



GHANA FINTECH AND INNOVATION REPORT

Q2 2024 EDITION

A SUSTINERI ATTORNEYS QUARTERLY FINTECH AND INNOVATION REPORT

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EDITOR'S COMMENT



Richard Nunekpeku
The Editor

Dear Esteemed Readers,

We are pleased to bring you the 2nd quarter edition of our authoritative “Ghana Fintech and Innovation Report”.

In this edition, we explore the Fintech Landscape in Ghana highlighting some key stakeholders, the licensing regime by the Bank of Ghana, primary and secondary regulations among others. Our goal is to give you a bird-eye view of the ecosystem and the foundations promoting the incredible growth.

Also, we spotlight the Ghana Police Service as a key player in combating and mitigating the impact

of the associated risks of technology uses including fraud, cybersecurity, impersonation among others.

Further, we have provided insights on how professional services landscape is changing with the adoption of technology.

Other exciting issues in this edition include the use of Artificial Intelligence by Meta (the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram) and Spotify, a leading music and podcast streaming app; vendor online selling checklist, the rise of virtual banks, and spotlighted the Ghana Venture Capital Trust Fund (GVCTF) as a

key investment vehicle for startups within the tech ecosystem in Ghana.

As always, we trust that the insights and knowledge shared in this edition will prove invaluable as we brace ourselves for rapid deployment of tech innovations in Ghana.

PUBLISHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS



SUSTINERI ATTORNEYS PRUC is Ghana's foremost Technology, Fintech, and Start-up law firm, committed to providing differentiated legal services by leveraging our experience as proven entrepreneurs, business managers, and business lawyers which allows us to think and act like entrepreneurs, business owners, and managers we work with at all times.

As a team of expert legal practitioners, SUSTINERI ATTORNEYS PRUC takes pride in acting with integrity, avoiding conflicts, and working with clients to design innovative legal solutions that meet their specific needs.

At SUSTINERI ATTORNEYS PRUC, we consider every client's brief as an opportunity to use our sound understanding of Ghana's business, commercial and legal

environment, professional experience, and sound commercial knowledge to provide solutions that do not only address immediate legal needs but also anticipate future challenges and opportunities.

Our pride as the foremost Fintech and Start-up focused law firm stems not only from our understanding of the potentials of emerging technologies and our belief in the ideas of many young people but also from the difference our network of resources and experience can make when working closely with founders and entrepreneurs. To this end, we operate a 24-hour policy urging our clients to reach out to us at any time and on any issue.

We strive for excellence, ensuring that our solutions provide sustainable paths for our clients' businesses by adopting a common-sense

and practical approach in our value-added legal service delivery – and employing our problem-solving skills.

Our goal is to help businesses to become commercially sound and viable, as well as regulatory compliant, by engaging in legal and beneficial transactions to promote their business competitiveness for sustained operations and investments.

And as our name implies, our priority is to always leverage legal means to promote the sustainability (long-term viability) of our clients' businesses.

We are different, and the preferred partner for growth.



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THE FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY (FINTECH) LANDSCAPE IN GHANA



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THE FINTECH REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

Broadly, the regulation of Financial Technology (Fintech) innovations in Ghana can be grouped into Primary and Secondary Regulations with established regulators. The Primary Regulations provide primarily for the licensing, supervision, and regulation of financial products or services while Secondary Regulations generally deal with the management and opera-

tions of businesses in Ghana. In the below snap review, we take a look at the Regulatory Bodies providing statutory services for the Fintech Companies and innovations in Ghana.

Numerous laws have been passed within the last decade to position the financial sector for inclusive growth. These laws include, amongst others, the Payment Systems and

Services Act, 2019 (Act 987) ("Payment Systems Act"); the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843); the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2020 (Act 1044); the Banks and Specialised Deposit-Taking Institutions Act, 2016 (Act 930); the Securities Industry Act, 2016 (Act 929) and the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038). Collectively, these legislations provide the legal basis for delivery of fintech products.



REGULATORS

PRIMARY REGULATORS:

- The Bank of Ghana (BOG)
- Securities and Exchange commission (SEC)
- National Insurance Commission (NIC)

SECONDARY REGULATORS:

- The Office Of The Registrar Of Companies (ORC)
- The Data Protection Commission (DPC)
- Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA)
- Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC)
- National Communications Authority (NCA)
- Social Security And National Insurance Trust (SSNIT)
- Metropolitan, Municipal, And District Assemblies (MMDAS)
- Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC)

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

PRIMARY LAWS, GUIDELINES, DIRECTIVES AND REGULATIONS:

1. Bank of Ghana Act 2002 (Act 612) (as amended)
2. Bank and Specialized Deposit-Taking Institutions Act 2016 (Act 930),
3. Payment Systems and Services Act 2019 (Act 987),
4. Anti-Money Laundering Act 2020 (Act 1044),
5. Ghana Deposit Protection Act 2016 (Act 931) (as amended)
6. Credit Reporting Act 2007 (Act 726)
7. Securities Industry Act 2016 (Act 929)
8. Insurance Act 2021 (Act 1061)
9. [Fintech Licensing Guideline]
10. Regulatory Sandbox Licensing Guidelines
11. SEC Crowdfunding Guidelines 2024

SECONDARY LAWS, GUIDELINES, DIRECTIVES AND REGULATIONS:

1. Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992).
2. Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843)
3. Ghana Revenue Act 2009 (Act 791)
4. Income Tax Act 2015 (Act 896)
5. National Pensions Act, 2008 (Act 766)
6. The Local Government Act 1993 (Act 467)
7. Ghana Investment Promotion Act 2013 (Act 865).

