end of 2023 to 5.5 million. Registered PoS terminals also increased substantially, from 3.5 million in December 2023 to 7.8 million in December 2024, indicating 4.3 million new registrations. However, a gap of over 2 million registered but undeployed terminals suggests potential for further growth.

Drivers of PoS Growth

Several factors are driving the increasing adoption of PoS transactions. The persistent difficulty in accessing cash through traditional banking channels, such as ATMs, has been a major catalyst. Long queues, frequent ATM downtime, and cash unavailability have frustrated Nigerians, making PoS payments an attractive alternative.

The rise of PoS transactions has also addressed the need for cash withdrawals, effectively filling a gap left by malfunctioning ATMs. Furthermore, PoS agents have extended banking services to rural areas with limited bank accessibility, according to financial analyst Adewale Adeoye.

Fintechs Bridging the Cash Gap

Initially driven by a lack of bank ATMs in certain areas, the PoS business model has evolved to address the broader issue of cash unavailability, even when ATMs are present. It's now common to see PoS agents operating near ATMs, providing an alternative when the machines are out of cash. Fintech companies like PalmPay have strategically deployed PoS agents to drive financial inclusion across Nigeria.

Cedar Money Secures $9.9 Million Seed Funding to Revolutionize Cross-Border Business Payments

Cedar Money, a fintech company specializing in seamless cross-border money movement via stablecoins, has announced a $9.9 million seed funding round. The investment was led by QED Investors, with additional participation from North Island Ventures, Wischoff Ventures, Lattice, and Stellar.

This funding will fuel Cedar Money's mission to redefine international business payments by leveraging cutting-edge blockchain technology. The company focuses exclusively on providing fast, secure, and cost-effective payment solutions for businesses, eliminating the inefficiencies of traditional banking systems. Legacy banking infrastructure often suffers from slow transaction speeds, high costs, and complex processes that hinder global commerce. Cedar Money's platform directly addresses these challenges, offering an innovative alternative that enhances financial accessibility and efficiency. By utilizing stablecoins, the company ensures instant settlement, lower transaction fees, and greater transparency, positioning itself as a game-changer in the cross-border payments landscape.

With this new capital infusion, Cedar Money aims to expand its payment infrastructure, strengthen its network of business clients, and drive further innovation in digital financial services, ultimately facilitating a more inclusive and frictionless global payments ecosystem.

Fintechs to Gain Easier Access Between Ghana And Rwanda With New Passport System

In a move designed to boost cross-border financial technology operations, Ghana and Rwanda are establishing a license passporting system.
This innovative approach will allow fintech companies authorized in one country to quickly gain access to the market in the other, simplifying expansion and reducing regulatory complexities.
Central Bank of Rwanda Governor John Rwangombwa unveiled the plan, noting the support of the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The official launch is set to take place at the Inclusive FinTech Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, from February 24-26, 2025.
The passporting regime will streamline the process for fintech firms seeking to operate in both Ghana and Rwanda. Instead of undergoing a full licensing procedure in each country, companies will be able to leverage their existing license, submitting only supplementary information for approval in the second jurisdiction. This is expected to significantly decrease the time and cost associated with cross-border expansion.

This initiative is part of a wider movement towards regulatory harmonization in Africa, with Ghana and Rwanda taking a leading role in fostering a more integrated and accessible fintech environment.
The simplified regulatory process is anticipated to encourage innovation and investment in the sector.
The final points of implementation are still being worked out, and stakeholders are eager to understand how the regulatory alignment will be achieved.

However, the overall development is seen as a major step forward for the African fintech landscape, paving the way for a more connected and dynamic digital financial ecosystem.

Safaricom And KBA Advocate for Pesalink as Kenya's Unified Digital Payment System

Kenya's digital payment ecosystem is poised for a major shift as Safaricom and the Kenya Bankers Association (KBA) propose leveraging Pesalinkas the country's primary fast payment system (FPS). Instead of creating a new infrastructure or depending on multiple private switches, the two entities advocate for enhancing Pesalink's existing framework to unify Kenya's fragmented payment landscape.

Operated by Integrated Payment Services Limited (IPSL), a fintech arm of KBA, Pesalink currently facilitates transactions worth $8.5 billion (KES 1.1 trillion). The proposed transition would make Pesalink the backbone of a seamless, interoperable system connecting banks, mobile money platforms like M-Pesa, SACCOs, and fintechs under a unified structure.

The Case for Pesalink

Safaricom and KBA argue that Kenya's digital payments network remains disjointed, with financial institutions relying on individual agreements to connect with mobile money services. This patchwork approach results in inconsistent service quality, higher transaction fees, and inefficiencies. Establishing Pesalink as the industry-led FPS could eliminate silos, ensuring a more integrated and cost-effectivepayment framework.

Building a new FPS from the ground up would be both costly and time-consuming—projected to require at least $200 million (KES 25.9 billion)and four years to complete. Enhancing Pesalink's capacity, on the other hand, would be a faster and more affordable alternative.

However, for Pesalink to serve as a national FPS, it would require significant upgrades, including the ability to process 6,000 transactions per second, enhance risk management, and improve security protocols to handle increased transaction volumes.

Alternative Models and Regulatory Considerations

While the Colombian model, which relies on multiple private switches managed by the Central Bank, is an alternative, Safaricom and KBA caution that such a structure may lead to governance challenges and inconsistent service quality. A single, industry-led FPS built on Pesalink would ensure a more streamlined regulatory environment and reduce operational inefficiencies.

According to Ali Hussein Kassim, Chairman of the Association of FinTechs in Kenya, a unified payment system would strengthen Kenya's digital economy, making transactions cheaper, faster, and more accessible across different platforms.

What's Next?

Although the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has yet to approve the proposal, momentum is building around the idea. If greenlit, Pesalink would undergo a comprehensive upgrade, positioning it as a next-generation payment system capable of supporting real-time cross-platform transactions between banks, mobile money operators, and fintech services.

This initiative could mark a transformative moment for Kenya's financial sector, fostering greater financial inclusion and enhancing the efficiency of digital transactions nationwide.

Nigeria's Cash Crisis: How ATMs Lost the Battle to POS Operators

Nigeria's ongoing cash crisis has been blamed on a haphazardly implemented cashless policy and the poor handling of currency circulation by banks, according to Tope Dare, Executive Director of e-Business and Infrastructure at Inlaks Computers Limited.

Speaking at a public lecture on Friday, themed "The Cash War Between ATMs and POS Agents in Nigeria," Dare argued that regulatory missteps—not banking inefficiencies—are at the heart of the cash shortage gripping businesses and individuals. He warned that despite official efforts to promote digital transactions, physical cash remains central to the Nigerian economy.

"The CBN's cashless policy has created persistent cash shortages," Dare asserted. "People now prefer to hoard cash instead of depositing it in banks. The ATM withdrawal limits are meant to ensure wider cash distribution, but they are only exacerbating the problem."

The Rise of POS Agents and a Parallel Cash Economy

Dare highlighted the unintended consequences of Nigeria's cashless push, particularly the rise of Point-of-Sale (POS) operators as dominant players in the country's cash distribution network. Initially conceived as a stopgap for areas underserved by banks, POS agents have evolved into primary financial service providers—often at the expense of ordinary consumers.

"The high fees charged by POS agents have incentivised them to source cash through desperate and unethical means," he said. "Some withdraw directly from ATMs, depleting cash meant for regular customers, while others purchase cash from businesses in exchange for digital transfers, creating an informal cash market."

This, he warned, has led to congestion at ATMs, disproportionately affecting individuals who rely on cash, such as traders, transport workers, and elderly citizens struggling with digital banking platforms.

Public Preference for POS Transactions

Despite the steep transaction fees, a survey conducted on street users revealed a strong preference for POS agents over ATMs. Factors such as accessibility, speed, and customer service were cited as key reasons for this shift.

"As of March 2024, Nigeria had approximately 2.7 million POS terminals, compared to fewer than 21,500 ATMs serving over 63 million unique bank clients," Dare noted. "This disparity underscores the growing reliance on POS machines as the primary cash source."

Moreover, many respondents found POS operators to be more approachable than traditional bank staff, despite lacking formal customer service training.

Regulatory Response and the Way Forward

Dare commended recent efforts by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to penalise banks failing to ensure adequate cash availability. These measures include increased oversight, encouraging customers to report ATM cash shortages, and imposing fines on non-compliant financial institutions.

However, he stressed that without a fundamental review of the cashless policy's implementation, the country risks entrenching an exploitative parallel cash economy.

"The dissatisfaction of everyday Nigerians is growing," he warned. "Something must be done before the situation devolves further."

XTransfer And Ecobank Group Partner to Empower African Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Foreign Trade

XTransfer, the world-leading and China's No.1 B2B Cross-Border Trade Payment Platform, and Ecobank Group, the leading private pan-African financial services group with unrivalled African expertise, have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding of Cooperation (MOU) to roll out comprehensive cross-border financial services to Africa's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in foreign trade. The collaboration will facilitate trade between China and African countries.

In recent years, China and Africa have continued to deepen trade cooperation, with the scale of imports and exports rising rapidly. In 2023, bilateral trade reached a record US$282 billion. From January to November 2024, China's exports to Africa totalled US$160 billion, a 1.4% increase from the previous year, while imports from Africa reached US$107 billion, marking a substantial rise of 6.6%.

Despite this growth, African SMEs engaged in foreign trade face numerous challenges related to cross-border payments and fund collections. These challenges include difficulties in opening accounts with traditional banks, a high risk of funds being frozen, difficulties in foreign exchange and related losses, lengthy remittance times and high remittance costs.

The partnership between XTransfer and Ecobank Group will foster collaboration between both parties to provide comprehensive cross-border payment solutions for African SMEs' foreign trade. XTransfer will leverage Ecobank's extensive network across Africa, enabling its Chinese clients to collect funds in local African currencies while assisting African SMEs in making payments in their local currencies to negate foreign exchange issues.

Bill Deng, Founder and CEO of XTransfer, stated, "We are excited about the partnership with Ecobank. This collaboration represents a significant milestone for XTransfer and greatly enhances our global payment capabilities. Leveraging Ecobank's extensive payment network in Africa will accelerate our business expansion in the region. We are looking forward to the synergies and opportunities this partnership will create. Together, we will drive innovation and improve the financial landscape, making financial services more efficient and accessible for African SMEs."

Jeremy Awori, CEO Ecobank Group, said, "We are proud to partner with XTransfer to advance seamless cross-border payment solutions between Africa and China. This partnership builds on our established strategy, which includes a representative office in China and a dedicated China desk. By integrating XTransfer's cutting-edge solutions with our pan-African payment platform, we simplify payments, reduce transaction costs, and enable African businesses to thrive in global trade."

The partnership will facilitate trade between SMEs in China and African countries and also streamline foreign trade transactions between African companies and their global partners. Ultimately, this will help reduce the costs of global trade and enhance the global competitiveness of African SMEs.

This partnership aligns with Ecobank's goals of driving financial integration by facilitating seamless cross-border trade, which is the backbone of the continent's economy growth. By collaborating with XTransfer, Ecobank is strengthening its position as a key player in the global payments industry by reducing trade barriers, enabling African SMEs to thrive in international markets and contribute to the continent's sustainable development.

