



Innovate UK

UK International Development  
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity



## Case Study

# Place-Based Innovation, a Snapshot of 2022–2023

Place-Based Innovation (PBI), as part of Innovate UK KTN’s Global Alliance Africa project, aims to leverages UK and pan-African expertise, networks and resources in order to build capacity for local innovation ecosystem players to drive forwards stronger, more sustainable and more inclusive local ecosystems.

Focusing on ‘place’ has been a **key strategic priority for the UK government** as part of its recent ‘levelling up’ agenda to spread opportunity more equally across the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

The Global Alliance Africa project has adopted the PBI approach in **Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa** to pilot activities across three ‘secondary’ ecosystems with significant potential for transformation and growth: Eldoret in Kenya, Ekiti State in Nigeria and Gauteng in South Africa (focused specifically on townships as the secondary ecosystem within the Gauteng province).

The PBI initiative is fundamentally driven by people and place. In practice, this means that local Innovation Advisory Groups (IAG), whose members are drawn from different parts of the ecosystem, co-design, co-own and co-drive the strategy.

A key principle that underpins the model is **collaboration and partnerships** - as we believe that connections and linkages help catalyse innovation and lead to transformative change. By supporting underserved innovation communities, Global Alliance Africa is helping to strengthen innovation ecosystems at a national level and expanding the potential for new partnerships outside of traditional innovation hubs and cities.

This case study provides a snapshot of what the last year of PBI looked like on the ground, as we navigated and better understood the Local Innovation Networks (LIN). In many respects, it was a year of building trust, visibility and connections, while laying the foundations for future bilateral partnership opportunities.

## Goal



Place-Based Innovation leverages UK and pan-African expertise, networks and resources in order to build capacity for local innovation ecosystem players to drive forwards stronger, more sustainable and more inclusive local ecosystems.

1. [gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

## South Africa Inclusive innovation ecosystem driving economic growth and prosperity in Gauteng

**Identified objectives**

- Reduce fragmentation and increase collaboration
- Increase SMME support and service capacity
- Increase support to women and youth
- Improve access to investment

**Investment Round table**  
Share learnings and challenges

**LIN: Connecting for Positive Change**

**#MoreThanAWoman campaign showcase**  
Access to Investment report and video published

**#MoreThanAWoman campaign launched**  
Support and training to 8 entrepreneurs

**SA Innovation Summit 2022**  
IAG visit Diepsloot  
IUK KTN on panel discussing the impact of innovation in Townships

**SMME pilot begins on local waste management**

PBI activities featured on prominent national media platforms

## Kenya Eldoret to be the Agri-Innovation Hub of Kenya by 2025

**Identified focus areas**

- Market Access**  
Market Access Forum: Farmers and Traders discuss key challenges
- Production**  
UK Eldoret collaborations in innovation: Solar thermal drying technology pilot
- Value Addition**  
University of Eldoret Innovation Week: IUK KTN hosted panel discussion

**General elections slow down activities**

**CEIL Summit**  
IAG representing work of PBI in Eldoret

**Kenya Innovation Week**  
IAG members attend  
Local media featuring work of PBI

**Nairobi Innovation Week**  
UK team in country

**Blockchain based food traceability pilot**

## Nigeria Ekiti to be a beacon of knowledge and innovation for Nigeria

**Explore ecosystem level Innovation Exchange (iX)**  
Convened iX design group to support planning and design

**The Convergence Youth Innovation event**  
Call for Youth Innovators - Top 6 pitch

**Youth Innovators continued support**

**Plan the first LIN**  
LIN convened to boost motivation, collaboration, networking and visibility

**LIN business mixer**

**Aquaculture identified as key focus**  
IAG travel to Abuja to meet UK Team

**Design Group attend Aquaculture Summit**

**Aquaculture knowledge exchange**

**National elections slow down activities**

**Creation of ecosystem Map**

Local elections slow progress  
Local media featuring work of PBI

**2022 Cross-country Learning and Planning**  
In-country Advisory Groups set up and ready to plan for the year ahead  
First perception survey deployed to advisory groups and LINs

**2023**  
First cross-country Learning Exchange in SA  
Advisory groups planning for year ahead: looking at growth and sustainability of PBI in-country

*Scriberia*

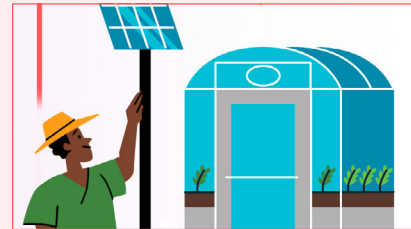
# Key highlights include:

## Kenya



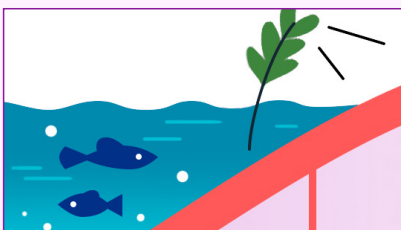
1. **Market access, production and value** addition for the AgriFood sector identified as a priority area for activities.

2. **Solar thermal drying technology pilot project** being explored between UK-based Enso Impact and local Eldoret stakeholders, with organisations such as Gavo Foods. The pilot hopes to explore the socio-economic impact that drying technology can have on the value addition ecosystem in Eldoret.