The Fintech Licensing Categories in Ghana

Licensing Category	Permitted Activities
Dedicated Electronic Money Issuer (DEMI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recruitment and management of agents o Creation and management of wallets o P2P On Net / Off Net o Cash-In and Cash-Out o Wallet based domestic money transfers including transfers to and from bank accounts o Investment, savings, credit, insurance and pension products (ONLY in partnership with banks and duly regulated institutions) o Mobile money merchant acquiring o Termination of Inbound International Money Transfer
Payment Service Provider (Scheme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Domestic Card Brand Associations e.g., Gh-Link o Switching & routing of payment transactions and instructions
Payment Service Provider (Enhanced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All permissible activities for PSP-medium license. o Marketplace for financial services offered by duly regulated financial service providers o Merchant acquiring and merchant aggregation o Payment processing o Printing and personalization of EMV Cards o Inward International remittances services o Provide 3rd party payment gateways services o Limited use closed loop virtual cards (funded via refunds, rewards & user's other accounts) o Connects to an Enhanced PSP to offer the following services o All permissible activities for PSP-standard license. o Payment aggregation which is connected to Enhanced PSP o Biller/Merchant Aggregation o POS Deployment o Printing of non-cash payment instruments e.g., cheques o Mobile payment Apps (with liability shift on PSP Enhanced)

Payment Service Provider (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connects to an Enhanced PSP to offer the following services o All permissible activities for PSP-standard license o Payment aggregation which is connected to Enhanced PSP o Biller/Merchant Aggregation o POS Deployment o Printing of non-cash payment instruments e.g., cheques, o Mobile payment Apps (with liability shift on PSP Enhanced)
Payment Service Provider (Standard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connects to an Enhanced PSP to offer the following services. o Mobile payment Apps (Liability shift on PSP enhanced). o Reserved for Ghanaians and wholly owned Ghanaian entities
Payment and Financial Technology Service Provider (PFTSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Digital Product development, delivery and support services. o Credit scoring predictive analytics. o AML/CFT centralized platform. o Fraud Management services. o Know your Customer (KYC) and Customer Due Diligence (CDD) authentication services. o Permitted to connect to DEMIs, PSPs, Banks and Financial Institutions

Key Licensed Activities Information

- 51 + licensed companies
- 1 special approval (MTN)
- Regulatory Sandbox Admissions
- eCedi Hackathon

RELATED FEES

Fee categories:

- Integrity Capital
- Processing fee
- License fee
- Renewal fee

License Type	Integrity Capital (GHS million)	Processing	License	Renewal	Tenure
Dedicated Electronic Money Issuer	20	25	100	10	5 Years
PSP (Scheme)	8	20	90	8	5 Years
PSP (Enhanced)	2	12	40	7	5 Years
PSP (Medium)	0.8	8	15	5	5 Years
PSP (Standard)	n/a	0.5	1	0.2	5 Years
PFTSP	n/a	10	20	5	5 Years

INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGY





A SPOTLIGHT ON THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE

A POLICE SERVICE PROVIDING SUPPORT TO MINIMIZE CYBERSECURITY CRIMES IN GHANA

Cybersecurity crimes, or cybercrimes, are criminal activities executed using digital technology and the internet. These crimes can take various forms and can have serious consequences for individuals, businesses, and even governments. Understanding cybersecurity crimes involves recognizing the different types of cybercrimes, the motivations behind them, and the methods used by cybercriminals.

Some common types of cybersecurity crimes include:

1. Hacking: Unauthorized access to computer systems or networks to steal information, disrupt

operations, or cause damage.

2. Phishing: Sending fraudulent emails or messages to trick individuals into revealing sensitive information such as passwords or financial details.

3. Malware: Malicious software designed to infect computers and steal data, disrupt operations, or cause other harm.

4. Ransomware: A type of malware that encrypts a victim's files and demands payment in exchange for decryption.

5. DDoS attacks: Distributed Denial of Service attacks involve overwhelming a target's server

or network with traffic to disrupt services.

6. Identity theft: Stealing personal information such as Social Security numbers or credit card details to commit fraud.

In Ghana, the primary legislation that governs cybersecurity crimes is the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038). This Act was passed to provide a legal framework for the prevention, detection, prosecution, and punishment of cybercrimes in Ghana.

The Ghana Police Service however, provides support services to minimize cybersecurity crimes through an approach that encompasses various

strategies and initiatives that includes the formation of specialized units, collaboration with national and international agencies, public awareness campaigns, capacity building, and legislative support. These efforts are aimed at addressing cyber threats, enhancing cyber-security awareness, and collaborating with relevant stakeholders to safeguard the digital ecosystem in Ghana.

Here is in-depth look at their efforts:

1. Specialized Cyber-crime Unit: The Ghana Police Service has established a dedicated Cyber-crime Unit within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). This unit is staffed with special-

ly trained officers who have expertise in investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes. The unit focuses on handling a wide range of cyber-related offenses, including hacking, online fraud, identity theft, cyberbullying, and other forms of digital crimes.

This Unit is also tasked with the major role of detection and investigations of crimes whereby digital devices, networks and other telecommunication devices and internet are used as the target and investigates very sensitive cases such as online child exploitation and all other cases related to women and children on the internet space.

It is equipped with a state-

of-the-art Digital Forensics Laboratory for digital forensics examination, and a cyber patrol section for advanced online monitoring and surveillance of Ghana's cyber space for crime detection. This Unit is not only involved in just criminal acts but extends to more traditional offences which includes fraud, threats, and other serious crimes whereas a digital device was the means used.