CBN Introduces New Forex Rules for BDCs to Curb Speculation and Enhance Transparency

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has rolled out fresh guidelines allowing Bureau de Change (BDC) operators to purchase up to $25,000 weekly from Authorised Dealer Banks (ADBs) to cater to retail forex demand.

The policy, aimed at improving transparency and curbing misuse, was detailed in a circular issued on February 5, 2025, and signed by Dr. W. J. Kanya, Acting Director of the Trade & Exchange Department.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW GUIDELINES

Single Dealer Rule to Prevent Speculation

To tighten oversight and limit speculation, BDCs are required to source their weekly forex allocation from only one authorised dealer bank. Any violation of this restriction will attract penalties from the CBN.

Uniform Exchange Rate and Profit Cap

Authorised dealers must sell forex to BDCs at the prevailing Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market (NFEM) rate, ensuring price consistency. Additionally, BDCs are permitted to charge a maximum of 1% above their purchase price when selling to end-users. This measure seeks to prevent excessive pricing and protect consumers.

Stricter Compliance and Reporting Standards

To enhance regulatory oversight, both ADBs and BDCs must comply with new reporting requirements:

- Authorised Dealer Banks must submit weekly reports on forex sales to BDCs using a prescribed format sent to the CBN's Trade and Exchange Department.
- DCs must provide daily reports on forex transactions via the Financial Institutions Forex Reporting System (FIFX).

These mandatory reports will help track forex movement and detect potential abuses in the system.

TRANSACTION LIMITS AND ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

BDC operators can only disburse up to $5,000 per transaction per quarter for specific purposes, including:

- Business and Personal Travel Allowance (BTA/PTA)
- Overseas tuition payments
- Medical expenses abroad

To strengthen anti-money laundering efforts, the CBN mandates BDCs to collect Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs) from customers and endorse transaction details in their international passports. This ensures better tracking of forex usage and prevents financial crimes.

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

The CBN has warned that any ADB or BDC failing to comply with these regulations—especially engaging in forex diversion—will face severe sanctions, including suspension of their operating license.

This policy shift aligns with the CBN's ongoing efforts to stabilise the naira, increase forex availability, and maintain a transparent currency market.

ADVERT

TECH TALK

Crypto Adoption in Africa: Regulatory Hurdles And Opportunities

<u>SECTION 1:</u> GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. *What is your perspective on the current state of cryptocurrency adoption in Africa?*

<u>TSHEPO</u>: Africa has one of the highest crypto adoption rates globally. And I think it comes down to necessity—people aren't just buying crypto as an investment; they're using it for real-life financial solutions. In many places, banking is expensive, cross-border payments are slow, and inflation eats away at savings. Crypto solves those problems.

2. *Why do you think Africa is considered a significant market for crypto adoption?*

<u>HLONI</u>: Africa has a large unbanked population—nearly 57% of adults don't have a bank account. Traditional banking is expensive.

3. *What factors make cryptocurrency appealing to many Africans?*

<u>TSHEPO:</u> There are many factors appealing to Africans, No bank account is required with crypto, crypto is faster, cheaper than traditional banking services and earning opportunities. I mean through DSP we are able to give higher interest rates to our users savings, than traditional banks

4. *Can you explain how crypto adoption varies across different African countries?*

<u>ALL:</u> Countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa lead in adoption because of fintech growth, remittances, and inflation concerns. Nigeria has a high P2P trading volume, Kenya integrates crypto into mobile money, and South Africa has more crypto-friendly regulations. Other countries, like Algeria and Morocco, still have restrictions but are opening up to blockchain.

<u>SECTION 2:</u> REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

5. *What are the primary regulatory challenges facing cryptocurrency adoption in Africa?*

<u>TSHEPO:</u> Many governments are undecided about how to treat crypto, some central banks block crypto transactions and there are no clear laws for resolving fraud cases.

6. *How have governments across Africa responded to the rise of cryptocurrency?*

<u>TSHEPO:</u> Some, like South Africa and Nigeria, recognize and regulate crypto, while others, like Ethiopia and Algeria, still restrict it. Many countries are now researching Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs), which may coexist with cryptocurrencies.

7. *Are there examples of African countries with progressive crypto regulations?*

<u>TSHEPO:</u> South Africa recognizes crypto as a financial product, Nigeria has a licensing framework for crypto exchanges and Mauritius allows blockchain startups to operate under a sandbox regulation.

-Lehlohonolo Ndawo,
Co-founder, Chief Executive Officer, Business Africa Online Team

8. *What role do central banks play in shaping the crypto ecosystem?*

<u>TSHEPO:</u> Central banks set policies that determine if banks can work with crypto businesses. Some are exploring CBDCs (like Nigeria's eNaira), which could integrate with platforms like DSP for easier digital savings and lending.

9. *How do regulatory uncertainties impact the growth of cryptocurrency startups in Africa?*

TSHEPO: When laws are unclear, businesses struggle to get banking services, investment, or user trust.

SECTION 3: OPPORTUNITIES IN CRYPTO ADOPTION

10. How can cryptocurrency address financial inclusion challenges in Africa?

BUHLE: Crypto allows people to save, send, and invest money without banks. Platforms like DSP take this further by creating community-based savings and lending models that people already understand.

11. Can crypto-based solutions help tackle cross-border payment inefficiencies in Africa?

ALL: Yes! Traditional cross-border transfers take days and have high fees. Crypto allows instant, low-cost transfers. DSP's partnership with NjiaPay supports cross-border payments.

12. What potential does crypto hold for remittances in Africa?

TSHEPO: Crypto cuts out middlemen, reducing costs. Traditional services like Western Union charge up to 10%, while crypto transfers can cost less than 1% in some cases.

13. How can blockchain technology enhance transparency in African economies?

TSHEPO: Blockchain records cannot be altered, so it can fight corruption, track government spending, and improve trust in financial transactions.

14. What opportunities exist for crypto in supporting African SMEs?

TSHEPO: Crypto offers SMEs access to international markets, alternative financing (DeFi loans), and cost-effective transactions.

15. Are there any success stories of crypto projects making a tangible impact in Africa?

BUHLE: Yes, DSP is pioneering blockchain-based stokvels, while platforms like BitPesa and Yellow Card facilitate cross-border transactions and remittances.

SECTION 4: GLOBAL INFLUENCE AND AFRICAN CONTEXT

16. How do global crypto trends influence Africa's adoption rates?

TSHEPO: Global trends such as Bitcoin ETFs, DeFi expansion, and institutional adoption impact African markets by increasing awareness, driving investment, and shaping local regulations.

17. Are international organizations playing any role in Africa's crypto space?

TSHEPO: Yes, organizations like the IMF, World Bank, and global crypto firms contribute to policy discussions, infrastructure development, and funding blockchain projects.

18. What lessons can African nations learn from other regions about crypto regulation?

TSHEPO: Countries can adopt balanced regulatory approaches like those in Europe or Singapore, ensuring consumer protection without stifling innovation.

SECTION 5: RISKS AND MITIGATION

19. What are the major risks associated with cryptocurrency adoption in Africa?

ALL: Fraud, volatility, lack of regulation, and cybersecurity threats are key risks.

20. How can stakeholders address concerns about crypto-related fraud and scams?

ALL: Education, regulation, and blockchain analytics tools can help mitigate fraud.

21. What role does digital literacy play in ensuring safer crypto usage?

ALL: Increased digital literacy reduces scam vulnerability and enhances financial security.

22. How can governments and regulators strike a balance between innovation and risk?

ALL: Clear frameworks, regulatory sandboxes, and collaboration with industry players are key.

SECTION 6: CRYPTO AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

23. How are traditional financial institutions in Africa responding to cryptocurrency?

ALL: Banks are cautious but exploring blockchain integration and partnerships with crypto firms.

24. Are African banks beginning to integrate blockchain or crypto into their operations?

ALL: Some banks are testing blockchain for remittances, identity verification, and settlements.

25. What impact could Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) have on crypto adoption?

ALL: CBDCs may increase trust in digital finance but also compete with decentralized cryptocurrencies.

SECTION 7: LEGAL AND POLICY DISCUSSIONS

26. What policies could help encourage safe crypto adoption in Africa?

TSHEPO: Clear regulatory frameworks and guidelines, tax clarity, and consumer protection measures are needed.

27. Are there specific frameworks African regulators should consider for crypto?

ALL: Hybrid and agile models combine regulation with innovation-friendly policies are ideal

28. How does taxation affect crypto usage and investment in Africa?

ALL: High taxation can deter investment and innovation in the sector.

SECTION 8: CRYPTO AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

29. How important is crypto education for accelerating adoption in Africa?

ALL: Crypto education is crucial for wider adoption, as it empowers individuals and businesses with the knowledge needed to safely and effectively use cryptocurrencies. Education helps reduce misinformation, increases confidence in blockchain technology, and ensures informed decision-making in crypto transactions.

30. Are there initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of cryptocurrencies in Africa?

ALL: Yes, several initiatives, including online courses, workshops, and community-driven programs, are focused on increasing crypto literacy in Africa.

31. What role do educational institutions play in crypto literacy?

ALL: Universities and training centers are increasingly incorporating blockchain and crypto courses into their curricula. Institutions like the University of Cape Town offer blockchain certification programs, helping to build a skilled workforce for Africa's emerging digital economy.d facilitate cross-border transactions and remittances.

SECTION 9: TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

32. How does internet access influence crypto adoption in Africa?

TSHEPO: Internet access is a cornerstone for crypto adoption, as transactions and blockchain interactions require online connectivity. Limited or expensive internet access hinders participation in the crypto economy.

33. Are there infrastructure challenges hindering the growth of cryptocurrency in Africa?

TSHEPO: Yes, challenges include inconsistent electricity supply, high internet costs, and limited access to smartphones. These barriers unfortunately affect rural areas and low-income populations.

34. How can African tech hubs and startups contribute to the crypto ecosystem?

ALL: Tech hubs and startups can drive innovation by developing user-friendly crypto platforms, fostering community education, and collaborating with governments and crypto providers to address gaps. Platforms like DSP allow for easy integration.

SECTION 10: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

35. Are there partnerships between crypto platforms and African governments?

ALL: Yes, partnerships are emerging, with governments exploring blockchain for public services like land registration and financial inclusion programs.

- Tshepo Sehlabela
Founder, Chief Technology Officer, Business Africa Online Team

36. How are NGOs and development agencies engaging with the crypto sector in Africa?
<u>ALL:</u> NGOs are leveraging blockchain for transparent aid distribution , Use crypto to store and disburse funds

37. What role do tech giants play in Africa's cryptocurrency space?
<u>TSHEPO:</u> Tech giants like Google and Meta are supporting blockchain innovation through grants, partnerships, and infrastructure development,

-Buhlekuzile Kunene ,
Chief Product Owner Business Africa Online Team

enhancing accessibility and adoption across the continent.

<u>SECTION 11:</u> PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

38. What does the future hold for cryptocurrency adoption in Africa?
<u>ALL:</u> Africa is poised for significant crypto growth, driven by grassroots adoption, increasing regulatory clarity, and the growth of blockchain-based solutions. collaboration with industry players are key.

39. Do you foresee African nations creating their own cryptocurrencies?
<u>ALL:</u> Yes, many central banks are exploring CBDCs as a way to modernize financial systems and offer a government-backed alternative to decentralized cryptocurrencies.

