

Global crowdfunding portal launched to fund African entrepreneurs

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are the primary job creation engine in Africa, accounting for over 95% of firms and 60%-70% of employment.



Neku Atawodi - founder and CEO of Malaik

However, SMEs on the continent report access to finance as the biggest obstacle to growth. There is no lack of good ideas. Yet, young African entrepreneurs struggle to access the funds needed to bring their ideas and businesses to scale. Malaik, a global portal for high impact investing in African businesses, launched a call for applications to African entrepreneurs with impact focused businesses. The portal offers opportunities for the global crowd to invest in Africa's growth story.

"Africa is brimming with entrepreneurs with growing high impact businesses that could not only positively impact Africa, but the world," said Neku Atawodi, founder and CEO of Malaik. "Access to finance has always been a tough challenge to overcome and people have typically not wanted to invest in African businesses as they have historically been considered too risky.

"However, the African narrative is changing for the better and the continent's exponential growth in the last decade shows that an investment in impact focused African businesses can yield high returns."

Funding first company

Since the launch of the portal, Malaik has fully funded its first company - i-Drop water - to the tune of over \$250,000 and has been chosen to demo its unique innovation on stage at one of Europe's largest technology in finance conferences, FinovateEurope 2016 in London from 9-10 February. FinovateEurope is one of the biggest financial conferences in Europe and attracts the most notable players in financial services technology from across the world.

"Young companies all over Africa face a scarcity of funds to fuel their growth," said Atawodi. "Apart from banks and occasional angel investors, there is often nowhere to turn. Malaik is turning this crisis into an opportunity for startups and investors alike by offering stakes in young African companies to the crowd. Our unique impact tracker means that investors can track their investments' impact on the platform."

Entrepreneurs across Africa are encouraged to submit their applications to join the Malaik platform as an opportunity to raise funds for their businesses. Open to startups with high impact, innovative, original and diverse ideas ready for potential investment. On passing Malaik's due diligence, startups now have the opportunity to attract a diverse crowd of investors and supporters via equity finance.