The Ghana Police, as part of its transformation agenda, implemented a comprehensive reorganization of the Cybercrimes Unit (CU) at the CID Headquarters. The Unit has been decentralized to all 256 Police Regional Commands across the country to bring its services closer to the public. The sole aim of this reorganization is to support criminal investigations by delivering services such as cyber forensic analysis, digital devices forensic analysis, mobile and network forensic analysis and digital content forensic analysis instead of its initial focus on general criminal investigations such as building case dockets and direct handling of suspects. The Cyber Crimes Unit (CU) and Digital Forensics Laboratory of the Ghana Police Service is composed of detectives specialized in cybercrime investigations and digital forensics. The



unit has three Divisions which include

- a. Cyber Investigations
- b. Cyber Intelligence (Cyber Patrol)
- c. Child Protection Digital Forensics Laboratory.

The function and responsibilities of the Cybercrime Unit includes a combination of Cybercrime investigations, and prosecution, Collection of data and forensic analysis, Cyber Intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination, Assessment and analysis of cybercrime phenomena, Specialized support to other police units, Cyber Surveillance and monitoring.

2. Collaboration with National Cybersecurity Agencies:

The Ghana Police Service collaborates closely with national cybersecurity agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-GH). This collaboration allows for the sharing of intelligence, resources, and expertise to effectively respond to cybersecurity threats and incidents. By working together, these agencies can coordinate their efforts to address cybercrimes and protect critical digital infrastructure

Importance of this collab-

oration:

a. Specialized expertise: National cybersecurity agencies often have specialized knowledge and skills in dealing with cyber threats, such as malware analysis, digital forensics, and incident response. By collaborating with these agencies, the police can benefit from their expertise to investigate and respond to cybercrimes more effectively.

b. Enhanced capabilities: National cybersecurity agencies typically have advanced tools and technologies for monitoring, detecting, and mitigating cyber threats. By partnering with these agencies, the police can access these capabilities to

strengthen their cybersecurity operations and improve their ability to prevent and respond to cybercrimes.

c. Information sharing: Collaboration between the police and national cybersecurity agencies enables the sharing of threat intelligence, trends, and best practices. This information exchange helps both parties stay informed about emerging cyber threats and vulnerabilities, allowing them to proactively address potential risks and enhance their cybersecurity posture.

d. Coordinated response: In the event of a cyber incident or attack, collaboration between the police and national cybersecurity agencies facilitates a coordinated response. By working together, they can quickly mobilize resources, coordinate investigations, and take appropriate actions to mitigate the impact of the cyber incident and identify the perpetrators.

3. Public Awareness Campaigns:

The Ghana Police Service conducts public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives to promote cybersecurity best practices among individuals, businesses, and organizations. These campaigns aim to educate the public about the risks associated

In Ghana, the primary legislation that governs cybersecurity crimes is the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038).

with cybercrimes and provide guidance on how to stay safe online. By raising awareness, the police help empower citizens to protect themselves from digital threats and reduce the likelihood of falling victim to cybercrimes.

Importance of public awareness campaigns in addressing cybersecurity crimes:

a. Education and empowerment: Public awareness campaigns help educate the general public about the various forms of cyber threats, such as phishing, malware, social engineering, and online fraud. By increasing awareness, individuals and organizations can become more vigilant and informed about potential cybersecurity risks, empowering them to make better decisions to protect their digital assets.

b. Promoting best practices: The Ghana Police can use public awareness campaigns to promote best practices for cybersecurity, such as using strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, keeping software up to date, and being cautious about sharing personal information online. By disseminating these best practices, the police can help individuals and businesses bolster their cybersecurity defenses.

c. Reporting mechanisms: Public awareness campaigns can inform the public about reporting mechanisms for cybercrimes and suspicious activities. By encouraging individuals to report cyber incidents to the appropriate authorities, the police can gather valuable intelligence, investigate cybercrimes more effectively,

The Ghana Police Service collaborates closely with national cybersecurity agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-GH).

and take proactive measures to address emerging threats.

4. International Collaboration: The Ghana Police Service engages in international collaboration with law enforcement agencies and organizations to address transnational cybercrimes. Given the borderless nature of cyber threats, cooperation with international partners is essential to combatting cybercrimes that may have cross-border implications. By working with foreign counterparts, the police can investigate and prosecute cybercriminals operating outside Ghana's jurisdiction.

5. Capacity Building and Training: The Ghana Police Service invests in capacity building and



training for its officers or personnels to enhance their skills in dealing with cybersecurity issues or to properly equip them to fight cybercrimes in the country. This includes providing specialized training in digital forensics, cyber-crime investigation techniques, and the latest developments in cybersecurity technology. By equipping officers with the necessary knowledge and tools, the police are better prepared to tackle cybercrimes effectively.

Mr. Isaac Ken Yeboah the then Commissioner of Police during the inauguration of a computer training program of the Ghana Police Service in the Ashanti Region said that the service rendered was committed to making effective use of communications technologies to fight and track down criminals. This motive behind

the program was to ensure that Officers had basic knowledge on ICT to aid effective policing, in communities.