40. How could blockchain and crypto redefine Africa's digital economy?
<u>ALL:</u> Creating our own financial ecosystem and blockchain can enable digital identity systems, transparent governance, secure transactions, and innovative financial models, fostering a more inclusive and efficient digital economy.

41. Are there any trends to watch out for in Africa's crypto landscape in the next decade?
<u>ALL:</u> Expansion of CBDCs., Increased DeFi adoption, Greater regulatory clarity and Integration of crypto into mainstream finance.

<u>SECTION 8:</u> CLOSING QUESTIONS

42. What advice would you give to African entrepreneurs exploring crypto opportunities?
<u>TSHEPO:</u> Focus on solving real financial problems, prioritize compliance, and build trust through education and transparency.

43. How can individuals and businesses prepare for a crypto-regulated environment?
<u>TSHEPO:</u> Stay informed on regulations, adopt compliance measures, and collaborate with industry stakeholders.

44. What partnerships are needed to propel crypto adoption in Africa forward?
<u>TSHEPO:</u> Collaboration between fintech startups, regulators, financial institutions, and global blockchain networks will be key.

45. What final thoughts do you have on overcoming regulatory hurdles and maximizing opportunities?
<u>ALL:</u> Engagement with regulators, industry advocacy, and a user-centric approach are crucial to driving adoption while ensuring consumer protection. Platforms like DSP can lead the way in shaping Africa's crypto future.

Mastercard Opens Uganda Office, Reinforcing Commitment to Digital Transformation and Financial Inclusion

Mastercard has announced the opening of its first office in Uganda, marking a significant step in its East African expansion. This move underscores Mastercard's dedication to fostering financial inclusion and accelerating digital transformation within the region.

With Uganda's economy projected to grow by 6.2% by 2025, Mastercard's presence in Kampala will facilitate deeper collaboration with local stakeholders. This collaboration will enable the development of tailored solutions that address the specific needs of Ugandan consumers and businesses, contributing to the nation's economic growth.

The move aligns with the government's 'Digital Uganda Vision,' an initiative focused on leveraging digital technologies for national development. Mastercard and the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance have signed an MoU to accelerate the adoption of digital solutions that enhance government services and drive financial inclusion.

Following the granting of a Payment System Operator (PSO) License by the Bank of Uganda last year, in accordance with the National Payment Systems Act 2020, Mastercard is now authorized to provide essential services such as settlement and clearing operations within Uganda. This license further empowers Mastercard to act as a payment system operator for domestic transactions.

"Mastercard has a long-standing commitment to Africa, and the opening of our office in Uganda reinforces our dedication to this vibrant market," said Mark Elliott, Division President for Africa, Mastercard. "By being on the ground, we can better collaborate and drive the adoption of digital payment solutions that promote economic growth and financial inclusion. We are committed to leveraging our global expertise and innovative capabilities to advance payment technologies in this market. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our extensive network of partners in both the public and private sectors for their support in helping us build a more connected digital world."

"Uganda presents immense opportunities for digital innovation," added Shehryar Ali, Senior Vice President and Country Manager for East Africa and Indian Ocean Islands, Mastercard. "Our new office aims to serve as a hub for developing and implementing payment solutions that cater to the evolving needs of Ugandan consumers and businesses. We will continue to collaborate with our stakeholders and new players in the fintech space and beyond as we contribute to a connected and inclusive digital future for all."

Mastercard continues to drive financial and digital advancement in Uganda through initiatives such as hosting the Community Pass Customer Summit and collaborating with the Uganda Bankers Association.

The Kampala office joins Mastercard's growing African presence, which includes existing offices in Cairo, Casablanca, Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi, Port Louis, and Accra.

NIBSS Enhances Nigeria Quick Response (NQR) Payment System to Drive Cashless Economy

The Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) has upgraded its Nigeria Quick Response (NQR) payment system, reinforcing Nigeria's transition toward a cashless economy. The enhancement aims to make digital transactions more seamless, secure, and accessible for both businesses and consumers.

Originally launched in March 2021, NQR is a QR code-based payment solution designed to unify Nigeria's QR payment landscape. It provides a cost-effective, instant transaction alternative to cash, allowing users to simply scan a merchant's QR code and complete payments through their bank or mobile wallet.

Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc

The upgraded NQR system now supports both Person-to-Person (P2P) and Entity-to-Person (E2P) payments, ensuring broader applicability and immediate settlement for merchants and consumers. Security remains a key focus, with mechanisms in place to minimize fraud risks while maintaining efficiency.

According to Premier Oiwoh, MD/CEO of NIBSS, the goal is to empower all merchants, including street vendors, to accept digital payments effortlessly. By reducing dependence on cash, NQR enhances transaction safety and financial inclusion across the country.

In August 2024, NIBSS partnered with Zone, a blockchain payment infrastructure provider, to integrate Payment Terminal Service Aggregator (PTSA) functions into Zone's blockchain network. This move aims to enhance interoperability within the Point-of-Sale (PoS) payment ecosystem, enabling financial institutions to route transactions directly without traditional intermediaries.

Nigeria's fintech landscape is highly competitive, with major players like Opay, Flutterwave, and Paystack dominating digital payments. While these platforms rely on mobile wallets, bank transfers, and online payment gateways, NQR differentiates itself through direct bank integration and lower transaction fees. The newly structured pricing model for NQR will take effect on March 1, 2025, making it an even more attractive option for businesses of all sizes.

Despite its advantages, widespread adoption remains a challenge, particularly among small-scale vendors and businesses in rural areas where cash transactions still dominate. Continuous education, incentives, and awareness campaigns will be essential in driving merchant and consumer adoption of QR-based payments.

Ghana Enhances Functionality of National Identity Card With Mobile Money and Driver's License Integration

Ghana is set to expand the functionality of its national identity card, the Ghana Card, by integrating it with mobile money services, bank accounts, and driver's licenses. This initiative, led by the National Identification Authority (NIA), aims to enhance financial transactions, identity verification, and government service accessibility.

With the upcoming integration, Ghana Card holders will be able to make payments without needing vendor phone numbers or mobile money details. According to Yayra Koku, Acting CEO of the NIA, this financial linkage will streamline transactions while strengthening Ghana's digital payment ecosystem.

Additionally, card replacements will become more efficient, allowing citizens to obtain new cards instantly at designated service points using fingerprint verification.

The Ghana Card will also serve as an official driver's license, eliminating redundant processes at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA). By leveraging existing biometric data, the new system will remove the need for separate fingerprinting, significantly improving efficiency and reducing administrative bottlenecks.

The Ghana Card is already linked to CitizenApp, a platform enabling secure access to government services through biometric authentication. This move aligns with broader regional trends, as other African nations, such as Kenya, are adopting similar digital ID programs.

A Step Toward a Digital Economy

Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumiaemphasized that these enhancements will boost business growth, streamline public services, and enhance Ghana's global competitiveness. By consolidating multiple functions into a single digital ID, Ghana is taking a significant step toward modernizing its economy and financial systems while improving efficiency across various sectors.

CreditChek and CredPal Partner to Expand Credit Access in Africa

CreditChek, a leading credit assessment company, has partnered with CredPal to enhance credit verification for CredPal's credit card business. This collaboration aims to simplify the lending process, improve financial access, and drive credit adoption across Africa.

CreditChek specializes in providing real-time credit insights by verifying income, analyzing financial history, and detecting potential fraud. By integrating these services into CredPal's platform, the partnership ensures that consumers can access credit faster and more securely.

Since its inception in 2022, CreditChek has facilitated over 300,000 verifications and supported $30 million in loan approvals. Its solutions are trusted by over 80 financial institutions, including Moni, AjoCard, and Trade Lenda.

To further enhance security, CreditChek recently launched Spectrum, a data-sharing network developed with a major credit bureau. Spectrum helps financial institutions flag high-risk borrowers, ensuring lenders can make informed decisions while reducing default risks.

Despite the increasing demand for digital financial services, credit card adoption in Africa remains low. In Nigeria, only 1.6% of the population owns a credit card, ranking the country 117th globally. The challenge extends across sub-Saharan Africa, where credit card usage hovers around 3% due to income constraints, a lack of formal credit history, and reliance on cash transactions.

By integrating CreditChek's verification tools, CredPal is well-positioned to drive credit card adoption, making financing options more accessible to underserved populations.

BUILDING A FUTURE OF FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Beyond Nigeria, CreditChek envisions a cross-border credit infrastructure that allows African consumers to access financial services internationally. This system will enable financial institutions worldwide to assess African borrowers more effectively, promoting global financial inclusion.

As the demand for flexible credit solutions grows, the partnership between CreditChek and CredPal represents a major step toward making credit fair, transparent, and accessible for millions across Africa.

Affinity Africa Secures $8M to Revolutionize Digital Banking in Ghana

Ghanaian fintech startup Affinity Africa has raised $8 million in seed funding to expand its reach and redefine banking for underserved communities.

The seed round was led by European VC firms Grazia Equity (Germany) and BACKED VC (London). Other investors include Enza Capital, Launch Africa, Renew Capital, Finca International, Attijariwafa Ventures, Impact Assets, joining Eldon Capital an early backer.

In a country where mobile money dominates

transactions, but traditional banks remain highly profitable, Affinity is positioning itself as a digital-first alternative offering inclusive and affordable financial services. Despite the growth of Ghana's banking sector, accessibility remains a challenge. Many banks rely on high fees, extensive paperwork, and lengthy onboarding processes, leaving millions without access to essential financial services.

According to the World Bank, over 60% of adults in Africa lack formal banking options, while fewer than 10% of businesses can secure credit. Affinity aims to bridge this gap by providing seamless digital banking solutions tailored to individuals and micro-enterprises. Since launching in October last year, Affinity has onboarded over 50,000 customers. Impressively, 65% of its users had never engaged with a formal banking institution before, and over 60% are women operating in the informal sector.

Affinity's banking model is built to support both individuals and micro-enterprises, recognizing the fluid relationship between personal and business finances in many African economies. The platform offers free savings and current accounts without transaction limits, while an automated system assesses users' transaction histories to generate credit scores.

After a few months of activity, customers become eligible for credit lines with monthly interest rates ranging from 3-7%. To date, Affinity has disbursed over $15 million in loans, with instant loans growing at a rate of 30% month-over-month and a non-performing loan (NPL) rate of just 3%.

With its new funding, Affinity Africa plans to scale its impact across Ghana, enhancing its digital banking services and increasing access to credit for small businesses and individuals who have historically been excluded from traditional banking.

Bento Africa Halts Operations Amidst Financial Troubles and CEO Exit

Bento Africa, the Nigerian HR technology startup embroiled in allegations of tax and pension irregularities, has temporarily ceased operations.

This decision comes on the heels of founder and CEO Ebun Okubanjo's resignation and the dismissal of the engineering team following a protest over unpaid January salaries.

"We will proceed to temporarily shut down operations to bring stability back to the company," the company's board stated in an email obtained by TechCabal.

They advised clients to refrain from funding their payroll positions during this period, expressing confidence in a swift return to normal operations.

The company's troubles escalated in January when the 10-person tech team was laid off after employees refused to work until their January salaries were paid.

