

The Baobab Network Report
for
ZENMONDO Members
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Baobab Insights weekly round-up
News, views and analysis on tech and VC in Africa

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Issue #14



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Hi,

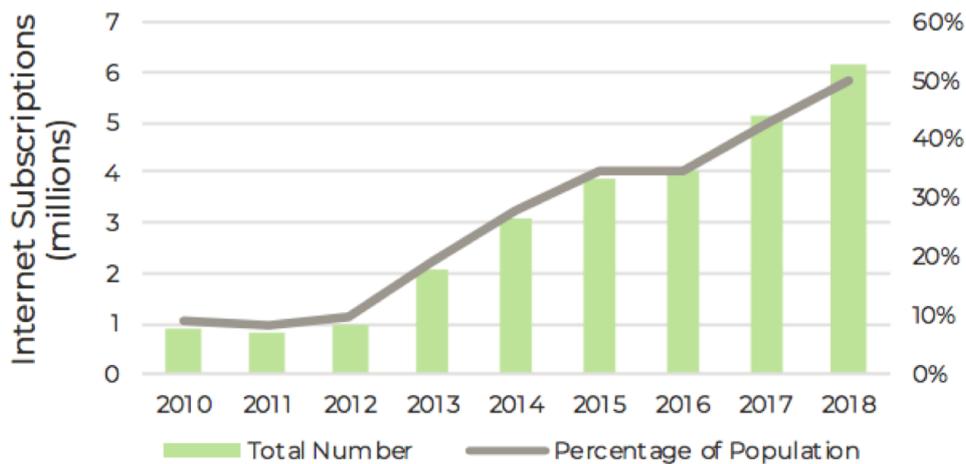
Mara Group has launched two new smartphones, both of which, are made in Rwanda

Last week, Rwanda's [Mara Group](#) announced the two new smartphones, claiming they are the first to be manufactured in Africa. At an event in Kigali last Monday, the move was celebrated as a boost to Rwanda's ambitions to become a regional hub for technology and innovation.

The [Mara X](#) and [Mara Z](#) will use Google's Android operating system and cost 175,750 Rwandan francs (\$190) and 120,250 Rwandan francs (\$130) respectively. The new handsets will compete with Samsung, whose cheapest smartphone costs 50,000 Rwandan francs (\$54), and non-branded phones at 35,000 Rwandan francs (\$37).



Rwanda provides Mara with a strong environment for growth. Mobile penetration currently stands at 76.6%, and the East African nation has seen huge increases in internet subscriptions in the last 10 years, creating a good environment for smartphone sales:



Source: [Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority, 2018](#)

A number of other countries, including Egypt, Ethiopia, Algeria and South Africa, have been assembling smartphones for some time using parts imported from suppliers based outside of Africa. Mara Group however claim to be the first to actually create key components in Africa, which they believe will be a big differentiator in the long run.

Mara's new plant cost \$50 million and could make as many as 10,000 phones per day. Our team will be keeping a close eye on just how popular these phones become.

Story source: [Reuters](#)

News

A tough week for Libra

Mastercard, Visa, eBay and Stripe have joined PayPal in removing their support for [Facebook's Libra](#), citing the threat of regulatory pressure on the project as the main reason. Although still backed by key partners such as Spotify, Vodafone and Uber, this news is seen as a blow for Facebook's flagship crypto project, and more broadly the company's strategy for advancing financial inclusion in key markets across Africa.

Source: [TechWeez](#)

Naspers to increase pan-African tech investing

[Naspers has announced](#) that it will be investing 1.4 Bn Rand in entrepreneurs and tech businesses over the next three years, expanding their focus out of South Africa to other key markets across the continent. This announcement comes after Naspers successfully listed [Prosus](#) on the Euronext stock exchange in Amsterdam back in September.

Source: [Weetracker](#)

Finalists announced for AppsAfrica's annual awards

The final shortlist for the 5th AppsAfrica Innovation Awards have been announced. The Awards celebrate the best in mobile and tech from across Africa with winners announced in Cape Town on November 11th, 2019. The awards are split across key verticals such as Fintech, Health and IoT. [Here](#) is the list of finalists.

