

STARTUP NEWS

Twiga Foods and Opibus make it to Time's list of 100 most influential companies of 2022



DIGITAL ID NEWS

European interoperable age verification completes the first large scale pilot



Newsletter

ISSUE 26 | APRIL 7 | 2022

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Africa LawTech Festival 2022 is here!



**AFRICA LAW
TECH
FESTIVAL 2022**
AFRICA - EUROPE AI POLICY TOUR

#AFRICALLAWTECH2022 #AFRICALLAWTECHFESTIVAL
Theme: Africa-Europe Artificial Intelligence Policy Dialogue

PHYSICAL VIRTUAL  5-18 JUNE

NAIROBI | CAPE TOWN | ACCRA | LAGOS
BRUSSELS | BERLIN | PARIS | GENEVA | LONDON

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After two successful editions — the first being held in 2020 physically in Nairobi and the second being held physically and virtually last year in Nairobi, Kenya & Accra, Ghana — We are incredibly proud to announce today that the Africa Law Tech Festival 2022 will take place this year in June.

The 2022 Africa Law Tech Festival dubbed “Africa-Europe Artificial Intelligence Policy Dialogue” will be held across various cities in Africa and Europe making it the biggest Africa Law Tech Festival that we’ve ever hosted.

Africa Law Tech Festival 2022

The increasing enactment of data privacy laws across Africa since the enactment of the GDPR in 2018 demonstrates the Brussels Effect in Africa with an increased proliferation of GDPR-like Data Protection laws and authorities in Africa. This demonstrates the Brussels Effect on digital policy. Artificial Intelligence has seen increased adoption across Africa, with Europe in discussions for an AI Act, the ripple effect will be seen in African policy and judicial systems in the months and years to come. As the Continent begins to form frameworks such as the Conti-

mental Data Policy Framework, the innovation policy framework, and the digital economy framework; there is a need to have an audience with development agencies in Europe working together with continental bodies.

There is also a need for policymakers, lawyers, and startups to understand the context within which Europe makes its laws, by seeing their enabling infrastructure, tech ecosystem, and policy processes to benchmark.

[Get involved](#) 

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Data Protection Compliance Training

The Lawyers Hub and the Africa Digital Policy Institute invite you to attend the Data Protection Compliance Training targeting all persons handling Data, including Officers working in Legal, ICT, Human Resource, Records Management, and Finance Departments.

This 2-day in-person training will be held on 12th and 13th April 2022 at the Lawyers Hub Nairobi, Kenya. To sign up, email hello@lawyershub.ke or call +254784840228

DATA PROTECTION TRAINING
Data Protection, Data Security & Compliance

12th & 13th April 2022
DURATION: 2 Days

Price: Ksh 15000 Inclusive VAT
EVENT TYPE: In-person // Nairobi, Kenya.

Click up: hello@lawyershub.ke
or Call +254784840228
www.lawyershub.org

Africa's Startup Policy Priority Survey

The Lawyers Hub is pleased to request your participation in the Africa Innovation Mradi Survey for Startups in Africa.

The survey is being run as part of the Powering Local Innovation in the Global South initiative by Mozilla, the Omidyar Network, and the Lawyers Hub.

It will be useful in mapping out the Start-Up Innovation Policy Ecosystem across Africa.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may opt-out of any question in the survey. All of your responses will be kept confidential, they will only be used for statistical purposes and will be reported only in aggregated form. This survey will take an estimated 5 minutes to complete.

[Take The Survey](#)

mozilla | [LAWYERS HUB](#) | [OMIDYAR NETWORK](#)

AFRICA'S STARTUP POLICY PRIORITY SURVEY

Get Your Voice Heard
The Lawyers Hub, in partnership with Mozilla, invites you to take the Africa Innovation Mradi Survey for Startups in Africa that will provide valuable insight concerning the policy priorities for the Startup Ecosystem in Africa.