Despite resigning on January 30th, Okubanjo informed employees on January 31st that salaries would be "strategically delayed" to prioritize client payroll, according to Google Chat messages reviewed by TechCabal. Employees subsequently decided to suspend operations until they received their due payments, citing financial difficulties.

These layoffs effectively paralyzed Bento's operations, particularly its payroll processing services. Several clients publicly shared their experience of not receiving employee payroll in the first week of February. Bento, which had previously automated salary disbursements, has been manually processing payments since 2024 due to issues with payment processors and reconciling underfunded accounts.

In a subsequent email to customers, Bento claimed to have paid staff their January salaries and "reactivated key staff to aid in bringing core functionality back online to clear outstanding payroll obligations triggered by our clients." However, they continue to face challenges in disbursing payments for some customers.

Bento has committed to refunding clients for whom they cannot process salaries by the close of business on Tuesday. The combination of payroll processing difficulties, the sudden CEO resignation, and allegations of financial discrepancies, including the failure to remit tax and pension payments, casts significant doubt on the company's future. Despite these challenges, Bento's board has assured customers of their belief in a prompt return to normalcy.

Raenest Secures $11 Million Series A Funding to Expand Cross-Border Financial Solutions

Raenest, a leading fintech company dedicated to optimizing cross-border money management for Africans, has announced the successful completion of its $11 million Series A funding round. The investment was led by QED Investors, with participation from Norrsken22, Ventures Platform, P1 Ventures, and Seedstars. This latest round brings Raenest's total venture funding to $14.3 million, marking a significant step forward in its mission to simplify international transactions for individuals and businesses across Africa.

For many Africans, receiving international payments, converting currencies, and managing cross-border transactions remain major hurdles. Raenest is tackling these challenges head-on by providing faster, smarter, and more affordable financial solutions tailored to freelancers, remote workers, startups, and growing businesses.

With this new investment, Raenest is set to expand its services and enhance its product offerings, ensuring seamless global transactions for its customers.

What's Next for Raenest?

The Series A funding will fuel Raenest's expansion into new markets, strengthening its presence in Nigeria and Kenya, while launching operations in the U.S. and Egypt. This strategic move will provide users with greater access to financial services and more opportunities for global transactions.

Additionally, Raenest is set to enhance its multi-currency wallets, global accounts, and payment processing tools, delivering even smoother, faster, and more reliable financial transactions.

To support its growth, the company is also expanding its team, attracting top-tier talent dedicated to refining customer experience and maintaining a robust, efficient platform.

Moreover, Raenest is forging partnerships with major financial institutions in the U.S., U.K., and beyond, further enhancing the security, speed, and efficiency of its transactions.

Africa's gig economy is expanding at an impressive rate of 20% annually, yet cross-border payment difficulties continue to hinder many freelancers and businesses. Raenest aims to eliminate these barriers by providing seamless payment solutions.

The global cross-border payments market is projected to reach $320 trillion by 2032, and Raenest is determined to ensure African professionals and businesses benefit from this financial evolution.

Since its launch in 2022, Raenest has achieved remarkable milestones:

- Over 700,000 individual customers onboarded
- More than $1 billion in payments processed
- 300+ businesses empowered, including industry leaders like MoniePoint, Helium Health, Fez Delivery, and Matta

Geegpay by Raenest: Revolutionizing Freelance Payments

Raenest has also gained traction through Geegpay by Raenest, a dedicated platform for freelancers, creators, remote workers, and independent contractors.

Geegpay enables users to receive payments in multiple currencies from anywhere in the world, with lower fees and faster transactions.

Looking Ahead

Raenest's latest funding milestone signals just the beginning of its journey. With a strong network of investors, partners, and customers, the company is on a mission to make earning, spending, and managing money across borders more accessible than ever.

As the company scales new heights, users can expect exciting innovations, expanded services, and stronger financial partnerships in the near future.

Nigeria's CBN Eliminates Free ATM Withdrawals For Customers Using Other Banks' Machines

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced a major revision to its Automated Teller Machine (ATM) transaction fees, scrapping the three free monthly withdrawals previously granted to customers using ATMs of other banks.

Outlined in a circular dated February 10, 2025, the directive applies to all banks and financial institutions in Nigeria and will take effect from March 1, 2025. The circular, signed by John S. Onojah, Acting Director of the Financial Policy and Regulation Department, was published on the apex bank's website on Tuesday.

Key Changes in ATM Fees:

• On-Us Transactions (Same Bank's ATM):Withdrawals from a customer's own bank's ATM remain free.

• Not-On-Us Transactions (Other Banks' ATMs):

• On-site ATMs (within bank premises):N100 per N20,000 withdrawal.

• Off-site ATMs (outside bank premises):N100 per N20,000 withdrawal plus a surcharge of up to N500.

• International Withdrawals: Charges will align with the amount imposed by the international acquirer.

The most notable change is the removal of the three free withdrawals per month for customers using other banks' ATMs, meaning every such transaction will now incur a fee.

CBN's Justification for the Review

The CBN cited rising operational costs and the need to improve ATM efficiency as the primary reasons for the adjustment. The bank believes this move will encourage the deployment of more ATMs across Nigeria while ensuring financial institutions charge appropriately for the service.

"This review is expected to accelerate the deployment of ATMs and ensure that appropriate charges are applied by financial institutions," the circular stated.

This decision aligns with the CBN's broader strategy to promote digital banking and reduce reliance on cash transactions, reinforcing its ongoing financial sector reforms.

SeamlessHR Secures $9 Million Series-A Extension to Drive Pan-African Expansion

SeamlessHR, a Nigerian HR tech company specializing in cloud-based human resources management solutions, has raised $9 million in a Series-A extension round, according to sources familiar with the development. The funding round saw participation from the Gates Foundation and Helios Digital Ventures, bringing the company's total capital raised to approximately $25 million since its inception in 2018.

This latest investment follows a $10 million Series A round in 2022 led by TLCom, Capria, Lateral Frontiers, Ingressive Capital, and Enza Capital, as well as earlier rounds, including a $150,000 pre-seed round in 2019 and an undisclosed seed round in 2020.

According to sources, the new funds will be directed toward SeamlessHR's expansion across Africa, potentially through acquisitions. The company reportedly explored acquiring an HR tech startup in Nigeria last year.

In a statement announcing the funding, Co-founder and CEO Emmanuel Okeleji shared the company's mission:

"Over the last 5 years, we have expanded across the continent to become the dominant HR and Payroll Software for medium to large enterprises in Africa. While we continue to accelerate our work to optimize workforce productivity in both the public and private sectors, much of our attention will also be on empowering hardworking Africans with responsible credit products that allow them to use their employment as collateral to improve their quality of life."

SeamlessHR's robust platform provides an end-to-end suite of HR solutions, including core HR functions, payroll, performance management, and recruitment. In 2024, the company expanded its product offerings with an e-procurement platform. Its customer base spans Nigeria, Ghana, and Tunisia, boasting prominent clients such as PwC, Sterling Bank, and Lagos Business School.

This funding marks a significant step in SeamlessHR's journey to solidify its position as Africa's leading HR tech provider while fostering innovation and workforce productivity across the continent.

Sava Partners With Access Bank to Launch SARB-Approved Digital Banking Platform for South African SMEs

The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) has granted regulatory approval to Sava to launch a digital banking platform tailored for local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Developed in collaboration with Access Bank, the platform aims to empower SMEs to gain full control of their financial operations and unlock new growth opportunities.

Sava has successfully completed industry testing, integrated with the National Payments System, and met all go-live conditions set by regulators. Additionally, it has obtained licenses and approvals from the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) and the National Credit Regulator (NCR). The platform has also undergone a recent audit by Deloitte, further solidifying its credibility.

"We are thrilled to have received the necessary regulatory approvals, enabling Sava to transform the SME banking landscape in South Africa," said Kolawole Olajide, CEO of Sava. "Our platform addresses the unique challenges faced by SMEs, serving diverse businesses from traditional sectors to emerging fintech players, empowering them to thrive in an increasingly digital world."

While an official launch date has not been announced, Sava's receipt of SARB's approval marks one of the final steps in preparing the platform for release.

In recent developments, Sava partnered with Mastercard to introduce its Payment Transaction System to businesses in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt. The system provides expense management tools such as digital accounts, rule-based card issuance (available in both physical and virtual cards), invoicing management, custom workflows powered by AI, and seamless accounting integrations. These features aim to enhance financial transparency, efficiency, and cost savings for SMEs.

Fincra Appoints Emmanuel Babalola as Chief Commercial and Growth Officer Amid Strategic Shift

Fincra, a leading B2B payments infrastructure provider, has appointed Emmanuel Babalola as its new Chief Commercial and Growth Officer. This leadership change comes as the company refines its strategy to expand its footprint in the cross-border payments sector.

Babz brings a wealth of experience in the African fintech industry, having played a pivotal role in Binance's expansion across over 40 markets in Africa and the Middle East. Under his leadership, Binance grew from a small user base to a platform facilitating billions of dollars in transaction volume, empowering millions of Africans.

As the co-founder and CEO of Bundle, he led the social payments app to become one of Nigeria's top startups, achieving over one million users. His commitment to financial inclusion also drove the development of Cashlink, a pioneering peer-to-peer network that redefined Stablecoin on-ramps, enabling participants to earn millions in commission.

Welcoming Babz to the team, Fincra's CEO, Wole Ayodele, described him as "one of the most respected leaders in African fintech."

"We are beyond excited to welcome Babz to Fincra. His track record of scaling platforms, driving innovation, and advocating for financial inclusion aligns perfectly with our mission to build seamless payment rails for Africa. His leadership will be instrumental as we continue to push boundaries and redefine payments across the continent."

Babz's appointment comes as Fincra undergoes a strategic transformation, refining its mission and vision to better serve Africa's financial ecosystem.

Speaking on his new role, Babz shared his enthusiasm:

"Africa's financial ecosystem is evolving rapidly, and Fincra is at the forefront of building the payment infrastructure powering the next generation of businesses and entrepreneurs. My mission has always been to enable freedom and prosperity for Africa through technology, and joining Fincra is an exciting opportunity to amplify this vision. I continue to dedicate my career to driving innovation, financial inclusion, and scalable growth across the continent. I'm thrilled to work with this incredible team to redefine payments and unlock new opportunities for businesses and individuals at scale."

He further emphasized his dedication to driving innovation, financial inclusion, and scalable growth across the continent, stating his excitement to collaborate with the Fincra team in unlocking new opportunities for businesses and individuals at scale.

Egyptian Startup Taager Secures $6.75M Pre-Series B Funding to Drive Growth in MENA's Social E-Commerce Market

Taager, the leading social e-commerce platform in the MENA region, has successfully closed a $6.75 million Pre-Series B funding round, led by Africa-focused tech growth fund Norrsken22. According to the company, the oversubscribed round will be instrumental in accelerating its expansion across the Middle East.

The funding saw participation from Endeavor Catalyst and Beltone VC, along with existing investors including 4DX Ventures, RAED Ventures, BECO Capital, and Breyer Capital.

Commenting on the milestone, Taager's Co-founder and CEO, Mohamed Elhorishy, stated:

"Taager has created its category, which means we have had to spend the past five years building social commerce fundamentals from the ground up. In the past two, we have refined the business, becoming more capital-efficient and scalable while improving our core unit economics. Now it's time to scale. We have laid the groundwork to enable us to grow five times within the next few years."

