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# BIC Africa Highlights 2024

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# Welcome!

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2024 has been a busy and productive year for the BIC Africa network, with many activities supporting business incubator managers in our five target countries (Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia) and beyond. The five country chapters of BIC Africa are now fully deployed and committed to strengthening business incubation ecosystems and empowering local entrepreneurs.

Through our boot camps and events, it has been particularly rewarding to witness how the local networks of incubators are growing and becoming recognised in their local communities as key entrepreneurship drivers, and their service in supporting youth and women to start new enterprises.

The collaboration between the EU|BIC community and the BIC Africa community has been enhanced; through mentorship programs and cross-continental partnerships, African incubators can access European connections, and European business and innovation centres gain insights into emerging markets. BIC Africa continues to strengthen these connections, to enhance resilience and promote cultural exchange.

We thank all our partners for their commitment to impactful, long-term collaboration in the African business incubation and entrepreneurship landscape.



*Robert Sanders, BIC Africa Team Leader*

## Business Incubator Communities (BIC) Africa

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BIC Africa is a regional network supporting selected business incubators (BIs) in stimulating entrepreneurship and creating and consolidating 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, and we explore business and public/private investment opportunities with local and European initiatives and companies.

BIC Africa is funded by the EU and implemented by EBN (European Business and Innovation Centre Network).

BIC Africa - a growing community!

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5 countries | 50+ incubators | 10+ partners

Our major programmes and results for 2024

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1 Award

1 Annual Gathering

1 Soft-Landing in Europe

1 Staff-Exchange in Africa

1 Scoping Mission in Angola

2 In-person National Boot camps in Africa

3 Diaspora Entrepreneurs Webinars

4 External event participation

23 Women Entrepreneurs supported

120+ Participated in the Annual Gathering 2024



# BIC Africa Annual Gathering 2024

Accelerating access to sustainable financing for young businesses in Africa.

The BIC Africa Annual Gathering 2024 (#BICAfrica2024), co-hosted by the INCUBOOST project, took place on the 24th of October 2024 in Antananarivo, Madagascar. With theme of “Accelerating access to sustainable financing for young businesses in Africa.” This year’s gathering discussed the crucial role of access to sustainable finance for young businesses in Africa to bring their ideas to fruition, drive local economic development and create new market opportunities. Moreover, the importance of building resilience, adapting to changing social and economic conditions, and long-term sustainability.



This third edition brought together over 120 participants, with additional participation online, including business incubation leaders, startup ecosystem experts, entrepreneurs, financial institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders from the five BIC Africa project countries (Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia), as well as participants from the European ecosystem. The event also brought key players from Malagasy ecosystem and enabled them to network and share their insights and experiences.

The BIC Africa Annual Gathering series has become an important annual event to discuss the latest development on the innovation and startup ecosystem in Africa to boost the African startup ecosystem potential. The first two editions of the gathering were held in 2022 and in 2023 and brought together over 200 stakeholders to explore and connect the regional startup ecosystems. In addition to panel sessions and focused thematic discussions, the annual gatherings enabled participants to network, visit local ecosystem, exchange knowledge, explore and foster partnerships, and participate in other side events.

# BIC Africa Soft-Landing and Staff-Exchange 2024

## Soft-Landing Programme

The first edition of the BIC Africa soft-landing programme that aimed to enable valuable exchanges between African and European business incubators was held in France from 10th to 12th of June. This first edition featured 6 business incubation experts representing 5 business incubators from Comoros and Madagascar, who were hosted by the 4 EU|BICs in four different cities in France.

The soft-landing programme is aimed at the selected business incubation experts to boost their capacities. It was designed and built upon the success of our capacity-enhancing activities for business incubator experts. It will nurture, empower and drive forward their respective ecosystems by addressing the challenges faced, and will enable them to implement future programmes to power their startup ecosystems using the learning, skills and networking from the programme.



