



Nine new projects focused on financial inclusion to receive more than US\$9 million from the Mastercard Foundation Fund for Rural Prosperity

Nairobi, Kenya, October 26, 2018 – The Mastercard Foundation Fund for Rural Prosperity (FRP) today announced that nine companies from seven countries will receive more than US\$9 million to support projects that expand financial inclusion in rural Africa. The nine companies were selected from more than 300 firms competing in the first two phases of the Fund’s 2017/2018 rolling competition, which launched in June 2017 and closed in January 2018.

The 2017/2018 rolling competition was one of the Fund’s largest in its efforts to find and support providers of innovative and scalable financial products and services that improve the lives of poor people living in rural areas of Africa. Financing for another group of companies, assessed as part of the third and fourth phases of the competition, will be announced in 2019.

The latest round of financial support will extend innovative transactions, green energy, asset finance, mobile banking, agency banking, and distribution/logistics solutions to excluded rural populations in the seven countries.

Phase #1 selected companies are:

- Equity Bank Congo SA
- FutureLink Technologies Limited
- Apollo Agriculture Limited
- SolarNow Services Limited
- Easy Solar Limited
- Dodore Kenya Limited

Phase #2 selected companies are:

- Farmerline Limited
- Stewards Globe Limited
- Microcred Limited

The nature and geographical diversity of the new projects saw the Fund expand its presence to four additional Sub-Saharan countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Zambia. The Mastercard Foundation Fund for Rural Prosperity portfolio now includes 30 projects in 11 countries in Africa (Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia). The projects comprise a range of businesses from traditional banks and solar-energy leasing companies to agricultural off-taker firms.

“We are excited to add nine more companies to our growing portfolio that is having a positive impact on the lives of millions of people across Sub-Saharan Africa,” said Wambui Chege, Team Leader of the Fund for Rural Prosperity. “Today’s announcement reinforces our belief that there is a wide range of innovative, Africa-led projects that, with a little support, can drive financial inclusion across the continent.”

Lindsay Wallace, Director of Strategy and Learning at the Mastercard Foundation, said: “The aim of the FRP has always been to enable smallholder farmers and poor people living in rural Africa to reach their full potential by supporting new private sector initiatives that provide access to financial



services. We're very happy to see this latest round of selected firms, demonstrating the depth and breadth of ideas and action plans that will do just that."

An overview of the nine projects that have just been selected can be found below. As well, more information about the 2017/2018 Rolling Competition is available on the website www.frp.org

NOTE TO EDITORS

The countries of focus for the Mastercard Foundation Fund for Rural Prosperity rolling competition are: Benin, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia.

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About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. The Foundation's work is guided by its mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion for people living in poverty. One of the largest foundations in the world, it works almost exclusively in Africa. It was created in 2006 by Mastercard International and operates independently under the governance of its own Board of Directors. The Foundation is based in Toronto, Canada. For more information and to sign up for the Foundation's newsletter, please visit www.mastercardfdn.org. Follow the Foundation at @MastercardFdn on Twitter.

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2017/2018 Rolling Competition: Phase #1 Selected Companies

Company	Company Description	Primary Project Country	FRP Support (in US\$)
Equity Bank Congo	<p>Agency Banking Project ProCredit Bank Congo SA plans to contribute to the expansion and revolutionary transformation of financial services inclusion by replication of an agency banking model throughout DRC. ProCredit Bank Congo SA will leverage technology (e.g., mobile banking), roll out new highly researched financial products and services, and develop a high level of customer service and emotional bonds with customers.</p> <p>It also will develop unique business models (e.g., agency branchless banking) to revolutionize and deepen financial access to unbanked and under-banked populations in DRC, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population resides.</p>	Democratic Republic of Congo	1,500,641
Apollo Agriculture	<p>Remote Sensing and Machine Learning for Smallholder Finance at Scale Apollo offers a customized package of farm inputs and advice on credit to rural farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Farmers receive the package at planting and repay slowly until harvest, when loans are due. Apollo’s digital approach enables low costs and rapid scaling. Apollo acquires and enrolls customers digitally; credit-rates them automatically using high-resolution satellite imagery and behavioural, psychometric, and agronomic data; collects repayments using mobile money; and trains farmers on best practices via automated voice calls (“IVR”).</p> <p>Apollo’s low-cost, low-touch model has the potential to scale-up rapidly to increase the incomes of millions of smallholders.</p>	Kenya	1,085,000
Dodore Kenya Limited	<p>Agri-wallet Agri-wallet, developed by Dodore, is a savings scheme to enable farmers to save for farm inputs and increase their agriculture production and income. Agri-wallet includes two unique and innovative savings features: (1) automatic contributions, and (2) restricted spending.</p> <p>Agri-wallet offers farmers a solution to problems such as lack of savings, mixing of personal and business funds, slow payments from buyers and diversion of funds, and lack of credit access. Agri-wallet uses technological innovations similar to blockchain, combined with social value chain integration and business process innovations like micro-transactions and lean production, to reduce complexity and process costs. Agri-wallet has the potential to transform the rural financial landscape as it fundamentally changes how smallholders save and borrow for farm inputs, pertinent for their farming activities.</p>	Kenya	1,000,000