Over the past two decades, social e-commerce—the process of buying and selling products directly through social media—has evolved into a dominant retail force. This seamless blend of social interactions and online shopping is reshaping the consumer journey, with global social e-commerce revenue projected to hit $2.5 trillion by 2025.

In the MENA region alone, the industry has already surpassed $14 billion, accounting for over 30% of total e-commerce sales. Social e-commerce has succeeded in this region where traditional e-commerce has struggled, largely due to the trust-based relationships between social sellers and their customers, the cultural relevance of product selection and marketing, and the widespread adoption of social media as a sales channel.

Despite the massive market potential, many social sellers face challenges such as complex supply chains, limited capital, restricted geographic reach, and a lack of data-driven insights to scale profitably. Taager addresses these pain points by offering a comprehensive end-to-end platform that provides:

- Access to trending product catalogs
- Pricing and marketing optimization insights
- Logistics support
- Embedded financing for inventory purchases
- Multi-market payment collection solutions
- Business optimization tools

Currently, Taager serves over 45,000 online social sellers, with ambitions to become the central demand generation and data platform for social e-commerce across the MENA region. By leveraging proprietary data collected over years of operations, the company aims to enhance the profitability and efficiency of thousands of merchants while reaching millions of end customers.

With this latest funding, Taager is well-positioned to scale its impact and solidify its leadership in the rapidly expanding social e-commerce landscape.

AFDB President Akinwunmi Adesina Express Openness to Serve Nigeria And Africa After Tenure Ends

Akinwumi Adesina, the outgoing President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), has expressed his willingness to serve Nigeria and Africa in any capacity after his tenure at the regional bank ends.

Adesina, who has served as AfDB President since 2015, will complete his second term in the second quarter of this year. In a recent interview with Arise Television, the former Nigerian Minister of Agriculture emphasized his passion for transforming lives, stating, "Look, the only thing that makes me happy is nothing else than seeing the lives of people transform. That is what gives me satisfaction. As a result, I will be available to serve in any capacity, globally, in Africa, anywhere, including my own country."

When questioned about his future plans and the possibility of running for President of Nigeria, Adesina recounted a story about declining US citizenship, affirming his commitment to his Nigerian identity. "One of the things that I am grateful for as a Nigerian: many, many years ago, when I was in graduate school in Nigeria, even after that, I had an opportunity to obtain a United States visa. I was given a great visa, and I could have obtained US citizenship. But I rejected it, not because I don't like America. My kids are Americans; they were born there…This passport is a Nigerian passport, a green passport, that I cannot and will never trade it for anything." He

acknowledged the challenges that come with holding a Nigerian passport but insisted that respect is earned, not begged for.

Adesina emphasized his belief in divine providence and his role as an instrument of God. While referencing Davido's song "Unavailable," he playfully suggested a modification for his own situation, saying, "But in the case where it comes to service of any kind, I would ask Davido to change that song, 'I am available, they will see me.' I will. I will be available to serve in God's hands for anything that God has in store for my life."

GTBank Eliminates PoS Processing Fees to Support Business Growth

Nigeria's leading Bank that offers Online/ Internet Banking, Retail Banking, and Corporate Banking, Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank), has unveiled a new initiative aimed at reducing transaction costs for businesses by removing processing fees on all its POS terminals. This move, set to take effect from February 2025, will exempt merchants from Merchant Service Charges (MSC), allowing them to receive payments without incurring additional fees.

Announcing the initiative, GTBank emphasized its dedication to fostering a business-friendly financial environment. The bank's Managing Director, Miriam Olusanya, highlighted that the initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance value for businesses and simplify digital payments.

"At GTBank, we continuously seek ways to enrich our financial ecosystem. By eliminating POS processing fees, we are ensuring that businesses maximize the full value of every transaction while offering a seamless and efficient payment experience," Olusanya stated.

The initiative is particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), allowing them to cut operational expenses and focus on business expansion. GTBank reiterated that this effort aligns with its mission to provide innovative financial solutions that drive economic growth and efficiency.

This announcement comes amid recent changes in Nigeria's banking landscape, including new Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) regulations on ATM withdrawal charges. While ATM fees are being restructured, GTBank's latest move provides financial relief for merchants, reinforcing its commitment to supporting businesses with cost-effective payment solutions.

Tony Elumelu Foundation and UAE's Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation Join Forces to Empower 1,000 African Entrepreneurs

The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), a leading advocate for African entrepreneurship, has announced a landmark $6 million partnership with the UAE Office of Development Affairs and the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, an affiliate of Erth Zayed. This collaboration aims to equip 1,000 African entrepreneurs with essential business training, mentorship, networking opportunities, and a non-repayable $5,000 seed grant.

The agreement, signed during the World Governments Summit by Tony O. Elumelu, Founder of TEF, and His Excellency Mohamed Haji Al Khoori, Director General of the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al

Nahyan Foundation, underscores a shared vision of fostering economic growth and self-sufficiency across Africa. By leveraging TEF's extensive experience in supporting startups through its flagship Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme, this partnership seeks to create a new wave of sustainable enterprises that will contribute to job creation and economic transformation.

Speaking at the event, Tony Elumelu emphasized the importance of investing in African entrepreneurs:

"Empowering entrepreneurs is not just a moral imperative, but also a strategic investment in Africa's future. By providing the necessary access to capital, mentorship, and resources, we are unlocking the potential of Africa's entrepreneurial talent, eradicating poverty, driving self-reliance, and paving the way for inclusive growth and prosperity on the continent.

This partnership between the Tony Elumelu Foundation and the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation not only reflects our shared vision of empowering Africa's next generation of business leaders, but will also create a ripple effect of economic transformation across the continent."

His Excellency Mohamed Haji Al Khoori echoed this sentiment, stating:

"Erth Zayed's mission is to foster impactful partnerships that drive humanitarian and developmental progress. Supporting young African entrepreneurs aligns with our goal of strengthening economies and building sustainable businesses that uplift communities"

Since its inception in 2015, the Tony Elumelu Foundation has trained over 2.5 million young Africans through its digital hub, TEFConnect, and disbursed more than $100 million in direct funding to over 21,000 entrepreneurs. These efforts have led to the creation of over 1.5 million jobs and lifted millions out of poverty. The foundation has also partnered with global organizations such as the European Union, UNDP, ICRC, and the IKEA Foundation.

This new alliance with the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation marks the first collaboration between TEF and a Gulf-based philanthropy, further strengthening the economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties between Africa and the GCC region. By investing in Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs, the partnership aims to drive long-term economic progress and build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem across the continent.

MoneyHash Secures $5.2M Pre-Series A to Expand Payment Orchestration in Emerging Markets

MoneyHash, a payment orchestration platform specializing in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), has announced a successful $5.2 million pre-Series A funding round led by Flourish Ventures.

The funding also saw participation from Vision Ventures, Arab Bank's Xelerate, and Emurgo Kepple Ventures, alongside industry figures such as Marqeta founder Jason Gardner. Existing investors COTU, RZM Investment, and GitHub founder Tom Preston-Werner also reinvested.

Since its launch in 2021, MoneyHash has aimed to simplify payment infrastructure for businesses operating across multiple markets. Payment landscapes in emerging economies are highly fragmented, with varying regulations, payment methods, and service providers. These challenges often lead to high failure rates, transaction drop-offs, and slower market expansion.

"In emerging markets, payment infrastructure remains significantly underdeveloped, with failure rates three times the global average and fraud rates and cart abandonment over 20% higher than developed markets," said Nader Abdelrazik, co-founder and CEO of MoneyHash.

To address these issues, MoneyHash provides an all-in-one payment API that streamlines transactions, increases success rates, and improves overall payment performance. The company offers a pay-in and pay-out API, a customizable checkout widget, and smart transaction routing across multiple providers. Currently, its platform integrates with over 300 payment service providers and methods across 100+ markets.

MoneyHash's COO, Maram Alikaj, emphasized the platform's tailored approach to emerging markets. "Rather than letting merchants struggle with fragmented solutions, we provide a unified suite that elevates all payment performance metrics."

The company has shown strong growth, particularly among large enterprises. Key clients include fintech unicorn Tamara, cloud kitchen operator Kitopi, and global e-commerce player Brands for Less. Large enterprise clients now make up over 35% of MoneyHash's portfolio, marking a threefold expansion in 2024. This growth has fueled a 4x increase in processing volume within the same year.

Flourish Ventures' venture partner Ameya Upadhyay, who will be joining the MoneyHash Board of Directors, praised the company's impact. "MoneyHash has built a must-have product for enterprises that delivers better payment performance and higher margins from day one. The team's deep payment expertise and customer focus position them to emerge as a leader across emerging markets, starting with MEA."

With this latest round, MoneyHash has now raised a total of $12.7 million in funding, reinforcing its commitment to future-proofing payments and enabling seamless financial transactions across emerging markets.

Mastercard Introduces AI-Powered TRACE to Strengthen Fraud Detection in Asia Pacific

Mastercard has unveiled TRACE (Trace Financial Crime) in the Asia Pacific region, an advanced artificial intelligence-driven solution designed to combat financial crime within real-time payment networks.

By leveraging vast transaction data from multiple financial institutions, TRACE provides a holistic, network-wide approach to identifying and preventing illicit fund movements, surpassing the limitations of individual banks' internal monitoring systems.

The rapid adoption of Real-Time Payments (RTP) has revolutionized digital transactions, enabling near-instant fund transfers across financial institutions. However, this speed has also created opportunities for fraudsters and money launderers who exploit the system by quickly moving funds across multiple accounts. Many criminals use unsuspecting individuals' bank accounts—often acquired through scams—to launder money, making detection more challenging.

Traditionally, financial institutions have relied on isolated fraud detection methods, which often involve manual reviews or in-house AI solutions that lack the ability to track patterns across an entire payment network. TRACE addresses this gap by providing a real-time, AI-powered view of suspicious transactions, proactively flagging fraudulent activity and identifying money mule accounts before they can be used for illicit purposes.

The first rollout of TRACE in Asia Pacific is in the Philippines, in collaboration with BancNet, the operator of the country's real-time payment system, InstaPay. With 36 domestic banks already onboarded, TRACE is enhancing fraud prevention efforts by helping financial institutions trace illicit fund flows and comply with the Philippines' new Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act (AFASA).

"TRACE represents a major leap forward in financial crime prevention," said Matthew Driver, Executive Vice President, Services, Asia Pacific, Mastercard. "By providing a network-level perspective, it enables financial institutions to take a proactive approach in combating fraud, ensuring the security of digital transactions and strengthening trust in the financial system."

BancNet CEO Emmie Reyes emphasized the importance of intelligence-driven fraud prevention, stating, "As scams become more sophisticated, financial institutions need advanced tools to stay ahead. TRACE allows us and our network participants to detect and respond to fraud faster, making real-time payment systems safer for everyone."

TRACE is designed to be network-agnostic, meaning it can be seamlessly integrated into various payment infrastructures across different countries. Its success in the United Kingdom, where it has been in use since 2018, demonstrates its effectiveness. Today, TRACE supports 21 financial institutions in the UK, covering 90% of the Faster Payments Service network, and continues to identify and disrupt fraudulent activity on a large scale.