## BIC Africa Launches Staff-Exchange Programme to foster Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange between African Business Incubators

The first BIC Africa Staff Exchange Programme, a pivotal strategy for practical peer-to-peer knowledge transfer among African Business Incubators (BIs), was held in Madagascar from the 16th to 18th of October 2024. This innovative programme aims to facilitate short-term inter-regional exchanges of business incubator staff members, providing a platform for mutual learning and the acquisition of practical experience in the day-to-day operations and management of business incubation services. In this first round 5 Comorian business incubators had an exchange with 5 Malagasy business incubators in Antananarivo. Designed to foster long-term sustainable relationships, the programme scouts regional connections and opportunities for client companies by enhancing practical capacities through direct interactions with similar African BIs within the BIC Africa target countries.

The programme operates in a two-way manner, with the visiting representatives from Comoros becoming hosts in the second round. Both visiting and host BIs will benefit from new knowledge, skills, and a better understanding of each other's ecosystem development perspectives.

# BIC Africa National Boot Camps in 2024

## Boot Camp for Comorian and Malagasy Business Incubators

The BIC Africa three-day boot camp for Comorian and Malagasy business incubators, held from October 21st to 23rd in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Organized in collaboration with the APILE Comoros and INCUBOOST country projects, the boot camp brought together 20 participants — 5 from Comoros and 15 from Madagascar ecosystems. Designed based on a comprehensive needs analysis, the boot camp focused on key topics such as financing an incubator, managing an incubator, supporting incubated companies and their financing, implementing quality assurance measures, and mobilizing the diaspora to boost investment in Africa.



## Angola Boot Camp

BIC Africa held a successful two-day boot camp in September 2024 in Luanda, with 22 participants representing 15 business incubators from across Angola. The boot camp brought together business incubation representatives from the different provinces of Angola and facilitated meaningful discussions and networking opportunities, contributing to a better future collaboration among the business incubators which helps to strengthen and boost the startup ecosystem in Angola. The boot camp was described as engaging, impactful, and well-received. BIC Africa will continue to work closely with these business incubators and key partners to support and to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Angola.

# Women Entrepreneurs Acceleration Programme 2024

The BIC Africa Online Acceleration Programme for Women Entrepreneurs 2024 was held from April to July 2024 for 23 promising entrepreneurs from a diverse range of backgrounds. Selected from an impressive 139 applications, this year's cohort represent 11 Sub-Saharan African countries, including the BIC Africa project countries (Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Somalia) with established post-revenue and registered startups across from different sectors.

For this year's cohort, the fourth edition, run for 12 weeks offered them a blend of tailored online training modules, coaching sessions, individual exercises, networking sessions and one-to-one mentoring by seasoned entrepreneurs and professionals, all aimed at transforming their business potential into sustainable and long-term success.

Since its inception in 2021, With four successful editions together with our partners, we have been able to support and equip 85 innovative women entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and grow their business. And many of these women entrepreneurs have been able to significantly improve their business operations to new heights and even secure funding right after completion of the programme.



23 Women Entrepreneurs



6 Online Training



4 Group Coaching Sessions



150+ Curated Resources



2 Networking Sessions



10+ Business Sectors



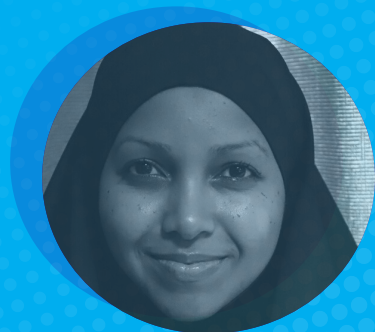
11 African Countries Represented

“

The BIC Africa 2024 programme has been an enriching experience that allowed me to discover many valuable tools to manage and develop my company Wutamu; I particularly liked analysing my psychological and financial profile, better understand my customers with customer empathy tool, and discover relevant marketing strategies.

