

Policy Taskforce – Roundup Newsletter – Vol. 4

Dear honoured member,

The Pan-African Policy Taskforce had the fourth session on October 3rd, 2023, focused on **leveraging regional ties**.

Following a dynamic Pan-African policy taskforce session on utilizing regional connections for business growth, this latest session focused on bringing together representatives from African startups and accelerators to discuss the future of regional collaboration and economic growth and explore how ecosystem actors can continue to leverage regional collaboration to grow Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystems.

The session included in-depth conversations with Danny Smith from [Katapult](#), Tonny Missokia representing [Laina Finance](#), Adebayo Alonge from [Rxall](#), and Dave Okech of [Aquarech](#), who each provided unique perspectives on expanding businesses across African borders.

Key Insights:

- Mentorship and Market Expansion:** Danny shed light on the strategies employed by Katapult to bridge the gap between startups and potential markets through mentorship and networking, emphasizing the tailored support for companies looking to scale.
- Cross-Regional Digital Solutions:** Adebayo detailed Rxall's success in scaling digital pharmacy infrastructure from Nigeria to East Africa, driven by robust market research, recognizing the critical role of local regulatory understanding, and harnessing established networks for support.
- Challenges in Talent Acquisition:** Talent acquisition was discussed as a critical hurdle, with Adebayo and Tonny sharing their contrasting experiences in Nigeria and East Africa. They stressed the importance of adapting hiring strategies to local contexts and leveraging networks for talent sourcing.
- Financial Sector Navigation:** Tonny brought to light the financial sector's complexity, touching upon the journey of securing investment and the nuances of different countries' regulatory frameworks affecting fintech operations.
- Supply Chain Complexities:** Dave offered a glimpse into the challenges faced by Aquarech in standardizing inputs across borders and the bureaucratic red tape that hinders efficient cross-border movement of goods.
- Role of Accelerators:** The session examined how accelerators like Katapult can play a pivotal role in supporting startups by connecting them with capital and networks, advocating for them in policy discussions, and helping them navigate the challenges of scaling up across multiple markets.

Expectations and Aspirations Post-AfCFTA:

- **Simplified Business Procedures:** A call for a unified system where businesses can access all necessary information and regulatory guidance to set up operations across Africa was evident.
- **Investment Frameworks:** The potential for regional financing solutions to reduce currency and foreign exchange risks was highlighted, suggesting an integrated approach to funding.
- **Operationalization of AfCFTA:** There was a strong expectation for AfCFTA to lead to harmonized standards, provide tax and immigration incentives, and offer a conducive environment for startups to scale across Africa.

Policy and Trade Protocol Evolution:

- Google shared a forthcoming startup policy framework is expected to be discussed by the Council of Ministers, focusing on structural enablement, and adapting regulatory issues to local contexts.
- Enhanced collaborative efforts are underway to refine digital trade protocols, which could impact data localization and cross-border data transfer regulations.

The session concluded with a consensus on the critical need for AfCFTA to address the practicalities of scaling businesses in Africa, from easing talent movement to aligning financial and digital frameworks across the continent.

We look forward to sharing more developments as they unfold.

The Pan-African Policy Taskforce Team

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