With its expansion into Asia Pacific, TRACE is set to play a crucial role in protecting consumers, financial institutions, and regulatory bodies from the evolving threats of financial crime, ensuring the continued growth and security of real-time payment ecosystems.

Unlocking Nigeria's Fintech Potential: Kuda MD Calls for Regulatory Reforms and Infrastructure Investment

Nigeria's fintech industry is experiencing rapid growth, attracting $2 billion in investments in 2024, but key challenges threaten its sustainability. Speaking at a Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) event, Musty Mustapha, Managing Director of Kuda Microfinance Bank, emphasized the need for a unified regulatory framework and increased infrastructure investment to accelerate the sector's development.

While fintech has played a significant role in advancing financial inclusion—pushing Nigeria's inclusion rate to 64% in 2023—regulatory fragmentation remains a major hurdle. Mustapha highlighted that fintech firms navigate a complex

landscape of oversight bodies, including the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and NDIC, leading to compliance bottlenecks.

He stressed that harmonizing regulations would foster innovation and attract further investment while ensuring fintech companies have equal access to critical financial infrastructure. Without clear and streamlined policies, the industry risks stagnation despite its potential.

Cybersecurity Risks Undermining Trust

Nigeria ranks fifth globally in cybercrime, with rising threats such as phishing attacks, insider fraud, and financial system breaches eroding trust in digital payments. Mustapha urged industry players to:

- Strengthen cybersecurity frameworks.
- Adopt multi-factor authentication.
- Collaborate with global cybersecurity firms and regulators.

By enhancing security measures, fintech companies can boost consumer confidence and drive greater adoption of digital financial services.

Bridging the Financial Inclusion Gap

Despite fintech's expansion, millions of Nigerians—especially in rural areas—remain financially excluded. Mustapha cited low smartphone penetration and poor digital literacy as key barriers to adoption. He recommended:

- Developing more inclusive financial products, including USSD and offline payment solutionsfor cash-dependent populations.
- Launching nationwide financial literacy campaigns to build trust in digital banking.

These measures, he noted, would help fintech solutions reach underserved communities and accelerate financial inclusion.

Tackling the Fintech Talent Shortage

Nigeria's tech workforce is among the fastest-growing in Africa, but brain drain is slowing local fintech innovation. Many skilled professionals in areas like blockchain, AI, and cybersecurity are migrating abroad for better opportunities.

To address this, Mustapha proposed:

- Partnerships between fintech firms and universities to develop specialized talent.

• Exchange programs with international companies to enhance skills and retain top professionals.

By investing in local talent, Nigeria's fintech sector can maintain its competitive edge and continue driving innovation.

The Need for Infrastructure Investment

Fintech's expansion is also being hindered by poor broadband access, erratic power supply, and inadequate payment networks, particularly in underserved regions. Mustapha called for public-private partnerships (PPPs) to improve digital infrastructure, ensuring fintech solutions can scale effectively.

Positioning Nigeria as a Fintech Powerhouse

With the right reforms and investments, Nigeria's fintech sector can solidify its leadership in Africa's digital economy. Mustapha's call for regulatory harmonization, stronger cybersecurity, financial inclusion efforts, talent development, and infrastructure investment highlights the key priorities needed to unlock the industry's full potential.

Africa's Fintech Boom: Revenue Set to Reach $47 Billion Amid Expanding Investment Opportunities

Africa's fintech sector has witnessed a remarkable transformation, driven by rapid innovation and expansion. A recent McKinsey report projects that fintech revenues in Africa could surge to $47 billion by 2028, a five-fold increase from $10 billion in 2023.

However, achieving this milestone depends on the continent reaching 15% fintech penetration, up from the current 5-6%—a level significantly lower than developed markets like the United States and Germany (6-16%).

Fintech Funding Decline and Market Adjustments

Despite its potential, macroeconomic headwinds and funding constraints have slowed fintech growth. According to McKinsey analysts Max Flötotto, Mayowa Kuyoro, and Carolyne Gathinji, fintech investments in Africa plummeted by 37% from 2022 to 2023. This downward trend persisted in 2024, with funding in the first half of the year falling 51% year-on-year, from $864 million to $419 million.

This funding crunch has forced fintech firms to downsize, merge, or shut down. Debt financing, however, has surged, growing by 182% CAGR between 2022 and 2023, signaling investor confidence in more mature fintechs.

Shifting Investment Trends

As Africa's fintech ecosystem matures, investments have moved towards lending (personal and SME-focused) and specialized payments (merchant and cross-border transactions), which attracted 70% of funding in 2022-2023. Meanwhile, digital wallets and blockchain/cryptocurrency ventures, once key investment targets, saw a sharp decline in funding in 2023.

Challenges Facing African Fintechs

Beyond funding issues, regulatory complexities and talent shortages present additional hurdles.

- Regulatory Complexity: Africa's fintech landscape is fragmented, with varying policies across different countries, creating compliance challenges.
- Talent Competition: 38% of African developers now work for companies headquartered outside Africa, while 80% of fintech executives report difficulties in hiring skilled tech professionals.

Key Trends Shaping Africa's Fintech Future

The McKinsey report highlights six critical factors influencing the future of African fintech:

1. New partnerships and collaborations to drive innovation.
2. Market consolidation through mergers and acquisitions.
3. Accelerated product innovation in financial services.
4. Fintech integration into broader industriessuch as e-commerce and insurance.
5. Regional variations in fintech adoption and regulation.
6. A complex regulatory environment requiring strategic navigation.

Unlocking Future Growth Opportunities

Despite current challenges, Africa's fintech sector still holds significant untapped opportunities. The McKinsey analysts emphasize that fintechs must prioritize profitability, scale, and specialization to thrive in a tightening economic climate.

Key growth areas include:

- Cross-border payments to enhance trade.
- Asset-backed lending to support businesses.
- SME-focused financial products to drive economic inclusion.
- Embedded finance solutions across various industries.

Additionally, emerging fintech markets in Angola, Algeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are showing promising signs of growth, presenting new frontiers for fintech expansion.

Conclusion

Africa's fintech industry has immense potential, but sustained growth will depend on regulatory clarity, investment shifts, and talent development. By adapting to market dynamics and embracing innovation, fintech firms can position themselves for long-term success in Africa's evolving digital economy.

Baobab Network Invests in Nigerian Fintech CreditChek to Boost Cross-Border Credit Access

Baobab Network, a pioneering early-stage investor and accelerator, has launched its 2025 investment cycle by investing an undisclosed amount in CreditChek, a Nigeria-base credit assessment platform that verifies the creditworthiness of African consumers.

Announcing the investment in the fintech startup, Baobab wrote,

"The founding team combines deep fintech and technical expertise. CEO Kingsley Ibe brings multiple years of fintech experience, having previously built and scaled MicroMoni. CTO Lionel Orishane contributes over a decade of experience in systems architecture and cybersecurity.

"Together, they've developed technology that reduces credit assessment integration times from 9 months to just 72 hours, making it faster and more affordable for financial institutions to serve immigrant customers. We've seen how similar solutions, such as Nova Credit have successfully addressed cross-border credit challenges in the U.S., and we believe CreditChek is poised to tackle this critical gap for Africa's projected 147M emigrants by 2050."

Based in Nigeria, CreditChek empowers African immigrants to access financial services by enabling banks and lenders to assess creditworthiness across borders in under 5 minutes. The platform tackles a significant challenge: 70% of Africa's 40 million annual emigrants are excluded from basic financial services because their credit histories don't transfer between countries.

Notably, CreditChek uses structured, user-permissioned data from multiple sources to create powerful Identity, credit and verification services that empower fintechs, banks, microfinance institutions, retail businesses and mobile money operators to build better financial products for the underserved.

By connecting with major African credit bureaus, leveraging open banking for income assessments, and integrating with government databases for identity verification, CreditChek provides a comprehensive solution to bridge this gap. The startup is on a mission to bridge the trust gap between credit-worthy consumers and credit businesses in Africa.

Investors Activity in African Startups Declined in 2024, Overall Deal Activity Slowed Down

Investors activity in African startups is reported to have witnessed a significant decline in 2024, with fewer investors participating and overall deal activity slowing down.

The report by Africa: The Big Deal, revealed that only 520+ investors participated in at least one $100k+ deal in 2024, a significant drop from 610+ in 2023 and a drastic decline from 1,000+ in 2022. 69% of investors participated in only one $100k+ deal in 2024, the highest percentage in recent years.

Notably, the number of investors participating in more than ten $100k+ deals plummeted to just 8 in 2024. Focusing on the most active investors, we observe a similar trend: while there had been up to 28 investors participating in more than ten $100k+ deals on the continent in 2022, this number has fallen to 8 in 2024, in line with 2023.

According to the report, the most active investors last year saw 54 Collective leading the pack with 26 deals. Techstars, Launch Africa, and Catalyst Fund maintained their presence among top investors but with reduced deal activity. Digital Africa, Baobab Network, Renew Capital, and EdVentures increased their activity. Y Combinator, 500 Global, and Axian Group also made significant contributions.

While investor activity has slowed down in 2024, it's crucial to avoid overstating the decline. A vibrant community of investors continues to support African startups, and the future of the ecosystem remains promising.

Ecobank Nigeria Partners with CrediCorp to Offer Affordable Loans for Nigerians

Ecobank Nigeria has partnered with the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation (CrediCorp) to provide affordable and easily accessible loans to customers. This initiative aims to help Nigerians cover essential expenses such as school fees, rent, medical bills, car purchases or repairs, maintenance, and asset acquisition.

The loan program is available to civil servants and private-sector employees who receive their salaries through Ecobank. New customers can also qualify if their employers agree to route future salary payments through Ecobank. Beginning this January, the program offers flexible repayment plans and a streamlined loan application process.

CrediCorp, a Development Finance Institution (DFI) established by the Federal Government, focuses on improving access to credit for Nigerian workers. Under the partnership, CrediCorp will provide funding for Ecobank to lend to eligible customers. The agreement includes personal loans and financing options for items such as solar systems, home appliances, phones, laptops, and vehicle conversions to compressed natural gas (CNG).

Adeola Ogunyemi, Head of Consumer Banking at Ecobank Nigeria, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership, highlighting its role in expanding financial access for salary earners in both the public and private sectors. She stated:

"This collaboration is an excellent opportunity to serve our customers, and we believe it will improve the quality of life for many Nigerians. Eligible customers can use the loans to purchase electronics, solar systems, or CNG vehicle conversions, as well as for other essential expenses like school fees, rent, upkeep, medical bills, and car maintenance."

The loan program features low-interest rates, a two-year repayment period, and a fixed monthly payment plan. Borrowers will pay the same monthly amount—covering both the principal and interest—throughout the loan term, providing stability regardless of economic conditions.

This initiative underscores Ecobank's commitment to empowering Nigerians with financial solutions tailored to their needs while enhancing their quality of life.

How the Open Banking Registry Could Transform Banking Network Reliability in Nigeria

As the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) continues to make significant progress in the implementation of Open Banking Framework and the introduction of the Open Banking Registry (OBR), a critical question remains unanswered: "will the OBR push Nigerian banks to upgrade their often underperforming network infrastructure?"