TAKE THE SURVEY <https://lawyershub.typeform.com/startups>

Join the Boost Africa Legal Capacity Workshop for Startup Funders and Founders in Africa

BOOST AFRICA LEGAL CAPACITY VIRTUAL WORKSHOP
'Building the legal capacity of startup funders and founders in Africa'

Dates: 26th April - 31st May
Registration Deadline: 25th April 2022
Commitment Period: 6 weeks with flexibility to attend preferred sessions

To sign up, visit: <https://lawyershub.org/startups/>
www.lawyershub.org

Logos: Lawyers Hub, European Investment Bank, Adam Smith Europe (part of the Adam Smith International group)

Lawyers Hub is excited to invite you to participate in a free legal training workshop that we will be hosting with the European Investment Bank and Adam Smith International, for early-stage startup funders and founders in Africa titled **Boost Africa Legal Capacity Workshop** from 26th April to 31st May 2022. Themed 'Building the legal capacity of startup funders and founders in Africa', the **Boost Africa Legal Capacity Workshop** is a virtual workshop that brings together early-stage startup funders and startup founders from Anglophone and Francophone Africa to learn about the legal aspects of setting up start-ups and first-time investment funds as well as build their legal knowledge and capacity to run legally sound ventures.

The virtual workshop will cover the following training modules:

- I. **Workshop 1: Company Formation and Structuring | Intellectual Property**
- II. **Workshop 2: Capital Structuring, Valuation and Fundraising | Fund management**
- III. **Workshop 3: Taxation | Contracting | Internal Organization Policies**

The workshop is a great chance to connect with other startup funders and founders from the African continent while building your legal knowledge and capacity on aspects of running a legally sound startup or fund through customized training delivered by experienced industry experts.

[Sign up](#)

The Democratic Republic of Congo Joins the East African Community

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) officially joined the East African Community (EAC) on March 29, 2022, becoming its 7th Partner State.

The Chairperson of the Summit, H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, who is also Kenya's President, informed the meeting that DRC had met all the set criteria for admission as provided for in the Treaty for the establishment of the EAC.

"We have concluded the regional processes for admitting new members as provided for in our rules of procedure," said President Kenyatta.

The DRC has a population of about 90 million and a GDP of \$54.8 billion. It is the world's largest source of cobalt and Africa's biggest miner of copper. The country is well placed to serve as a trade corridor between East and West Africa.

STARTUP NEWS

The Baobab Network Launches The African Founder Community

■ This week, the Baobab Network, an accelerator that backs early-stage technology start-ups in Africa, launched the Africa Founder Community in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Safaricom launches Sharia-compliant lending product

■ Telecommunications giant Safaricom has added a new Sharia-compliant offering to its product suite. HalalPesa is an interest-free lending credit platform built to cater to Muslim customers who have been left out because most credit facilities are not Sharia-compliant. The product is offered in partnership with Islamic Bank Gulf Africa.

Morocco's AlMada launches African startup investment fund

■ AlMada, an investment holding company run by the Moroccan Royal Family, announced a \$110 pan African start-up investment fund. The fund targets African startups that have progressed to a certain level of maturity to help increase their capital and foster their growth. Further, the venture fund also offers access to a network of industry partners. With about 100 years of experience in promoting innovative entrepreneurship, the startup ecosystem stands to benefit significantly from the fund.

Kenyan companies; Twiga Foods and Opibus make it to Time's list of 100 most influential companies of 2022 as the only African Companies



Photo: Business Today

■ The two named companies made it to the second edition of Time's list highlighting impactful businesses around the world under the 'disruptors' category. Nominations across different sectors were made before the making of the list after which editors from Time assessed each based on different factors, including relevance, leadership, success, and impact. Opibus is a Swedish-Kenyan company founded back in 2017 known to be the first African company delivering locally developed electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are part of the transition toward sustainable transport. Twiga Foods was launched in the country in 2014, operating as a B2B e-commerce platform that simplifies the supply chain.

DATA PROTECTION NEWS

The US and EU finalize talks to revamp the Privacy Shield agreement

■ The USA and EU are finalizing talks to allow the free flow of personal data between the two regions. The news was publicly announced by US President Joe Biden on 25th March 2022 at the NATO summit. Earlier in July 2020, the Court of Justice of the European Union declared that the Privacy Shield, which allowed for the ease of transatlantic data flow, was unlawful. Resultantly, organisations that rely on cross-border data flows were forced to seek alternative means such as Standard Contractual Clauses between the sender and the receiver. Privacy experts have expressed their criticism of this recent development, stating that despite the new privacy shield framework promising secure and trustworthy data flows, it does not expressly state how the same will be achieved nor how the concerns outlined in the Schrems 2 judgment will be addressed. In a tweet expressed by Max Schrems, the privacy lawyer who led the case against the first Privacy Shield, argued that this new agreement poses as a patchwork rather than a sophisticated solution, skeptically adding that such efforts are likely to fail again.



