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BIC Africa Highlights 2023

Promoting shared learning. Driving innovative startups!

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Welcome!

2023 proved to be a busy and active year for BIC Africa. All 5 country projects are now fully engaged, and more business incubators participated in the activities of the project. The BIC Africa network is therefore growing, offering more opportunities for business incubators to meet, learn and share their experiences with their peers.

The boot camps enable business incubator communities to take a deep dive into topics and themes that they have themselves selected and learn more about case studies and success stories from a team of global incubation and innovation experts. The Annual Gathering, the BIC Africa flagship event, gives the business incubators the chance to meet and connect with other Africa ecosystem players, and the opportunity to build networks for their own communities.

Finally, the excellent collaboration between BIC Africa and the country project implementing partners has resulted in a dynamic team spirit, with everybody committed to strengthening the capacity of business incubators and boosting entrepreneurship.

Robert Sanders , BIC Africa Team Leader.



Business Incubator Communities (BIC) Africa

BIC Africa is a regional network supporting selected business incubators (BIs) in stimulating entrepreneurship and creating new innovative start-ups in Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Somalia with a specific focus on youth and women. We seek to strengthen entrepreneurship and foster decent job creation and sustainable livelihoods.

We support, connect and promote business incubators, tech hubs and innovators of all kinds. Explore business and public/private investment opportunities with African and European initiatives and companies.

BIC Africa is commissioned by the European Union and implemented by EBN. The project will run from 2021 to 2025.



BIC Africa - a grwoing community

5 countries | 30+ incubators | 10+ partners

BIC Africa 2023 Major Results

2 In-person National Boot camp

1 In-person African Boot camp

1 Online boot camp for business incubators

4 Online Trainings

250+ Online and 65+ In-person business incubation experts trained & increased incubator's capacity and their services.

20 Women Entrepreneurs supported through the Acceleration Programme

200+ Startups/companies received business incubation support services through the Country Projects

6 External event participation



BIC Africa Annual Gathering 2023

Promoting shared learning. Driving innovative startups!

The BIC Africa Annual Gathering is BIC Africa's flagship event that brings together policymakers, business incubator managers, entrepreneurs, business incubation experts and other stakeholders from the 5 BIC Africa project countries (Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia), and participants from other African and the European ecosystem. The gathering aims to connect incubation practitioners, exchange knowledge, and discuss how to overcome the challenges faced by the business incubator communities today to support current and future entrepreneurs.



The second edition (#BICAfrica2023), co-hosted by BIC Somali, took place on Thursday 26th October 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme of "Promoting shared learning, Driving innovative startups!", with a special focus on the Somali ecosystem and featured relevant actors from Kenya. It brought together over 100 participants, in-person and online, and representatives from the innovation and startup community, and facilitated networking and dialogue between entrepreneurs, startups, and the private as well as the public sector innovation ecosystem from Africa and Europe.

The event organised by European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN) in close coordination with the Delegation of the European Union to Somalia and the BIC Somali project lead by UNIDO Somalia.

BIC Africa Virtual Training and Boot Camps

BIC Africa Online Training

The BIC Africa Online Training 2023 on Proven Models and Engaging with Investors designed by the BIC Africa Virtual Training Centre took place in November and December.

In four separate sessions and with 4 hour each the training covered the topics of introduction to incubation and ecosystems, business model canvas, engaging with investors, and interactive business cases. The training mainly targeted business incubation experts and professionals from business incubators, tech hubs, and innovation or Entrepreneur support organisations across Africa, but especially targeted to those are from the BIC Africa country projects.

The training was facilitated by EU|BIC members, who are experienced in incubation and innovative entrepreneurship globally.

4 online sessions | **16** hrs of content | **252** total attendances | **63** average attendance per session | **66** participants attended at least two sessions | **15** countries represented.

African Boot Camp: Impactful Dialogue

The first edition of the BIC Africa African Boot Camp was held on October 24th and 25th in Nairobi, Kenya. This intensive two-day event brought together 15 business incubator managers from the five BIC Africa project countries.