The OBR will be designed to foster transparency, trust, and seamless collaboration between banks, fintechs, and other financial institutions, representing a pivotal step forward for the country's financial ecosystem. Yet, the OBR's success is largely dependent on stable and reliable network infrastructure which is almost non-existent in most of the major financial institutions in the country. Several issues such as frequent downtimes and inconsistent API performance, pose significant risks to the consumer authorization process for seamless data sharing and payment initiation required for open banking to thrive. Addressing these challenges is not just a necessity for compliance but a strategic opportunity to enhance the resilience and reliability of Nigeria's banking infrastructure.

Understanding the Open Banking Registry

The Open Banking Registry (OBR) is a centralized repository that houses information on all participants in Nigeria's open banking ecosystem, including banks, fintechs, and other financial institutions. It acts as a regulatory gateway, ensuring that only accredited entities can securely access and share data as part of the open banking framework in the country.

This registry will promote trust and security while establishing minimum standards for operational efficiency and interoperability with the ecosystem.

For Nigerian banks, the OBR represents both an opportunity and a challenge. While it enables innovation and broader financial inclusion, it could also require banks to upgrade their infrastructure to meet the registry's technical and operational demands.

Persistent Network Challenges in Nigerian Banking

One of the critical hurdles for Nigerian banks is the ongoing network instability that has plagued the sector for years. Not a day goes by without receiving a notification from one or more of my bank telling me about some network downtimes. All over social media, particularly X, Nigerians are also "calling out" these banks for one reason or another. Issues around network challenges can result in one or more of the following:

- Frequent Downtimes: Many banks experience frequent and repeated service outages, disrupting customer transactions and third-party integrations.
- Inconsistent API Performance: Open banking relies heavily on robust and reliable APIs for real-time data exchange, which could be undermined by poor network infrastructure.
- Limited Scalability: With the expected influx of fintech partnerships and increased transaction volumes, banks will be expected to scale their infrastructure to handle demand without compromising performance.
- Data Security Risks: Substandard infrastructure can expose banks to data breaches, undermining customer trust in the open banking framework.

Infrastructure as a Competitive Necessity

For open banking to deliver its full potential—fostering innovation, financial inclusion, and enhanced customer experiences—banks must ensure their systems can meet the requirements of the registry. This includes:

1. **API Performance:** One major challenge lies in the varied authentication processes employed by banks across Nigeria. While some banks use two-factor authentication (2FA), others rely on multi-factor authentication (MFA). This inconsistency in authentication experiences introduces significant friction for third-party providers (TPPs) and, by extension, the customers they serve.

That said, some banks are leading the way in delivering smoother authentication experiences. Wema Bank, GTBank, and Zenith Bank stand out for their relatively seamless processes. However, Access Bank's MFA process, though secure, has proven to be cumbersome, often resulting in frustration for TPPs. It's worth emphasizing that API performance starts with authentication. If authentication is overly complex or unreliable, it sets a poor tone for subsequent integrations and user interactions. To unlock the full promise of open banking, banks must not only adopt robust security measures but also ensure these measures are efficient and user-friendly. By standardizing and improving authentication processes, banks can create a more conducive environment for collaboration, innovation, and customer satisfaction—cornerstones of a successful open banking framework.

2. **Data Security:** Ensuring secure transmission of sensitive financial data requires advanced encryption and infrastructure upgrades to meet regulatory standards.

3. **Scalability:** The influx of third-party applications and increased API calls will require banks to adopt scalable cloud-based infrastructure.

Banks that fail to invest in these areas risk being left behind in an increasingly competitive landscape. The ability to provide uninterrupted, real-time services will become a differentiator for customer retention and partnership opportunities.

The Opportunity Ahead

While the challenges are significant, the Open Banking Registry presents a transformative opportunity for Nigerian banks. The Open Banking Registry is a bold step toward a more integrated and inclusive financial ecosystem in Nigeria. However, for it to succeed, the persistent network issues facing Nigerian banks must be addressed. By encouraging higher service standards and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the CBN can ensure that the OBR not only facilitates innovation but also strengthens the resilience of the country's banking infrastructure.

For Nigerian banks, the message is clear: the time to invest in network reliability and scalability is now. Those that rise to the challenge will emerge as leaders in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.

Klasha launches instant pay to China Service For Fast Cross-Border Payments Between China And Africa

Klasha, a leading global cross-border payment company, is thrilled to announce the launch of its latest product, Pay to China designed to send money to China from Africa instantly.

With the Pay to China feature, African businesses and individuals can make instant CNY payments directly to Chinese bank accounts, Alipay wallets, WeChat wallets, and bank cards using their local African currencies. This service is accessible via Klasha's dashboard and API, ensuring a seamless and flexible user experience for businesses.

Speaking on the launch, Klasha's CEO Jess Anuna shared:

"China is Africa's largest trading partner, yet businesses have historically faced complex processes when transacting with Chinese suppliers and partners. Our Pay to China feature will provide a fast, cheap and secure way to complete payments to China without delays and hidden fees."

The Pay to China solution has an instant processing time of 5–10 minutes, making it one of the fastest payout services available for businesses and individuals looking to send money to China. This product is especially valuable for B2B transactions, where companies must pay suppliers and partners quickly to keep supply chains running smoothly.

Klasha's Pay to China eliminates common issues such as delayed payments and high fees for African businesses, particularly in the e-commerce, manufacturing, and retail sectors, where China plays a vital role as a trade partner. Unlike traditional payment methods that can take days to process, Pay to China ensures that money reaches China quickly.

With Africa-China trade relations growing stronger by the year, Klasha's Pay to China solution aims to become the preferred payment solution for anyone transacting between the two regions. By making CNY payments fast, reliable, and affordable, Klasha is taking another significant step toward simplifying cross-border payments for African businesses and opening new growth opportunities.

South African Insurtech Startup Naked Secures $38 Million in Series B2 Funding

South African insurtech startup, Naked, has raised $38 million in a Series B2 funding round to further revolutionize the insurance industry with its technology-driven solutions. According to a statement shared with Technext, this funding will enable Naked to enhance its focus on convenience, transparency, and cost-effectiveness.

The funding round was led by global impact investor BlueOrchard, with increased support from existing investors, including Hollard, Yellowwoods, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Germany's development finance institution (DEG).

Launched in 2018 by actuaries Alex Thomson, Sumarié Greybe, and Ernest North, Naked leverages artificial intelligence (AI) and automation to deliver a fully digital insurance platform. Its app allows users to obtain insurance quotes in less than 90 seconds, purchase policies online, submit claims, or even pause accident coverage, all without requiring phone calls or human intervention. As the only platform in South Africa that sells 100% of its car, home, and single-item insurance policies online, Naked has achieved rapid scalability while enhancing risk selection and pricing for profitable unit economics.

In addition to its technological edge, Naked stands out with its innovative business model, the "Naked Difference." Unlike traditional insurers, Naked takes a fixed percentage of premiums and donates any surplus from unclaimed funds to causes chosen by its customers. This unique approach removes conflicts of interest in claims processing, ensuring fair and prompt handling of valid claims while building trust among its customers.

The newly secured funding will support Naked's growth by increasing its investment in AI and automation, expanding its product offerings and market reach, and boosting its advertising efforts to attract a broader customer base. Furthermore, the funds will help Naked meet regulatory capital requirements, ensuring compliance as the business continues to grow and evolve.

With this fresh capital, Naked is well-positioned to solidify its role as a modern, purpose-driven alternative in the insurance sector, offering South Africans a transparent, efficient, and customer-focused experience.

Visa Invests in Nigerian Fintech Company Moniepoint, to Boost SME Growth in Africa

Moniepoint, a leading Nigerian business payments and banking services platform, has secured an investment from global payments giant Visa. This strategic investment underscores Visa's commitment to advancing financial inclusion and fostering the growth of SMEs across the African continent.

Founded in 2015, Moniepoint has emerged as a dominant force in the Nigerian fintech market, serving a vast network of SMEs with an integrated suite of financial services. These include digital payments, bank accounts, credit facilities, and business management tools. The platform boasts impressive scale, processing over 1 billion transactions monthly and facilitating over $22 billion in total payments volume, empowering businesses to digitize their operations and thrive in Africa's dynamic economic landscape.

This investment from Visa will provide crucial support for Moniepoint's ambitious growth plans, enabling the company to accelerate its expansion across the African continent. Moniepoint's proven track record of profitability and scalability, coupled with its strong operational and financial performance, has solidified its position as a transformative player in the African fintech ecosystem.

As Africa's fintech landscape continues to evolve at a rapid pace, driven by a vibrant ecosystem and a strong focus on bridging the financial inclusion gap, Visa has been a key player in this transformation. By investing in and supporting innovative fintech startups like Moniepoint, Visa demonstrates its commitment to leveraging its expertise and resources to drive the growth of the African fintech sector.

Tosin Eniolorunda, Founder and Group CEO of Moniepoint Inc., said:

"We are thrilled to announce Visa's investment in Moniepoint. Visa's backing is a strong endorsement of our vision to digitize and support African businesses at scale. Together, we aim to deepen financial inclusion, enabling SMEs to access the tools and resources they need to thrive in an increasingly digital economy. Given that about 83% of employment across Africa is in the informal economy, we are very keen to widen access and participation in the formal financial system and drive economic growth across Africa.

"Visa's expertise in global payments and Moniepoint's proven ability to serve African businesses make this partnership an exciting opportunity in shaping the continent's economic future even as we pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic financial ecosystem. We are delighted in joining forces with Visa to enhance the digital payment infrastructure, expanding financial services, and fostering innovation in Africa."

Andrew Torre, Regional President, Central and

Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa at Visa, added:

"Moniepoint has built an impressive platform that directly addresses the needs of Africa's SMEs, a critical segment in enabling economic development. By making financial services and digital payments more accessible and efficient, Moniepoint is helping transform how businesses operate in Nigeria and beyond. We are excited to support their next phase of growth and innovation."

"Visa's investment in Moniepoint is the latest example of our long-standing commitment to advancing digital economies in Africa. We will enable even the smallest businesses to thrive through innovative payment and software solutions that allow SMEs to scale and open new revenue opportunities, while streamlining their operations."

Moniepoint has experienced exponential growth since its founding in 2015, with revenues increasing by over 150% CAGR in recent years. The company's efforts to expand access to financial services align closely with Visa's mission of enabling individuals and businesses to thrive in the global economy.

This partnership combines Moniepoint's local expertise and innovative business model with Visa's global resources and capabilities. Together, Moniepoint and Visa aim to accelerate the digital transformation of African SMEs, driving financial inclusion and long-term economic prosperity.

Fintech Transactions Propel Nigeria's Government EMTL Revenue to A Record N31.2 Billion in December 2024

The expansion of the Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL) to transactions on fintech platforms has yielded significant results for the Nigerian government.

In December 2024, revenue from this source surged to a record high of N31.2 billion, marking a substantial 107% increase compared to the N15.046 billion collected in November.

This substantial revenue boost was evident in the December revenue-sharing data released by the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC). The three tiers of government – Federal, State, and Local – collectively shared a total of N1.424 trillion, comprising statutory revenue, Value Added Tax (VAT), and the newly expanded EMTL collections.

The implementation of the EMTL on fintech platforms, including prominent players like PalmPay, OPay, and Moniepoint, commenced on December 1, 2024. This involved a N50 charge on transfers received from N10,000 and above, marking the end of an era of free transactions for many users on these platforms. While fintechs do not directly benefit from this charge, with all proceeds directed to the Federal Government, the move underscores the government's efforts to bolster its revenue streams.

