

Enablis expands into West Africa

Following the launch of its operations in East Africa, Enablis, a member-driven entrepreneurial network, is spreading its reach into Western Africa with a US\$1million injection from Microsoft.

Enablis, a membership-based organisation accredits members who demonstrate entrepreneurial skills with over 500 entrepreneurs from Cape Town, South Africa to Nairobi, Kenya.

Microsoft has, over a three-year period, provided over US\$1million to help Enablis establish regional offices in various countries across Africa.

According to the CIA World Fact Book, the Western African region (encompassing English and French West Africa) has a combined GDP of US\$279,2bn and an average GDP growth rate of 5,65%

Enablis' aim is to provide the region's entrepreneurs with better access to networking, capacity building and financing services. Supported by Microsoft and many other partners, Enablis focuses on driving measurable social and economic development by supporting entrepreneurs in the developing world.

"Entrepreneurs exist to develop innovative solutions that transform local, regional and even international markets. And with the growth we've seen in the West African region, there's no doubt that by fostering local businesses and continually developing skills, there will be a very positive economic and social effect on the local economies," said Thomas Hansen, regional general manager for Microsoft West, East and Central Africa.

"The entrepreneur forms the cornerstone of any successful economy," explains Paul Lamontagne, CEO of Enablis Africa, "To expand our coverage across the region, Enablis will be setting up regional hubs in French and English West Africa in mid-2009," he continued.

"Microsoft has been an Enablis partner since 2006 and has offered not only financial support, but has also donated software to build the online member networking platform called the Global Enablis Network and Information Exchange (GENIE)."

The platform allows entrepreneurs to network virtually and to access necessary business advice from coaches and an online library, Lamontagne said.

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