The Boot Camp was aimed to equip selected business incubators (BIs) with essential knowledge and skills, focusing on business mentorship and mentoring start-ups, sourcing and securing good human resources capital and creating and maintaining s with corporates. Through this Boot Camp, the business incubator managers explored how to scale up their business incubation services, by having an opportunity to engage in teamwork, collaborative exercises, and exchanges with the other fellow participants as well as the expert facilitators.



BIC Africa National Boot Camps

Ethiopia

The BIC Africa Ethiopia boot camp held on the 19th and 20th of Sep 2023 in Bishoftu, Ethiopia. It focused on the theme of mentorship and mentoring startups, a key topic for business incubators in Ethiopia, with the main aim of producing a collaborative and innovative “Guidebook on how to mentor startups” tailored to the local ecosystem, which was shared with Business Incubators (Bis) in Ethiopia as a reference and living document. At this boot camp, organised in collaboration with the BIC Ethiopia country project, had 11 participants – representing 4 Business Incubators participating in the Ethiopia country project, 3 startups from these BIs and the Ethiopian Association of Startup Ecosystem (EASE) participated.



Somalia

The Somali National boot camp was organised in association with BIC Somali project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 14th and the 15th of March. It was the first national boot camp for business incubators from Somalia and Somaliland and brought 9 participants from HarHub, iRise Hub and SIMAD iLab. The boot camp provided a deep dive into proven models on value propositions and strategies for setting up and running business incubators, and how to design quality incubation curricula to better support entrepreneurs in their programmes, with a focus on Agribusiness and AgriTech business incubation. The two-day event was followed by a networking and study visit to the BIC Ethiopia project BIs and participants had the opportunity to meet, connect and exchange knowledge with the hub’s experts and the BIC Ethiopia project.



Women Entrepreneurs Acceleration Programme

The BIC Africa Online Acceleration Programme for Women Entrepreneurs 2023 cohort featured 20 entrepreneurs from eleven countries, including 14 entrepreneurs from the BIC Africa target countries Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia, and six from Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia.

These entrepreneurs have a unique innovative solution and a high potential for growth and operating in sectors like agri-business, food, digital technology, health, renewable energy, manufacturing, retail, recycling, and business stages, ranging from ideation to growth.

This 3rd cohort focused on supporting entrepreneurs who are willing to scale their businesses while contributing to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and creating an inclusive and sustainable local economy.

This year's programme provided these women entrepreneurs a blend of online training modules, coaching sessions, individual exercises, and mentoring. This helped them to upgrade their business skills and quickly amplify their business growth and sustainability for long-term.

This exclusive acceleration programme covered modules such as product development Value proposition, marketing strategy, business model for scalability, financial management, investment readiness, leadership, and partnership development.

The programme was held from May to September 2023 and ran for 15 weeks.



20 Women Entrepreneurs



6 Online Training



4 Group Coaching Sessions



120+ Curated



2 Networking Sessions



10+ Business Sectors

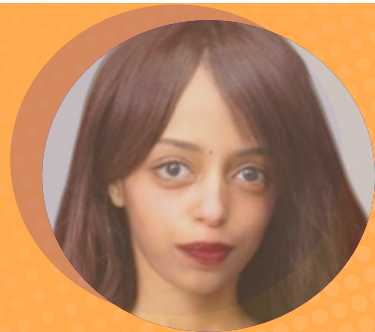


11 African Countries Represented



"The BIC Africa acceleration programme was a turning point for me. It wasn't just about acquiring new skills or knowledge; it was about discovering my purpose and the power I held to make a positive impact. The programmer's greatest strength lies in its human touch. From the moment I joined, I was met with warmth, encouragement, and genuine belief in my potential.

*Eden Tadesse, Founder & CEO at Invicta, from Ethiopia
BIC Africa Acceleration programme 2023 participant*



BIC Africa in Major External Events

Africa Startup Ecosystem Builders Summit and Awards (ASEB) 2023

BIC Africa participated in the Africa Startup Ecosystem Builders Summit and Awards (ASEB) 2023 Nairobi Kenya from the 6th to the 8th of December. During the opening panel on the “Fostering Entrepreneurial Growth through Regional and Cross Border Collaboration”, our colleague Dawit Dagnew presented the project’s invaluable contributions in this regard and the important role of BIC Africa in creating a regional network to strengthen and boost regional as well as cross continental collaboration to build ecosystems in Africa.