6. Legislative Support: The Ghana Police Service advocates for legislative support to strengthen the legal framework for addressing cybercrimes. This involves working with policymakers and lawmakers to enact or amend laws that specifically target cyber offenses, ensuring that law enforcement has the necessary legal tools to combat digital crimes effectively. One law that was passed is the Cybersecurity Act. The police work with lawmakers to develop and pass legislation that specifically addresses cybercrimes, such as hacking, online fraud, and cyberbullying. The police also receive training on cybersecurity laws and regulations, enabling them to effectively investigate and prosecute cyber-

crimes.

Legislative support is crucial for the Ghana Police to effectively combat cybersecurity crimes. By having appropriate laws and regulations in place, the police are empowered to investigate, and prosecute cybercriminal activities. Legislative support provides the legal framework for law enforcement agencies to take action against cybercriminals and hold them accountable for their actions.

In summary, the Ghana Police Service provides the needed support to minimize cybersecurity crimes. Through their efforts, the police aim to create a safe and secure digital environment for all citizens and entities in Ghana.

EMERGING BUSINESS MODELS AND PRODUCTS



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DIGITALISATION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



“BUILT” ACCOUNTING IS LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM THE ACCOUNTING LANDSCAPE

In today's fast-paced business environment, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face numerous challenges, not least of which is effective financial management. For many SMEs, keeping accurate financial records, managing cash flows, and ensuring compliance with tax regulations can be daunting tasks, often due to limited resources and expertise.

Enter Built Accounting, an innovative accounting

startup that is leveraging cutting-edge technology to simplify and enhance the financial operations of small businesses.

Built Accounting, a pioneering Ghanaian company, is dedicated to training African youth and equipping them with the digital tools necessary to provide affordable bookkeeping services to small businesses.

Utilizing advanced digital infrastructure, Built Accounting delivers services that enable small businesses to operate more efficiently and effectively. The Built Accounting

Software allows small enterprises to manage their cash flow, process customer payments, and handle payroll seamlessly.

Since its inception, Built Accounting has made a significant impact on over 5,000 small businesses in Ghana through its comprehensive business training programs and development services. These direct beneficiaries have collectively mobilized more than \$480,000 in credit, generated \$2.5 million in additional revenue, and created over 500 new jobs for young people.

Recent research by the African Development Bank

highlights a critical issue: only 20% of African SMEs have access to credit, posing a substantial challenge within Africa's entrepreneurial landscape. Built Accounting addresses this problem on two fronts. First, it provides young people with the skills and experience needed to secure employment and earn an income. Second, it ensures that SMEs maintain accurate financial records, which in turn facilitates easier access to financial services.

With the Built Accounting software, businesses can create personalized invoices, track and organize expenses, manage payroll, control inventory, and generate clear, detailed financial reports. This comprehensive suite of tools supports small businesses in maintaining robust financial health and achieving sustainable growth.

Built is enhancing the creditworthiness of businesses by streamlining the traditionally complex process of financial management through automation. This innovation is particularly beneficial in Africa, where \$205 billion was raised in 2022 to boost investor confidence and support.

As the role of banks evolves, fintech solutions like Built are providing businesses with seamless access to capital while maintaining financial control.

Built simplifies profitability for businesses by offering comprehensive finance management services. Businesses can easily create and track invoices, receive global payments, pay suppliers, manage payroll, and monitor cash flow accurately. The platform also enables the generation of detailed financial reports and facilitates bank reconciliation, all accessible via phone or desktop.

Built provides businesses with a comprehensive, lifetime free package that includes unlimited invoicing, payment processing, expense tracking, and financial reporting. This service consolidates all financial activities in one platform, eliminating the need for cumbersome Excel sheets or complex formulas.

To get started, businesses simply need to sign up with an email address and begin creating invoices. The platform handles the rest, requiring no specialized skills from the user.

This service offers significant benefits, such as reducing revenue leaks, enhancing tax compliance, and improving the business's creditworthiness. Additionally, it helps businesses present a strong financial position to investors, stakeholders, and partners.

Built Accounting is setting a new standard in the accounting industry by leveraging technology to provide SMEs with accessible, efficient, and powerful financial tools. Their commitment to understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by small businesses has made them a valuable partner for SMEs aiming to achieve sustainable growth and financial health. As they continue to innovate and expand their services, Built Accounting exemplifies how technology can be harnessed to empower small businesses, driving them towards greater success in an increasingly competitive market.

In the words of Peter Drucker, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Built Accounting is certainly creating a brighter future for SMEs, one where financial management is no longer a hurdle but a pathway to success.



EMBRACING MOTHERHOOD WITH DEARX MOM: A NEW ERA IN PREGNANCY CARE

Imagine having a friendly, knowledgeable companion by your side throughout your pregnancy journey—someone who can answer your questions, provide personalized nutrition advice, and support you every step of the way. This is the vision behind DeaRx Mom, an innovative Ghanaian fem-stem platform designed to revolutionize the way women experience pregnancy.

DeaRx Mom is a soon-to-be-launched platform dedicated to providing comprehensive information and unwavering support for women during pregnancy. Understanding the unique challenges and joys of this transformative period, DeaRx Mom aims to be a reliable, empathetic companion for expectant mothers.

At the heart of DeaRx Mom is Melyna AI, a cutting-edge personal assistant designed to cater to

the specific needs of pregnant women. Melyna AI is designed to be more than just a digital assistant - she is a confidante and guide, offering personalized advice and answers to any pregnancy-related queries. Whether it is understanding the nuances of prenatal care, managing morning sickness, or preparing for labor, Melyna AI is equipped with the knowledge and empathy to provide valuable support.