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Jihane Guy from Wutamu- Comoros





# BIC Africa Diaspora Webinars and Virtual Training

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## BIC Africa Diaspora Entrepreneurship Webinar Series

In a significant move to foster economic growth and innovation, BIC Africa has launched its Diaspora Entrepreneurship Webinar Series in 2024. The series aims to connect diaspora communities in Europe and beyond with entrepreneurs in their countries of origin, to share experiences and advice for a lasting impact.

The first introductory webinar, titled “Opening Dialogue with Diaspora Entrepreneurs,” was held on April 18th, 2024, and targeted budding entrepreneurs and Business Incubator representatives. Featuring from the USA and Europe: Yonas Alemu CEO & founder of Lovegrass Ethiopia, João Boavida CEO and Founder at Afrikanizam Art, and Samuel Demisse founder of Keffa Coffee.

The second webinar held on the of 25th July 2024 focusing on Angolan diaspora entrepreneurs featuring Joachim Valot, CEO & Co-Founder at CYTO; Ricardo Reis from lapadosreis and Wilson Ganga, Founder at Avança Na Vida - Micro Crédito.

The third Webinar Series: Dialogue with African Diaspora Entrepreneurs in the Fashion Sector was held on 17th of December 2024 and aimed at highlighting the journeys, challenges, and successes of entrepreneurs within the fashion sector featuring Omar Munie - Founder of Munie&Co (Somalia / Netherlands), Rose Palhares - Founder of ROSE PALHARES (Angola / Portugal) and Adebola Ataiyero-Adefila - Founder of Iré Dire (Nigeria / UK). Dive into insightful discussions and key takeaways on fashion entrepreneurship.

The webinar series created for budding African entrepreneurs from BIC Africa’s target countries—Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Somalia and other African countries.

## BIC Africa Virtual Training Programme 2024

The BIC Africa Virtual Training Programme for 2024, designed by the BIC Africa Virtual Training Centre, offers business incubators a unique chance to connect with experts in incubation and innovative entrepreneurship. Held online in December 2024 and attended by over 50 participants, it provided an insight into proven models and strategies for establishing and managing business incubators, as well as engaging with investors.

This second edition training was divided into four carefully curated and facilitated sessions, each lasting four hours, led by experts from EU|BICs. The sessions will covered Digital Marketing, Mobilising Diasporas, Financial Modelling and Control Management and Agri-business and Partnership Development topics.

# BIC Africa Recognition & Participation in external events

## BIC Africa Recognised as top EU-AU R&I Success Story by SEADE: Shining Moment of 2024!

The BIC Africa project was recognised as one of the top EU-AU Research and Innovation (R&I) Success Stories by the Strengthening the Europe-Africa Digital Ecosystem (SEADE). This award was given during the SEADE Summit held 4th of December 2024, in Cape Town, South Africa.

The award ceremony was a significant milestone, recognising the contribution and achievements of the BIC Africa project in promoting business incubation and entrepreneurial growth across the five target African countries – Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Somalia and across the continent. Our success in this endeavour is thanks to the unwavering support of our partner, the European Union, whose contributions have been instrumental in making this project a reality.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the implementing partners of the five country projects, both in Africa and Europe. Their support and collaboration have been pivotal in driving the success of business incubators and empowering entrepreneurs to drive innovative start-ups focusing on youth and women across Africa. We are immensely proud of this achievement and remain committed to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development in Africa. This recognition serves as a testament to the collective efforts and dedication of everyone involved in the BIC Africa project. Finally, we would like to thank the SEADE project for this recognition and congratulate all the fellow winners.



**TOP EU-AU Research & Innovation  
Cooperation Success Story - 2024**

# BIC Africa

Strengthening business incubators and supporting  
startups to foster innovation and economic growth



Funded by  
the European Union



# BIC Africa Recognition & Participation in external events

## BIC Africa at the EBN Congress 2024 in Nantes, France

The BIC Africa team took part in the EBN congress (European Business and Innovation Centre Network) held from the 12th to 14th June in Nantes, France. The 2024 EBN Congress, co-organised by EU|BIC Atlanpole, gathered over 300 participants and 175+ Innovation organizations from 37 countries worldwide. It is the flagship gathering of European innovation centres, incubators, accelerators, science parks, and innovation actors.