<u>Key Points on EMTL:</u>

* What it is: A one-time charge of N50 on electronic money transfers or receipts within Nigeria.
* Exemptions:
  * Transfers under N10,000
  * Money paid into one's own account
  * Transfers between accounts of the same owner within the same bank
* Revenue Sharing:
  * Federal Government: 15%
  * State Governments: 50%
  * Local Governments: 35%

The introduction of the EMTL in the Finance Act 2020 aimed to promote the growth of electronic funds transfers while generating additional revenue for the government. The December figures demonstrate the effectiveness of this policy in achieving its objectives.

B2B Payments Startup Waza, Launches Lync To Help Transform African Businesses International Transactions

Waza, a Y Combinator-backed B2B payments startup, has launched Lync, a groundbreaking banking product designed to transform international transactions for African businesses.

This innovative solution, powered by a recent $8 million funding round, aims to empower enterprises across the continent to navigate global markets with greater ease and efficiency. Lync offers a comprehensive suite of banking features, enabling businesses to seamlessly receive payments and make transactions in over 100 countries.

The platform supports a wide range of currencies, including USD, EUR, GBP, NGN, and stablecoins, providing businesses with the flexibility to conduct international trade in their preferred currencies.

Unlike traditional wallet-based systems, Lync processes transactions under the company's name, granting businesses full banking access and simplifying payment reconciliation. By leveraging a diverse range of payment rails, including ACH, Fedwire, SWIFT, and local payment rails like the UK's Faster Payments. With Lync, empowers African businesses can now seamlessly integrate international trade into their operations, accessing global markets with greater confidence and efficiency. This innovative solution represents a significant step forward in facilitating cross-border commerce for African enterprises and unlocking new opportunities for growth and economic development across the continent.

PalmPay Leverages Zone's Blockchain Network to Enhance Payment Capabilities

Zone, Africa's fastest-growing payment infrastructure company, has announced that PalmPay, one of Africa's leading fintech platforms for payment, has joined its decentralized payment network.

This strategic move aims to fortify PalmPay's existing payment infrastructure and provide a superior experience for its 35 million users.

Speaking on this partnership with Palmpay, Obi Emetarom, Co-founder and CEO of Zone said, "We are thrilled to welcome PalmPay to our payment

network. Their hugely successful approach of becoming a market leader by delivering superior payment experiences aligns nicely with Zone's focus on providing a reliable, and frictionless yet secure and compliant payment network. With our infrastructure, PalmPay is set to boost its value proposition to its customers and expand its lead in the market."

By joining Zone's regulated blockchain network, PalmPay gains several key advantages:

- **Direct Transaction Routing: Zone's network** eliminates the need for intermediaries, eliminating unnecessary points of failure and allowing for more reliable and secure transaction processing. This ensures that PalmPay's users experience uninterrupted transactions along with a seamless payment journey that meets the demands of a rapidly growing customer base.
- **End-to-End Transparency:** Zone's infrastructure offers full transaction visibility, supporting automatic reconciliation that effectively eliminates chargebacks and protects against chargeback fraud. For PalmPay, this means a more secure and trustworthy system for its users, who can transact with greater confidence knowing that their payments are protected from potential disputes and fraud.
- **Same-Day Settlement: With Zone's same-day** settlement capabilities, PalmPay can deliver quicker value from successful transactions directly to its customers. This expedited settlement process unlocks liquidity, as customers benefit from faster access to their funds, solidifying PalmPay's reputation for efficiency and reliability.

In addition, PalmPay will remain fully compliant with regulatory guidelines for POS transaction processing. This compliance is enabled by the recent partnership between Zone and NIBSS to perform PTSA functions using blockchain technology and reinforced by CBN's endorsement of the new arrangement —. With this foundation, PalmPay strengthens its commitment to reliable and frictionless payments while remaining fully compliant with all relevant regulations.

This move is a natural progression in PalmPay's journey as it continues to solidify its leadership and prepare for an ambitious phase of growth. By integrating with Zone's network, PalmPay gains a powerful competitive edge, positioning itself at the forefront of the industry and setting the stage for the next wave of expansion.

Chika Nwosu, Managing Director at PalmPay Nigeria, said: "Our partnership with Zone marks an exciting step in our mission to deliver exceptional financial solutions. By leveraging Zone's blockchain-powered infrastructure, we're reinforcing the reliability and speed of our transactions success rate of 99.5%, allowing us to better serve our customers and set a new standard in digital finance."

Five Major Kenyan Associations Join Forces to Form A Groundbreaking Body, The FinTech Alliance

In a landmark development for the Kenyan financial technology (fintech) sector, five major representative associations have joined forces to form an umbrella alliance dedicated to driving the growth and development of the industry.

The new entity, named The FinTech Alliance (TFA) brings together the Association of Fintechs in Kenya (AFIK), Fintech Association of Kenya (FINTAK), Digital Financial Services Association of Kenya (DFSAK), Digital Credit Providers Association (DCPAK) and Blockchain Association of Kenya (BAK).

Speaking at the launch, the spokesperson of The Fintech Alliance, Ali Hussein, said "Today marks a significant milestone for Kenya's fintech sector. By uniting under the Fintech Alliance, we are better positioned to address challenges, seize opportunities and drive meaningful change in the industry. Together, we will shape the future of fintech in Kenya and beyond."

The Fintech Alliance is an umbrella organization representing Kenya's fintech ecosystem. AFIK, FINTAK, DFSAK, DCPAK, and BAK coming together is groundbreaking with the alliance advocating for the growth, innovation and development of the fintech sector to drive economic and social transformation.

The Fintech Alliance will create a unified voice for the fintech ecosystem, advocating for key initiatives that will position Kenya as a global leader in financial innovation.

The alliance will focus on policy and regulatory reforms where it will engage with government agencies, regulators and other stakeholders to shape policies and regulations that foster innovation while ensuring consumer protection and financial stability.

"The alliance will also focus funding and scaling up access to capital and resources for fintech startups and established players to scale their operations and achieve sustainable growth," Hussein said.

"It will also enhance product and service innovation whereby it will encourage collaboration among stakeholders to develop cutting-edge solutions that meet the evolving needs of Kenyan and global markets."

Lastly, the alliance will catalyze economic and social growth by leveraging fintech solutions to enhance financial inclusion, create jobs and transform lives by driving economic and social progress.

The Fintech254 Alliance will serve as a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing and strategic partnerships within the ecosystem. It will also work closely with international organizations to ensure Kenyan fintech solutions remain competitive on the global stage.

Accrue Raises $1.58 Million Seed Funding to Boost Cross-Border Payment Solutions

Accrue, a fintech startup revolutionizing cross-border payments in Africa, has secured $1.58 million in seed funding led by Lattice Fund. Other participants in the round include Kraynos Capital, Distributed Capital, Lava, and Maven 11. The investment will be used to expand Accrue's payment infrastructure, strengthen its team, and enhance its product offerings to address critical financial needs across the continent.

Founded in 2021 by ex-Helicarrier employees Zino Asamaige, Adesuwa Omoruyi, and Clinton

Mbah, Accrue originally launched as a platform for simplifying crypto investments. While the startup gained traction during the crypto boom, the market downturn in 2022 prompted a strategic pivot to address Africa's cross-border payment challenges. Accrue's solution uses an agent network model, inspired by platforms like MPESA and Moniepoint, to facilitate faster and more reliable money transfers. The startup claims payments on its platform are completed in under five minutes, providing significant convenience for its over 200,000 users across eight African countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa.

Revenue is generated through transaction fees, foreign exchange spreads, and penalties for prematurely stopping auto-investment plans. While crypto investment remains a feature, Accrue has discontinued stock trading to focus on its core offerings, such as saving in dollars and making online payments with virtual cards.

By leveraging stablecoins—cryptocurrencies pegged to assets like the US dollar—Accrue bypasses inefficiencies in traditional banking systems, enabling faster and more cost-effective cross-border transfers.

As Accrue refines its offerings and scales operations, it continues to position itself as a pivotal player in Africa's evolving fintech ecosystem, tackling the continent's pressing financial challenges head-on.

Finance App Usage and Revenue on the Rise in Sub-Saharan Africa – AppsFlyer & Google Report

AppsFlyer and Google have launched their 2024 "The State of App Marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa" report, analyzing overall performance of finance apps in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on a sample of 1.1 billion app downloads and 20,000 apps, the report reveals a growing trend in finance app installs, reflecting the region's strides toward economic recovery following a general rise in inflation and macroeconomic instability.

According to data, while overall app installs continued to grow in 2024, finance apps stood out, highlighting an impressive 34% increase in downloads between Q1 and Q3, when compared to the same period in 2023. iOS emerged as the primary contributor to this trend, experiencing a twofold increase in finance app installs during Q1 2024, compared to the same quarter in 2023.

Financial Search Trends in Nigeria and South Africa

Leveraging Google Search trends, the report uncovers key trends and purchasing interests within the financial services sector, one of the most-searched categories in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Nigeria, Google Searches point to an overall growth in financial services interest between January 2023 to August 2024, with "Naira" "dollar" "naira to dollar" and "loans" as the most searched terms, indicating a growing apprehension about the country's currency devaluation. Financial searches also reached a high between February and April, in line with the Naira falling to a record low in February.

On the other hand, finance related searches have remained relatively static in South Africa, with spikes in January and August, coinciding with seasonal peaks such as educational expenses, holiday financial expenses, and other cultural activities.

2025 Outlook for Marketers

While the finance sector faced a challenge in Q1 to Q3 2024, with Android installs dropping 27% due to reduced app install ad spend, in-app purchase (IAP) revenue from finance apps is showing strong growth across the region, indicating a shift toward more consistent in-app spending.

Figures on IAP revenue from finance apps in sub-Saharan Africa have shown a boost in Q3 with a 46% increase compared to the same quarter in 2023. This also aligns with an overall growth trend of 28% between Q1 – Q3 as a whole. In Nigeria specifically, iOS has seen a 51% jump in IAP revenue from finance apps compared to Q1 – Q3 of the previous year.

Marketers can look forward to continued growth in Sub-Saharan Africa's mobile landscape, fueled by rising installs and in-app purchase revenue from finance apps. This momentum is further supported by a promising 9% increase in ad spend recorded in Q4 2024, compared to Q3.

Commenting on findings gathered from the report, Netta Lev Sadeh, Managing Director EMEA SANI, AppsFlyer stated, "Our partnership with Google has allowed us to gain valuable insights into the dynamic financial services landscape. As one of the most exciting sectors in the region, the findings of this report underscore the crucial role of mobile phones and apps in continuing the advancement of financial inclusion, helping to bridge a critical gap across Sub-Saharan Africa. We are excited to see the steadily growing trend in IAP revenue from finance apps, which signals a promising and optimistic outlook for the region's economic future."

Lorraine Landon, Head of Advertising Products and Solutions – SSA for Google, added "This report from AppsFlyer is a must-read for brands and advertisers targeting the African market. The data clearly shows a huge opportunity to connect with consumers through mobile apps, with engagement growing significantly year-over-year. We are proud to once again partner with AppsFlyer on this report, which reflects our commitment to supporting businesses in this dynamic market and serves as a great starting point for unlocking success."

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