Further, DeaRx Mom features a comprehensive nutrition planner that helps expectant mothers make informed dietary choices. By offering customized meal plans and nutritional tips, the platform ensures that both mother and baby receive the essential nutrients they need. The nutrition planner takes into account individual dietary preferences, allergies, and specific nutritional requirements, making healthy eating both simple and enjoyable.

DeaRx Mom aims to be a treasure trove of pregnan-

cy information, offering articles, videos, and expert advice on a wide range of topics. From the early signs of pregnancy to postpartum care, the platform covers every stage of the journey. The content is curated by healthcare professionals, ensuring that users receive accurate and reliable information. This extensive resource library helps demystify pregnancy and empowers women to make informed decisions about their health.

Pregnancy can sometimes feel isolating, but with DeaRx Mom, it doesn't have to be. The platform fosters a sense of community by connecting expectant mothers with others who are going through similar experiences. Users can share their stories, ask questions, and offer support, creating a network of solidarity and encouragement. This community aspect adds an extra layer of emotional support, which can be incredibly reassuring during pregnancy.

Beyond pregnancy, DeaRx Mom also provides valu-

able resources to help women prepare for the arrival of their baby. From tips on setting up a nursery to advice on newborn care, the platform ensures that mothers-to-be feel confident and prepared for the next chapter of their lives. This holistic approach makes DeaRx

Mom an invaluable tool for both expecting and new mothers.

As DeaRx gears up for its official launch, the anticipation is palpable. The platform promises to be a game-changer in the realm of pregnancy care,

offering a blend of technology, empathy, and expert guidance. By addressing the physical, emotional, and informational needs of pregnant women, DeaRx is set to become an indispensable companion on the journey to motherhood.

TRENDS AND INNOVATION





EXPLORING META AI: DATA USAGE AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

Meta (the parent company of Facebook) has developed a sophisticated Artificial Intelligence system, META AI, which leverages data from its suite of platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. This practice has sparked widespread interest and concern regarding the use of personal information in data training processes. This article focuses on the latest research on META AI, examining its data usage, the ethical implications, and the ongoing privacy concerns.

INNOVATIONS IN META AI

Meta AI, the artificial intelligence division of Meta Platforms Inc., has been at the forefront of AI research and development. The

company's focus spans various applications, from natural language processing (NLP) and computer vision to augmented and virtual reality. Meta AI aims to revolutionize how people interact with technology, enhancing user experiences across Meta's suite of products:

1. Natural Language Processing (NLP):

- o LLaMA (Large Language Model Meta AI): Meta AI's LLaMA models have made significant strides in understanding and generating human-like text. These models can assist in content creation, translation, and customer service automation.

2. Computer Vision:

- o Deepfake Detection: Meta AI has developed advanced techniques to detect deepfakes and manipulated media, ensuring the integrity of visual content on its platforms.

- o Image and Video Analysis: AI algorithms power features like automatic photo tagging, content moderation, and enhanced search capabilities.

3. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR):

- o Project Aria: This research initiative explores wearable AR devices that understand and interact with the

world in real-time, paving the way for future AR glasses.

- o Horizon Workrooms: A VR platform enabling remote work and collaboration, showcasing Meta's vision for the future of virtual workplaces.

4. Data Usage and Psychological Profiling:

Meta's platforms, particularly Facebook, have been utilized extensively in research aimed at predicting psychological traits from user data. A meta-analysis demonstrated that it is feasible to predict personality traits from Facebook data, including text posts and user interactions such as "likes." The accuracy of these predictions is moderate, indicating the potential of social media data in psychological profiling.

FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYZING WHATSAPP DATA

WhatsApp, another major platform owned by Meta, has been a subject of interest due to its encrypted nature and its use in sensitive communications. Deb, Paul, and Das (2019) proposed a framework to predict radicalization and civil unrest by analyzing WhatsApp group chat logs. This study highlights the challenges of access-

ing and utilizing such sensitive data for research purposes, emphasizing that the success of predictive models heavily relies on the availability of actual data

ASSOCIATION STUDIES USING DATA FROM MULTIPLE PLATFORMS

Researchers have also explored the combined use of data from Facebook-owned platforms to understand user behavior better. A study by Marengo et al. (2020) analyzed the patterns of social media use across Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. This research found associations between user demographics and personality traits, indicating that data from these platforms are often integrated for comprehensive analysis.

ADDRESSING PRIVACY CONCERNS

The integration and use of personal data from Meta's platforms raise significant privacy concerns. To address these, tools like MetaPriv have been developed. MetaPriv helps users obfuscate their online behavior to protect their privacy from profiling algorithms used by Facebook and Instagram. Experiments with

MetaPriv have shown that users can achieve a higher degree of privacy within a few weeks of usage.

DATA USE IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

Meta's platforms are not only used for psychological and security analyses but also play a significant role in health and medical research. For instance, WhatsApp and Instagram have been used in studies to improve patient compliance and outcomes in healthcare settings. These platforms facilitate patient communication and knowledge sharing, proving invaluable in modern healthcare.

Current research indicates that Meta utilizes data from its platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, for a wide range of purposes, including psychological profiling, health research, and addressing security concerns. While these applications demonstrate the vast potential of social media data, they also raise significant privacy and ethical concerns. The development of tools and frameworks to protect user data is an ongoing effort to balance the benefits and risks associated with such extensive data usage.



SPOTIFY LAUNCHES AI-GENERATED PLAYLISTS BASED ON TEXT PROMPTS

Spotify already has numerous ways for listeners to find music to listen to on its platform. Now it is adding a new AI tool that can automatically compile a playlist based on user-entered text strings.

