

5G Tech Spaces will mobilize university expertise to develop agriculture and food security in Nigeria

Tech Spaces enable XR- and AI-assisted training and development programs for smallholder farmers, youth, and all other stakeholders in the food chain.

ABUJA, NIGERIA, February 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The African School of Economics (ASE) and the Finnish University Consortium, one of its technical partners, have started negotiations with several federal states in Nigeria for the deployment of 5G Tech Spaces on their university campuses and satellite-like service points.

Negotiations took place throughout this week during and after the African Union Development Agency AUDA-NEPAD's two-day High-Level Strategic Engagement meeting, where Climate Change, Food Systems and Resource Mobilization were discussed. The meeting was held at the Presidential Banquet Hall in Abuja at the invitation of the National Coordinator and Director General of AUDA-NEPAD Nigeria Branch, Princess Gloria Akobundu.

A HIGH-TECH SOLUTION FOR NETWORKED INNOVATION

The 5G Tech Space is a university service developed by leading universities in Africa and Finland. It brings a cost-efficient, modular, high-tech XR- and AI-assisted learning, innovation and remote work and service environment to the university campus, as well as reliable internet, uninterrupted electricity, and business connections. In addition to campuses, universities can take 5G Tech Spaces as service points to smaller towns and close to farms.



From left to right: Mr Brian Stephenson, Dr Olatundun Adelegan, Mr Obinna Obiwulu, Her Excellency Princess Gloria Akobundu, Professor Marko Nieminen, Associate Professor Antti Pinomaa, Mrs Mariam Olorundare, Dr Jari Handelberg. Photo credit: African School of Economics.

5G means Fifth-Generation Mobile Telecommunication technology. AI is short for Artificial Intelligence. XR stands for Extended Reality (XR) applications, an umbrella term for Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR).

The 5G Tech Spaces help to build the resilience and capacity of smallholder farmers and boost productivity. In addition, Tech Spaces help the entire food chain's ability to provide products and services to international markets. Moreover, Tech Spaces have the potential to inspire young people's interest in agriculture and the food industry and they offer them a variety of paths to pursue education, work and entrepreneurship.

By providing remote education and enabling technologies, the Tech Spaces will contribute to innovation and increased productivity in agriculture. In pilot cases in Finland, Tech Spaces have served as local hubs creating mobile networks to monitor crops and optimize field work with the help of drones.

NIGERIA AND BEYOND

During the week, a model was developed with leading African universities on how to quickly apply the results of the Nigerian pilot in other African countries.

The negotiations came following talks between various stakeholders during the United Nations Conference of the Parties - COP28 -, which brought together world leaders, ministers and negotiators in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, between 30 November and 13 December, to agree on how to address climate change.

At COP28 in early December, twelve African universities presented a proposal for 5G Tech Spaces as an important Digital Climate Action tool. The 5G Tech Spaces concept enables universities'



Dr Jari Handelberg of Start North, presenting the 5G Tech Spaces. Photo credit: African School of Economics.



5G Tech Space designers Antti Hevosmaa and Antti-Oskari Sinkkonen. Photo credit: Johannes Terhema.

learning, innovation, work and service environments to be quickly brought to smaller towns and remote, otherwise poorly served regions, as well.

The growing list of leading African universities supporting the adoption of 5G Tech Spaces includes, in alphabetical order:

Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
African School of Economics, Benin, Ivory Coast, Nigeria
Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia
Kenyatta University, Kenya
Obafemi Awolowo University (Ile-Ife), Nigeria
The Technical University of Kenya
University of Cape Town, South Africa
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
University of Lagos, Nigeria
University of Lusaka, Zambia
University of Nairobi, Kenya
University of Namibia

The development of the 5G Tech Spaces concept is coordinated by the Start North association and accelerator network, with offices in Helsinki, Finland, and Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.

AFRICA'S LEAP

5G Tech Spaces enable easy and fast sharing of university programs between continents utilizing XR and AI technologies. In addition, in the XR world rendered by 5G Tech Spaces, one can quickly connect to company projects in North America or Europe. This makes it possible to quickly train and onboard internationally talented experts and entrepreneurs.

Stable connections offered by the 5G Tech Spaces and the transition to the XR and AI world offer tremendous opportunities for Africa. The continent can avoid unnecessary traffic and construction while leapfrogging directly to developing low-emission, resource-efficient products, services and methods that restore fields to farming conditions.

FOOD EMERGENCY

On July 13, 2023, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency on food security in the country. The strategy talks in Abuja this week addressed, in particular, the need to support smallholder farmers in their ability to build resilience and boost productivity while promoting climate-smart agriculture.

Nigeria's biggest challenges related to agriculture and food security are the need for restoration of fields, to reduce the loss of raw materials, to develop further processed products for the

international market and to attract more young people to the sector.

The government's goal is to increase smallholder farmers' contribution to GDP, to boost economic growth and to create direct and indirect jobs, thereby reducing unemployment. In addition, the goal is to create wealth, curb youth restiveness and promote climate-smart agriculture.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (AUDA-NEPAD)

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) is a specialized body under the African Union (AU) with the mandates, among others, to provide technical support and mobilize resources and partnerships to its member states.

ABOUT THE FINNISH UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

The Finnish University Consortium represents the country's EDUCase platform. As one of eight international development pilot projects sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, EDUCase brings together 26 Finnish higher-education institutions with academic and societal partners in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to promote collaboration for sustainability in higher education and innovation.

ABOUT START NORTH

Start North is an association that serves as an accelerator network to promote the learning and application of new technologies in order to meet the challenges of global sustainable development. The accelerator network consists of world-leading universities, companies, and not-for-profit organizations.

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RESOURCES:

Start North website: <https://startnorth.com>

5G Tech Spaces are a concrete example of Digital Climate Action to help COP28 signatories move away from fossil fuels | Media Release, Start North, December 13, 2023.

<https://www.einpresswire.com/article/674926416/5g-tech-spaces-are-a-concrete-example-of-digital-climate-action-to-help-cop28-signatories-move-away-from-fossil-fuels>

[COP28 Media Release - November 29, 2023.](#)

[High-Tech 5G Cottages for Africa - August 18, 2023.](#)

[ASE launches 5G Tech Spaces - April 20, 2023.](#)

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