Source: [AppsAfrica](#)

Deals

- [Hive](#), a Cairo-based ride-hailing platform for kids [has raised \\$400,000](#) in seed funding led by Abdelmoneim Al-Adawy
- Cape Town start-up [SweepSouth](#) raises 50m Rand in new funding round led by the [Michael & Susan Dell Foundation](#)
- [Doctoor Health Services](#), has won the prize of best start-up pitch at the 25th Nigerian Economic Summit start-up pitch competition, netting 5m Naira in funding.
- Cairo-based logistics start-up [Sprint has raised six-figure \(USD\)](#) in seed funding.
- Kenyan agri-tech startup [Lentera secures debt funding from KCIC](#)

Fund news

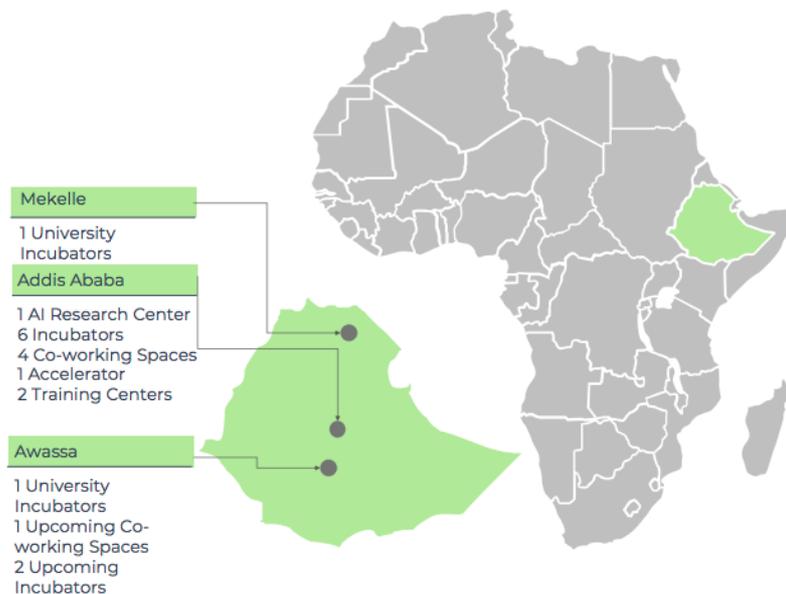
A new \$6.8 million fund – [Enygma Ventures](#) – has launched with a focus on investing in women entrepreneurs in Southern Africa.

Global digital marketing firm Dentsu Aegis Network has launched [Female Foundry](#), an initiative to support female entrepreneurs, in five of its markets, one of which is South Africa.

Chart of the week

Last week, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed [won the Nobel Prize](#) for his work in finding peace with Eritrea after a 20 year conflict. As well making great progress on diplomatic matters, Prime Minister Ahmed's administration has introduced a wide range of new growth focused economic policies including more investment into technology and innovation.

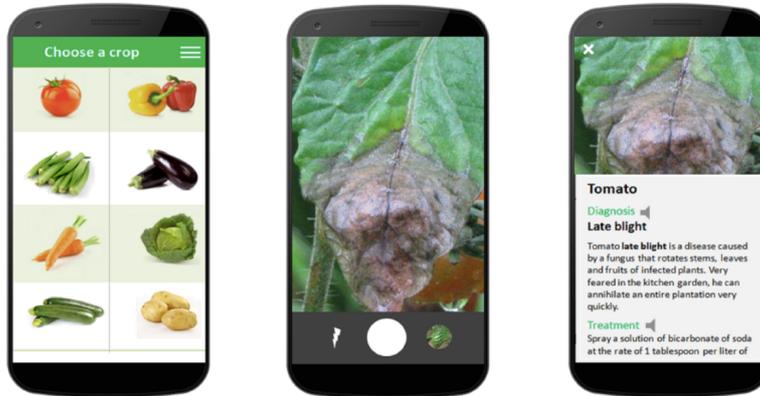
Here's a snapshot of Ethiopia's tech hubs, which have grown significantly in number since Ahmed took office in April 2018.



Source: [Baobab Insights 2019](#)

Start-up spotlight

Based out of Yaunde, Cameroon, [Agrix](#) have built an AI powered app that detects crop diseases and proposes treatments. The app, available offline and in a number of local languages, leverages machine learning to provide instant advice and suggestions to farmers of all sizes, helping to reduce the risks associated with crop failure.



The company, who were [featured in a Quartz Africa article](#) in August of this year, are making exciting progress and we'll be keeping a close eye on their growth as they look to expand outside of Cameroon next year.

Know a company building something cool?

Nominate them for our weekly spotlight at team@baobabinsights.com.

Get in touch

Want to learn more about our content or send us feedback? Email us on team@baobabinsights.com.



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