This feature, called AI Playlist, is currently in beta and available to Spotify Premium subscribers in the U.K. and Australia. Spotify promotes this tool as a way to "turn your most creative ideas into playlists."

Some examples of prompts for AI Playlists provided by Spotify include: "An indie folk playlist to give my brain a big warm hug"; "Relaxing music to tide me over during allergy season"; "A playlist that makes me feel like the main character"; "Sad music for painting dying flowers"; "I'm getting

ready with the girls. Make us a fiery playlist for heating up the dance floor"; and "Tracks for horse riding into the sunset."

Spotify said AI Playlist will not produce results for non-music-related prompts, such as current events or specific brands. In addition, the company said it has implemented measures to block "prompts that are offensive."

According to Spotify, AI Playlist can work off prompts referencing places, animals, activities, movie characters, colors, emoji and more. The "most successful" playlists will result from prompts "that contain a combination of genres, moods, artists or decades," the company added. Users also can revise and refine

the playlists by telling AI Playlist more specifically what they're looking for (i.e., "more pop" or "less upbeat").

The AI Playlist beta is available initially in the U.K. and Australia to subscribers on its Android and iOS apps. "Over the coming months, we look forward to continuing to iterate on this new feature to best serve our listeners," the company said.

With about 100 million tracks available and over 600 million subscribers, helping listeners find the music they will love has become a navigational challenge for Spotify. It's the promise of personalization and meaningful recommendations that will give the vast catalog more meaning, and that is central to Spotify's mission.

The streaming audio giant's suite of recommendation tools has grown over the years: Spotify Home feed, Discover Weekly, Blend, Daylist, and Made for You Mixes. And in recent years, there have been signs that it is working. According to data released by Spotify at its 2022 Investor Day, artist

discoveries every month on Spotify had reached 22 billion, up from 10 billion in 2018, "and we're nowhere near done," the company stated at that time.

Over the past decade or more, Spotify has been investing in AI and, in particular, in machine learning. Its recently launched AI DJ may be its biggest

bet, yet that technology will allow subscribers to better personalize listening sessions and discover new music.

CONSUMER INSIGHTS – WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO KNOW





VENDOR CHECKLIST FOR SELLING ON THE INTERNET

A vendor, in the context of e-commerce, refers to an individual or business that sells goods or services to consumers over the internet. Selling on the internet has become an essential avenue for businesses to reach a broader audience and increase their revenue. As a vendor, it's crucial to establish a solid foundation to ensure your online store operates smoothly and effectively. This checklist serves as a comprehensive guide for vendors, detailing the essential steps and considerations required to successfully sell products or services online.

Vendor Checklist for Selling on the Internet



1. Business Setup

- **Register Your Business:** Ensure your business is legally registered and obtain any necessary licenses or permits.
- **Open a Business Bank Account:** Open a dedicated business bank account and set up accounts with reliable payment processors like PayPal, Stripe, or Square.



2. Website and E-Commerce Platform

- **Register a Domain Name:** Register a memorable and relevant domain name that reflects your brand.
- **Choose an E-Commerce Platform:** Select a platform (e.g., Shopify, WooCommerce, Magento) that fits your business needs and design a user-friendly, mobile-responsive website.
- **Secure Hosting and SSL Certificate:** Select a reliable hosting provider and install an SSL certificate to secure transactions and protect your customers' data.



3. Product Management

- **Create Product Listings:** Develop detailed product descriptions with high-quality images and videos to showcase your products effectively.
- **Implement Inventory Management:** Set up an inventory management system to track stock levels and prevent over-selling.



4. Legal and Compliance

- **Draft a Privacy Policy:** Create a comprehensive privacy policy to inform customers about how their data will be used and protected.
- **Develop Terms and Conditions:** Outline the rules and regulations governing the use of your site.
- **Create a Return Policy:** Establish a straightforward return and refund policy and ensure compliance with data protection regulations such as GDPR or CCPA.



5. Marketing and Sales

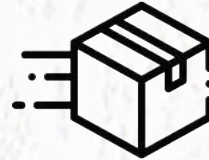
- **Optimize for SEO:** Enhance your website for search engines to increase visibility and attract organic traffic.
- **Engage on Social Media:** Create social media profiles on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and develop a content strategy to engage with your audience.
- **Set Up Email Marketing:** Implement an email marketing system to build and maintain a subscriber list for promotions and updates, and plan online advertising campaigns using platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Ads.



6. Customer Service

- **Create Product Listings:** Develop detailed product descriptions with high-quality images and videos to showcase your products effectively.

- **Implement Inventory Management:** Set up an inventory management system to track stock levels and prevent over-selling.



7. Shipping

- **Choose Shipping Partners:** Select reliable shipping and logistics partners to ensure timely and accurate delivery of products.
- **Determine Shipping Rates:** Set up shipping rates based on factors like destination, weight, and delivery speed, and source appropriate packaging materials.
- **Streamline Order Fulfillment:** Develop an efficient order fulfillment process to ensure orders are processed and shipped promptly.



8. Financial Management

- **Set Up Accounting System:** Implement an accounting and book-keeping system to track income, expenses, and financial performance.



- **Ensure Tax Compliance:** Stay updated on sales tax regulations and ensure compliance in all the regions you operate.



9. Security and Backup

- **Install Security Software:** Use firewalls, anti-virus software, and secure passwords to protect your site from cyberattacks.

- **Regularly Backup Data:** Backup your website and data frequently to prevent data loss in case of technical issues or cyber incidents.