AfriLabs Annual Gathering 2023

Together with the Eia and AEDIB | NET projects, BIC Africa participated in the AfriLabs Annual Gathering 2023 held from the 10th to 13th of October in Kigali, Rwanda, themed “Accelerating Africa’s Digital Economy; by the Strength of our Community.”

BIC Africa, along with its sister projects, was showcased during the exhibition and able to interact with the African innovation and tech hubs as well as reconnect with the selected BIs from the BIC Africa country projects, and other participants, and strengthen the cross-continental collaboration and innovation between Africa and Europe.



The Comoros Business Fair BIK 2023 (Salon des Entreprises)

The Comoros Business Fair BIK 2023 (Salon des Entreprises) took place in Moroni, Comoros from the 6th to the 8th of June 2023 organised by the National Agency for the Promotion of Investments (ANPI), under the high patronage of His Excellency Azali Assoumani president of the Comoros.

During this high-level event, our colleague Dawit Dagnew presented our unwavering support for the business incubator communities in Africa through BIC Africa regional network activities and announced the official adhesion of Comoros into the regional network through the APILE project component funded by the EU and implemented by UNIDO.

In additions, together with the APILE project, BIC Africa exhibited the project's objectives, activities, results, and shared information about the other four country projects. The three-day annual forum and business fair brought together over 200 exhibitors, 100 speakers, over 50 startups and MSMEs, and over 10000 government representatives, visitors, foreign investors, the EU, and other international delegations from Africa and Europe.



Conclusion

The third year of BIC Africa, 2023, was marked by all the Country Projects - Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia coming onboard, with the last country project, Madagascar, officially joining on the 1st of May 2023. Furthermore, Comoros has officially joined BIC Africa through the Support Programme for Production, Industrialisation and Free Trade in Comoros (APILE project), as of June 2023, as such expanding the Regional Network to 5 Country Projects.

During the third year of the action, BIC Africa has conducted numerous activities, as described above. BIC Africa organised the first national boot camp for BIs from Somalia and Somaliland, as well as the second national boot camp for BIs from Ethiopia. The third edition of the “BIC Africa Acceleration Programme for Female Entrepreneurs” took place between May and September 2023. The first African boot camp, back-to-back with the Annual Gathering 2023 and the Steering Committee meeting took place in October 2023 in Kenya. The Virtual Training Centre was launched in November, and the Quality Assessment of Business Incubators in BIC Somali has started in 2023, serving as a pilot. Through these activities BIC Africa has continued supporting, connecting, and promoting business incubator communities in Africa throughout 2023, and making an impact.

The following major activities are foreseen for 2024 – keep an eye for our latest news and announcements for open calls and other opportunities through our website and social media channels.

The 4th edition of the **Acceleration Programme for Women Entrepreneurs** will be launched through an open call in February 2024 and will be running from April to July 2024. A combination of trainings, coaching and networking is foreseen for the 20 selected participants.

“**Meet the Innovator Online Sessions**” are planned to take place across 2024 with successful innovators from the diaspora communities of the five target countries, who will present their stories.

The **National Boot Camp for Business Incubator** managers from **Angola** will take place in September 2024.

The third **BIC Africa Annual Gathering** will take place in Madagascar in October 2024, co-hosted by the Incubost country project.

Soft Landing Programme will be launched in 2024, targeted at Business Incubator managers from African BIs to be hosted by EU | BICs for short periods of time.

The second edition of the Virtual Training Centre programme is planned to take place in Autumn-Winter 2024.

Staff Exchange Programme for selected BIs in one of other BIs of their choice (in collaboration with the 5 Country Projects) will be launched in 2024.

The BIC Africa team is excited and looking forward to further reinforce the Network in 2024!

Get in touch



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