Photo: Stephanie Lecocq

Meta and Apple disclose users' data in error to forged data requests

■ Three investigators uncovered that Meta and Apple disclosed users' data, including phone numbers, IP addresses, and other subscriber details to hackers in alleged 'emergency data requests'. The hackers involved are said to be from the 'Recursions team' that made a series of these unlawful requests to numerous targeted companies back in 2021. Usually, the companies conduct due process to ascertain the legitimacy of the requests as being from other established corporations' verifiable addresses or law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement agencies routinely make such requests to aid in criminal investigations. In some jurisdictions, law enforcement agencies are required to submit a court order to back their request. On the other hand, when emergency requests are made, they may be fulfilled without due legal process except in instances of serious risk where the big tech companies may notify the police. This presents a blind spot that hackers have effectively exploited. Further, the CEO of Resecurity shared that metadata and cookies of law enforcement agencies' addresses can be found and sold on the dark web. This assertion makes it easy for hackers to make successful illegitimate claims under a verifiable address.



DIGITAL ID NEWS

Nigeria extends deadline for linking Digital ID to SIMs

■ This week, Nigeria's Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami), extended the deadline for linking digital IDs to SIMs. The Minister further directed that the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) offer enrolment services for the next few days. National Identification Number (NIN) issuances have reached 77.1 million, according to statistics from the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) reported by The Guardian Nigeria.



Photo: Wikipedia

State of Immigration documentation process following the influx of Russian refugees

■ The recent Missile attacks on Ukrainian big cities have forced residents to flee to other countries such as Poland and Denmark, consequently burdening these countries' immigration documentation processes. Canada swooped in to help by providing biometric kits to the immigration departments of countries taking in Ukrainian refugees. Further, Canada extended the time for Ukrainian immigrants to submit their biometrics for Visa applications.

European interoperable age verification completes the first large scale pilot

■ The UK, Europe, and Australia are building digital mechanisms for age verification geared towards improving online safety for minors. The first test runs for the interoperable age verification technology proved successful. The euCONSENT project ran across five countries including Greece, the UK, Germany, and Belgium. The age verification providers association also utilizes facial age estimation tools that incorporate biometrics which has reported considerably low error rates so far.



Digital identity tools and the metaverse

■ American Telecommunications company and biometrics provider, Qualcomm, recently announced it opened a \$100M fund dubbed the 'Snapdragon Metaverse fund' to support innovation in the Metaverse. Previously, Qualcomm Launched Snapdragon to aid in building biometric systems. In this respect, the fund will go toward developing fundamental structures of the Metaverse, which includes biometric ID solutions. A report by Accenture on the Metaverse industry outlines the importance of authenticity in digital ID verification to foster trust and reliability. Adventure proposes the use of distributed ledger technology (DLT) such as blockchain offered by companies such as Liquid Avator to counter digital vulnerabilities; for instance bad actors/scammers.

LEGAL TECH NEWS

Rwanda's Legal Tech startup, Hence, discusses International launch

A new legal tech startup, Hence, is looking to Africa for software development talent. Hence, a legal tech startup that looks to match clients with the right lawyer using data and artificial intelligence, launched on March 18th after two successful pilots and \$1.8 million raised in seed funding. The company is based in London and with a hub in the Rwandan capital of Kigali. In an interview with Legaltech News, Hence co-founder Arun Shanmuganathan revealed that the decision to hire from the "underleveraged" legal tech talent market in Africa was an economical and creative one. "We are hiring people across the continent [Africa] like from Uganda, Ethiopia, and of course Rwanda, perspectives that you don't often see in the U.K. or U.S. legal tech worlds because hiring from the perspective of 'I've worked with these people before, so I'll work with them again,' is an easy default to have," Shanmuganathan said. "But when companies start exploring beyond that—maybe a candidate didn't go to the right school, or hasn't worked in the right company—you start seeing newer perspectives to solutions emerge, ones that are cheaper, better, and more efficient in the long run." It is now clear that as job opportunities in the legal tech markets in the U.S. and U.K. grow, some entrepreneurs are venturing into regions of the world with more nascent legal tech scenes to find new talent, lured by the prospect of "outside the box" thinkers.