10. Continuous Improvement

- **Use Web Analytics:** Utilize tools like Google Analytics to monitor site performance and gain insights into customer behavior.

- **Review Customer Feedback:** Regularly review and act on customer feedback to improve products and services.

Additional actions

Optimize for Mobile: Ensure your website is mobile-friendly, as a significant portion of online shopping occurs on

mobile devices.

Enhance User Experience: Continuously improve user experience and site navigation to make shopping easy and enjoyable for customers.

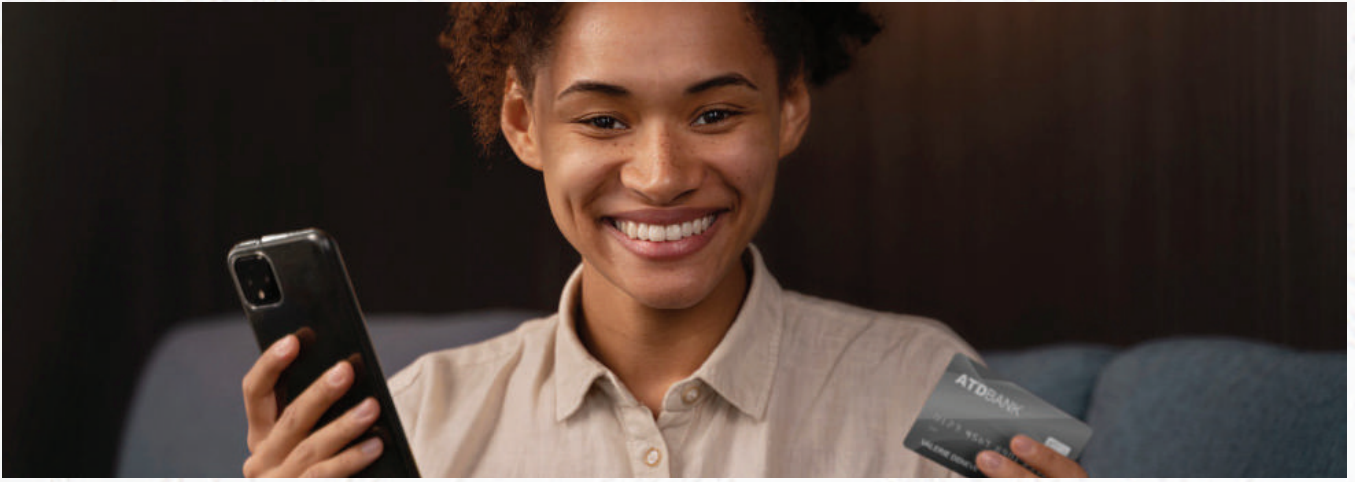
Implement Loyalty Programs: Create customer loyalty programs to reward repeat customers and encourage long-term engagement.

Conclusion

This vendor checklist provides a comprehensive framework for setting up and running a successful online store. By systematically addressing each aspect of the checklist, vendors can ensure that their business operations are efficient, compliant, and customer-centric. This approach not only helps in building a reputable brand but also in achieving sustainable growth and profitability in the competitive e-commerce landscape.

INSIGHTS





THE RISE OF VIRTUAL BANKS: REVOLUTIONIZING THE FUTURE OF BANKING

In the not-so-distant past, banking often meant enduring long queues, paperwork, and rigid operating hours just to perform basic transactions like transferring money or checking balances.

Today, however, the digital revolution has fundamentally reshaped our relationship with banking. Armed with nothing more than a connected smartphone or computer, individuals can effortlessly navigate their financial affairs from virtually anywhere.

Whether it is paying bills, transferring funds between accounts, or monitoring investments, the barriers of physical branches and fixed schedules have been shattered. This newfound freedom and ease of access have

redefined how we interact with our money, empowering us to take control of our finances on our own terms.

At the heart of this digital revolution is the emergence of financial institutions known as virtual banks. These banks operate entirely online, offering a range of financial services through digital platforms. As more people become comfortable with online transactions, virtual banking is continuing to take the banking world by storm.

Therefore, this article intends to discuss what exactly a virtual bank is, its distinction from other related innovative banking solutions, and its associated benefits and challenges.

WHAT ARE VIRTUAL BANKS?

A virtual bank, also known as a direct bank, neobank, branchless bank, digital bank, or online bank, operates exclusively through digital platforms such as the web, email, mobile apps for check deposits, and ATM machines without physically setting foot in a physical banking hall. Unlike traditional banks that maintain physical branches, virtual banks leverage technology to deliver banking services efficiently and conveniently to customers.

The concept of virtual banking dates back to 1989 in the UK when First Direct introduced telephone banking, marking the inception of banking without physical branches.

However, the proliferation of the internet and mobile technology in the mid-2000s accelerated the growth of virtual banks worldwide. These banks have gained popularity for their accessibility, ease of use, and ability to provide a wide range of financial services online, from basic transactions like transferring money to complex activities such as investment management and loan applications.

Rather ironically, traditional banks have also entered the virtual banking space by establishing virtual banking subsidiaries or separate entities focused solely on online banking services. This hybrid approach allows traditional banks to leverage their brand reputation and

existing customer base while capitalizing on the operational efficiencies and customer-centric innovations inherent in virtual banking models.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MOBILE BANKING, DIGITAL BANKING AND VIRTUAL BANKING

Virtual banking by its model inherently differs from traditional banking and digital banking services typically offered by traditional banks.