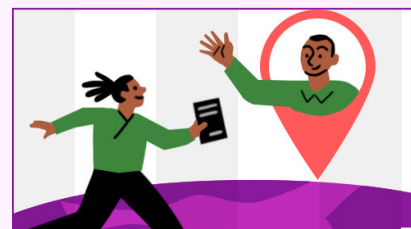
3. **Scoping the adaptation and piloting of a blockchain based food traceability application** – AgriTrack - designed by UK-based Assentian and partnering with a local Eldoret stakeholder PlusFarm. The pilot is aiming to digitalise food traceability to ensure transparency and compliance across agriculture value chains thereby increasing access to global markets.

## Nigeria



1. **Aquaculture identified as a key area of focus.** The PBI Advisory Group and Global Alliance Africa hosted an Aquaculture International Knowledge Exchange event in Ekiti to guide the direction of activities going forward, with a particular focus on alternative food proteins for fish feed. The project is collaborating with UK-based FlyBox to investigate alternative protein opportunities.

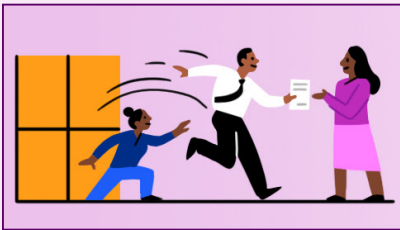
2. **The Advisory Group invested in creating an ecosystem map which will be launched in 2023 called Innovate Ekiti.** The purpose of the map is to provide the innovation network actors with increased access to information, collaboration and investment opportunities.



3. **An open call for youth innovators** was launched to help find, support and celebrate young people with great business ideas. This initiative is aligned with Innovate UK's commitment to drive positive change by investing in young people with big environmental, societal, and economic ambitions.

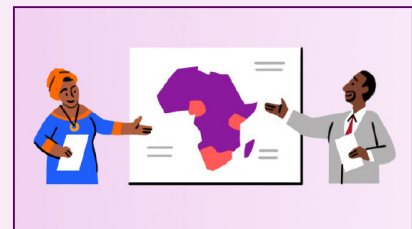


## South Africa



1. Reducing fragmentation, increasing SMME support, increasing support to women and youth and improving access to investment identified as priority areas by the Advisory Group.

2. A roundtable on sharing knowledge and insights was facilitated between Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and UK stakeholders, which culminated in the launch of the Facilitating Access to Investment report.



3. #MoreThanAWoman campaign was launched focusing on supporting eight female township focused entrepreneurs with bespoke support. Two £4,000 awards were given as part of the flagship #MoreThanAWoman event on International Women's Day for Best Pitch and Best Township Innovation.

4. A local SMME, BoombaDotMobi, began a shared waste management pilot in the Diepsloot township through a collaborative support model that involves Wot-if? Trust, Africa Tikkun, A Game Business and Innovate UK KTN. The model has brought together services providers that address specific needs of the township innovative SMME.



# The Road Ahead

In the coming year, the intervention will build on the momentum that has been created within each location, testing and gathering evidence to demonstrate the impact of the PBI model in helping to realise the innovation potential that can lead to economic development in each context.

Existing partnerships will be supported and developed further so as to demonstrate the value and impact of a localisation agenda by gaining insights, exploring opportunities and building relationships locally, bilaterally and globally.

## Kenya

Facilitating innovations around **agriculture, and specifically on value addition, were identified as priority areas** in line with the findings of the Global Alliance Africa Innovation Audit of 2022 (a summary can be [found here](#)). The agriculture focus in Eldoret will continue, deepening UK-Africa connections through the pilots being scoped and designed, as well as other opportunities that may arise.



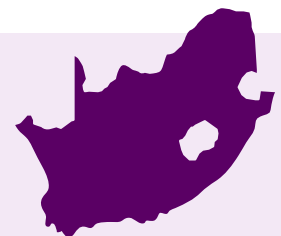
## Nigeria

Activities will continue to focus on **agriculture-sector related activities**, an area which was identified as having considerable potential for growth by the Advisory Groups and in the Global Alliance Africa Regional Innovation Audit of 2022 (a summary can be [found here](#)). Through PBI we will continue to **deepen UK-Africa collaborations** on identifying alternative proteins for animal feed; strengthen and embed support to young innovators in Ekiti, launch and develop the Innovate Ekiti ecosystem map, and encourage investors and investment structures for nascent ecosystems using Ekiti as a case study.



## South Africa

**Fragmentation within the innovation ecosystem** was identified as one of the core challenges for Gauteng by the Advisory Group which is validated in the Global Alliance Africa Audit of 2022 (a summary can be [found here](#)). The project will continue to focus on **strengthening the cohesiveness** of the innovation ecosystem with supporting township economies and innovators.



As PBI activities progress across the three countries, the resulting outcomes will continue to align with the UK's International Development objectives which focus on supporting vibrant sustainable ecosystems that enable innovation to flourish and scale (at the local, national and international level), **contributing to inclusive growth and shared prosperity.**

**“We are excited to see what the coming year brings as we continue the important work that has been set in motion, and we start to see, and grow, its impact.”**

Emmy Chirchir - Science Technology and Innovation (ST&I)  
Advisor and Cluster Lead, East Africa Research and Innovation Hub



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The Global Alliance Africa project is a six-year project funded by UK International Development through Innovate UK (GCRF) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Read more about PBI in the following case study:

## Creating Change Through Telling Untold Stories



[View Case Study](#)

For more information on PBI and Global Alliance Africa, contact Bhavya Srinivasan

**Bhavya Srinivasan**

Knowledge Transfer Manager - Global Alliance Africa

✉ [bhavya.srinivasan@iuk.ktn-uk.org](mailto:bhavya.srinivasan@iuk.ktn-uk.org)

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**Positive Change.**