We are hiring people across the continent [Africa]...because hiring from the perspective of 'I've worked with these people before, so I'll work with them again,' is an easy default to have.

**Hence co-founder,
Arun Shanmuganathan**



AI NEWS



Photo: Sergei Supinsky

Ukraine's Ministry of Defense uses AI technology to identify dead Russian soldiers

■ Earlier in the month, news stations noted Ukraine's use of Clearview AI technology. The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence began using ClearView facial recognition software to identify Russian soldiers who succumbed to death in the war on Ukraine soil to later locate and notify their families. Clearview matches images sought from the web with uploaded photos of dead bodies. The use of this AI tech has attracted reasonable scrutiny. For instance, racial bias stifles the software's reliability and privacy concerns over the collection and use of people's sensitive data over the internet.

BLOCKCHAIN AND DIGITAL CURRENCIES

Kenyan Crypto Scam: Bitstream circle

On March 13th, 2022, Investors in an alleged crypto Ponzi scheme, Bitstream Circle, were shocked to find out that they couldn't successfully process withdrawals. The scheme's Telegram admin communicated that the holdup was caused by a supposed network update problem. However, after the promise of a 5-hour wait to fix the error, the problem wasn't rectified. Reports show that the persons behind the scam made away with investors digital assets worth \$10million. Bitstream Circle is alleged to be registered in the UK in November 2021, with Quin Yang, a Chinese National, as the director.



Photo: Google

Ethereum Co-creator endorses Zambia to be Africa's Tech Hub

■ Ethereum founder Vitalik Buterin has endorsed Zambia's efforts to establish itself as a hub for thriving startups. The founder had previously expressed his support in a meeting with Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema following a visit in 2019.

"I was impressed by everyone I met's willingness to go and do big things," said Buterin in an interview. Zambian President, driven by the need to reduce the country's dependence on copper exportation and create employment opportunities as promised in his election campaign, wholeheartedly supports Zambia being Africa's Tech Hub.

I was impressed by everyone I met's willingness to go and do big things.

**Ethereum founder,
Vitalik Buterin**



EU lawmakers to join the bandwagon in tightening regulation on cryptocurrency trade

■ Concerns about the exploitation of the majorly unregulated \$2.1 trillion crypto sector by bad actors have stimulated policymakers' action worldwide. On 31st March 2022, Policymakers from the EU Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Civil Liberties backed the proposed traceability draft legislation. Crypto Exchange Coinbase expressed concerns over such new legislation crippling innovation in the crypto sector. Under the proposed law first introduced last year, crypto exchange firms would have to disclose information on parties involved in transfers to legal authorities. This move is an effort to curb financial crime and money laundering in the sector. The proposed legislation impacts individuals with 'unhosted wallets' who will be required to keep records of transactions of 1000 or more and report to competent authorities.

POLICY WATCH

Public Consultation on Industry Guidelines for Child Online Protection and Safety in Kenya

■ The Communications Authority of Kenya has developed “Industry guidelines for child online protection and safety in Kenya.” The Authority wishes to submit the above guidelines for public consultation. Stakeholders, including the general public and all interested parties, are invited to review the proposed industry guidelines for child online protection and safety in Kenya and provide any suggestion(s) with justification(s), views, and inputs in enhancing its implementation.

Stakeholders, interested parties, and the public have until **22nd April 2022** to submit their inputs and comments, which will inform any changes to the final industry guidelines for child online protection and safety in Kenya.

Written submissions can be forwarded to the Authority through cop@ca.go.ke or the address below on or before the stated deadline.