Company	Company Description	Primary Project Country	FRP Support (in US\$)
Easy Solar Limited	<p>Innovative Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) Financing Adapted to the BoP Market in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Easy Solar has an innovative solution to finance previously un-bankable customers. The company uses the sale of an entry-level solar lamp on a rent-to-own payment plan to build customer relations and density. The lamp repayment history allows for credit scoring and deep customer knowledge before selling higher value solar and other life-changing products on terms affordable to “bottom of the pyramid” customers.</p> <p>Easy Solar’s tiered PAYG financing solution, backed by credit scoring-based on customer data to make its products accessible to “bottom of the pyramid” (BoP) customers, is very innovative in Sierra Leone. It allows the company to get to know its customers (and vice versa) and create customer density, thus making solar home systems and other products accessible and affordable to remote and low-income households and micro-enterprises.</p>	Sierra Leone	588,474
FutureLink Technologies Limited	<p>MSACCO ScaleUp: Leveraging the Relevance and Outreach of SACCOs to Minimize the Cost and Accelerate the Adoption and Usage of Digital Financial Services Channels in Rural Communities</p> <p>FutureLink Technologies is scaling up the adoption and usage of MSACCO. MSACCO is a mobile banking switch that enables thousands of members of SACCOs to transact with their respective SACCO accounts and to deposit and withdraw check account balances and mini-statements through their phones and ATMs.</p> <p>The project aims to boost financial inclusion by improving access, transparency, and convenience to SACCO members, and extending “bank-like” financial services channels to underserved farmer communities across Uganda. Additionally, it will extend the most cost-effective financial services channel to the target population.</p>	Uganda	700,000
SolarNow Services Limited	<p>Modern Off-grid Farmer Financing (MOFF)</p> <p>SolarNow has seen a strong demand for agri-related financing after selling more than 160 solar water pumps in Uganda. To meet this demand and reduce the financial barrier for farmers to invest in agricultural products, SolarNow has fully tailored a flexible pay-plan scheduled to the seasonal cash flows of farmers. For agricultural appliances, flexible down payments and installments will be defined based on production and cash flow records of farmers.</p> <p>SolarNow aims to offer innovative payment plans tailored to seasonality, launched through its existing in-house finance vehicle and embedded in rural areas through the presence of its branch network.</p>	Uganda	739,454



2017/2018 Rolling Competition: Phase #2 Selected Companies

Company	Company Description	Primary Project Country	FRP Support (in US\$)
Farmerline Limited	<p>399 Services: Information and Innovative Finance for Improved Input Distribution</p> <p>Farmerline leverages innovative mobile technology to extend access to financial services, information, and high-quality input directly to farmers resulting in increased yields and incomes. Farmers will need to dial the USSD code “399” on any of the top mobile networks in Ghana to access the service. Farmerline presents the farmers with an opportunity to receive genuine and affordable agri-inputs through credit or savings (lay-away), financial literacy content, climate-smart agricultural tips and weather forecasts, as well as weekly updates on market prices.</p>	Ghana	692,000
Microcred	<p>Energy Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) and Digital Finance to Reach Off-grid Farmers in Mali</p> <p>To offer financial inclusion to off-grid customers in Mali, Microcred will provide PAYG energy. PAYG energy will offer clients a first leasing experience, based on energetic savings realized thanks to the solar product. Then, once they become owners of their solar product, they will become eligible for a digital loan with Microcred Mali. This project will help farmers improve their daily lives by accessing a quality solar product. An optional tablet may be included in the pack to offer rural farmers a way to access key data (weather, the retail price of their products, names of potential buyers, or where to buy their seeds) to help them improve their productivity and revenue. The digital loan will be able to develop their agricultural activities.</p>	Mali	900,000
Stewards Globe	<p>Integrating Credit and Marketing in the Supply Chain for Smallholder Financial Inclusion</p> <p>The financial solution is an integrated supply chain financing model that incorporates input microcredit and insurance with an assured offtake market supported by a “common” mobile platform connecting farmers to financing and buyers. Stewards Globe Limited, along with Good Fellow Finance, Mayfair Insurance, and Export Trading Limited, intends to implement a well-organized supply chain finance to reach underserved yet economically active smallholder farmers. The objective is to improve the access of rural farmers to the formal credit system and increase farmer productivity and income while offering credit, technical capacity-building extension services, financial literacy, and linkages to agricultural markets in a cost-effective and sustainable manner using producer groups.</p>	Zambia	1,800,200
Total			\$9,005,769