The congress delved into the pivotal theme of “Supporting sustainable industry” and explored how the EU|BIC community is supporting challenge-driven, strong, innovation networks – regionally and EU-wide – and supporting entrepreneurial innovation that modernises industrial ventures. BIC Africa had a booth and showcased its work in supporting the innovation ecosystems in the project target countries – Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Somalia.

The energy, engagement, and networking that took place at the congress reflects BIC Africa’s values and commitment to our shared vision of bringing closer African and European innovation ecosystems.



## BIC Africa Participated in the Unlocking ESO Self-Sustainability Webinar

On Thursday, 29th August 2024, BIC Africa participated in a webinar titled “Unlocking ESO Self-Sustainability” organised by Startup Savanna. The event focused on aligning deal flow strategies with the path to self-sustainability for Entrepreneurship Support Organisations (ESOs) targeting the Kenya ecosystem. The webinar featured a short presentation of BIC Africa project by Krisztina Dax, followed by insights from leading European experts in the field.

BIC Africa’s support in facilitating connection with European ESOs and participation in the webinar underscored our commitment in facilitating the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies between African and European ecosystems. By sharing the European ESOs’ experiences, BIC Africa aims to enhance its support for ESOs in Africa through its regional network, specifically targeting ESOs, entrepreneurs, and innovative startups to drive sustainable development.

# Conclusion

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2024 was marked by all the BIC Africa country Projects - Angola, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Somalia advancing well and we continue empowering business incubators.

During the fourth year of the action, BIC Africa delivered many impactful activities with incredible support from our partners – the European Union, and the implementing partners in Africa and in Europe. Our footprint across Africa's innovation ecosystem pushed forward African entrepreneurship and startups, especially for youth and women. As we look ahead to an exciting 2025 we will continue supporting, connecting, and promoting business incubator communities in Africa throughout the year, and making a sustainable impact in the innovation ecosystems.

The following major activities are foreseen – keep an eye for our latest news and announcements for open calls and other opportunities through our website and social media channels and reach out if you'd like to collaborate.

- The 5th edition of the Acceleration Programme for Women Entrepreneurs will be launched
- through an open call in February 2025.
- Three Diaspora Webinars scheduled to take place in 2025
- Soft-landing programme for three Angolan business incubators scheduled to take place in Portugal in March 2025
- Soft-landing programme for three Ethiopian business incubators scheduled to take place in the United Kingdom in April 2025.
- Soft-landing programme for three Somali business incubators scheduled to take place in Slovenia in May 2025.
- Staff-Exchange programme for three Angolan and five Malagasy business incubators in Ethiopia and in Comoros respectively scheduled to take place in May 2025.
- Staff-Exchange programme for Ethiopian and Somali business incubators in Angola scheduled to take place in October 2025.
- The fourth BIC Africa Annual Gathering scheduled to take place in Luanda, Angola in October 2025, co-hosted by IFC.
- BIC Africa Virtual training programmes scheduled to take place in November and December 2025.

The BIC Africa team is excited and looking forward to further reinforce the Network in 2025!

Thank you to our partner the European Union.

## Get in touch



Robert Sanders  
Team Leader  
robert.sanders@ebn.eu



Krisztina Dax  
Project Manager  
krisztina.dax@ebn.eu



Dawit Dagne  
Communication Manager  
dawit.dagne@ebn.eu

[www.bic-africa.eu](http://www.bic-africa.eu)

[hello@bic-africa.](mailto:hello@bic-africa)

 [bic-africa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bic-africa)

 [@BICAfrica](https://twitter.com/BICAfrica)

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