Ghana to levy tax on electronic payments amid opposition protest

■ The majority of Members of Ghana’s parliament approved a 1.5% ‘e-levy’ tax. It was introduced in parliament by the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, presenting it as a means to increase government revenue. The government estimates that it would raise \$926 million in 2022 through the e-levy tax. Ghana is currently facing an economic crisis facing a high rate of inflation, a heavy debt burden, and a depreciating currency. Industry experts indicated that the country would need more fiscal measures to reverse the country’s current state, and that would also take time. Opposition members were heavily against the tax, to the extent that some walked out in protest. They believe that this move is against public interest and would shuffle economic growth in the private sector. Market participants are equally displeased.

\$926 million

Estimated amount government would raise in 2022 through the e-levy tax.

The Nigerian Communications Commission publishes the License Framework for the Establishment of Mobile Virtual Network Operators in Nigeria

■ The Nigerian Communications Commission published the License Framework for the Establishment of Mobile Virtual Network Operators in Nigeria this week. The Policy sets out the licensing requirements for Mobile Virtual Network Operators in Nigeria (MVNO). Its objectives are as follows

- To allow the service providers of virtual mobile communications services to participate in the telecommunications provisioning market of Nigeria, with an emphasis on improving the telecommunication output of the country.
- To ensure that all core stakeholders are adequately catered for and protected within a Virtual Network Operator enabled environment.
- To allow for the Virtual Network Service to contribute to the availability and expansion of quality mobile coverage through redundant capacity utilization, active infrastructure sharing, national roaming, and other telecommunication elements that enable it.
- To present guidelines to which MVNO operations can flourish within the Nigerian Telecommunications market.

[Access the Framework](#)

Togo exempts electric vehicles from import duty

Togo authorities have canceled duties on any electric vehicles. Per the directive, any transport vehicle that does not use diesel or petrol will benefit from State approval to enter the country legally.

“For the completion of customs clearance formalities for electric or hybrid vehicles, as well as batteries intended for their power supply, an approval issued by a joint order of the Minister of Trade and the Minister of the Environment is required at the customs cordon,” explained the Commissioner-General of the OTR, Adedzé Kodjo.

The move could prove beneficial for the country’s green economy.



PRODUCT HUNT

WhatsApp expands file-sharing size to 2GB in limited test



Meta Platforms-owned messaging app WhatsApp has begun testing the ability for users to share media files up to 2GB in size. After rolling out an update that came with message reactions for a limited number of beta testers, the app – the world’s most popular instant messenger with more than two billion users – is now running a limited pilot to test the sharing of large files. Currently, WhatsApp users are restricted to sending files no bigger than 100MB. The increased file size could prove a concern for the rights holders of television series and movies as it could become easier to share this sort of content with other users. WhatsApp has rolled the larger limit out to a limited set of beta testers in Argentina and could still be rolled out in different countries soon, although it’s unknown if the larger file size will be made permanent.

EVENTS

Big Data Tech Summit- 26th -27th April 2022

Big Data Tech Warsaw is an exciting conference with purely practical content in the fields of data science, AI, data strategy and ROI, data engineering, real-time streaming, and the cloud. In our agenda, you will find real stories from the trenches, practical case studies, and technical presentations given by experts and true practitioners who work at top data-driven companies. They will share their use-cases, recommendations, tips, successes, and failures. The 8th edition of the annual conference Big Data Technology Warsaw Summit takes place on April 26th-28th

Africa CEO Forum Annual Summit- 13th & 14th June 2022

The annual summit of the AFRICA CEO FORUM is the largest international meeting of the African private sector. Two days of conferences, debates, and high-level meetings dedicated to highlighting the driving role of the private sector in the development of the continent.

CIARB International Conference 2022. 27th to 29th April 2022

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators International Conference is a bi-annual premier event that attracts panelists & delegates from the world over. The conference provides a perfect opportunity for delegates and panelists to network, forge new relations, share ideas and gather new insights on how to navigate and manage the emerging innovations as we gain new skills in handling foreseeable and unforeseen disruptions.

Connected Summit 2022. 10th -14th April 2021

The Connected Kenya Summit is an ICT thought leadership gathering that brings together over 1,000 regional and global ICT industry thought leaders, key policymakers, high profile industry champions and executives, financiers, and ICT innovators, for a series of high-level discussions geared towards nurturing innovative ideas, investments and partnerships that spur the realization of Kenya’s development agenda leveraging on technology.