The following elucidates the distinctions between the respective traditional banking, digital banking, and virtual banking models.

a. Traditional Bank-

ing: Traditional banks operate through physical branches and have a long-established presence in the banking sector. They offer face-to-face customer service and a wide range of financial products, but often come with higher fees and slower service delivery compared to virtual banks.

b. Digital banking:

Digital banking refers to the online services offered by traditional banks, accessible through their websites or mobile apps. While digital banking shares similarities with virtual banking in terms of online accessibility, digital banks are still tied to traditional banking infrastructure and may not offer the same level of agility and cost-effectiveness as virtual banks.

c. Virtual Banking:

Virtual banks are standalone entities that exist entirely in the digital space. They provide banking services exclusively through online platforms, offering advantages such as lower fees, faster transaction processing, and enhanced user experience. Virtual banks are often at the forefront of innovation, leveraging technology to streamline operations and cater to the digital-first preferences of modern consumers.



DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEOBANKS

a. Front-end virtual bank: A front-end-focused virtual bank does not have an operating banking license. It usually relies on the backing of a traditional financial institution and functions in partnership with them to provide services to its customers. Such a neobank often piggybacks on the traditional bank's balance sheets for operating.

b. Digital banks: Standalone or independent digital banks are the digital arms of an established bank. Marcus by Goldman Sachs is a popular example. Digital banks act as an extension or online-only arm of traditional banks. They do not just back traditional banks but also offer adequate digital services such as savings accounts, loans, payments, and investments entirely online.

c. Full-stack digital banks: Full-stack digital banks have the required bank regulatory approvals and provide a broad selection of services. They issue deposits and loans and maintain their independent brand and balance sheets. In an increasingly digital environment, these banks are not burdened by the costly networks of physical branches.

d. Mobile-first Banks:

As more people become comfortable with online transactions, virtual banking is continuing to take the banking world by storm.

These banks prioritize mobile app accessibility, providing seamless banking experiences primarily through smartphones. They may offer innovative features like mobile check deposits, instant payments, and personalized financial management tools. Examples include Revolut and Monzo.

e. Challenger Banks: These are new entrants into the banking sector, challenging traditional banking norms with customer-centric approaches, innovative technology, and agile operations. Challenger banks often target specific demographics or niche markets, offering tailored products and services. Examples include Chime in the U.S. and Star-

ling Bank in the UK.

f. Platform Banks: These banks integrate financial services and products into existing third-party digital platforms, such as e-commerce or social media platforms through the use of Application Programming Interfaces.

They leverage large user bases to offer banking services as an additional feature, enhancing customer engagement and loyalty. Examples include BBVA Open Platform, Solaris bank, Starling Bank and Bankable.

g. Embedded Finance Providers: These are non-bank companies that embed financial services into their core offerings, expanding beyond traditional banking roles. They provide seamless financial transactions within their ecosystems, integrating banking services with everyday activities. Examples include fintech startups like Square and Stripe.

ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL BANKS

Virtual or neo banks provide several advantages that appeal to both individuals and businesses in today's digital age:

a. Convenience: They

offer round-the-clock accessibility through web and mobile platforms, allowing customers to manage their finances anytime and from anywhere in the world. For instance, you can order your physical bank card and have it delivered to your home or request a virtual card to make online payments, all with a few taps on your phone or clicks on your computer.

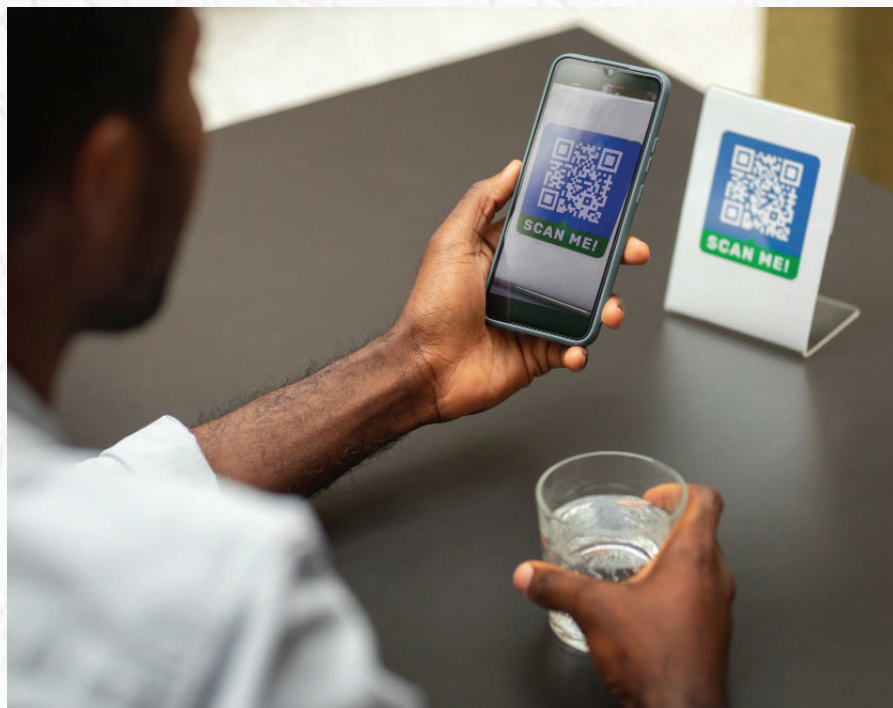
b. Cost-effectiveness:

With no physical branches to maintain, virtual banks typically have lower overhead costs. This translates into lower fees for account maintenance, transactions, and often higher interest rates on savings accounts compared to traditional banks.

c. Innovation: Virtual banks are pioneers in digital financial services, offering innovative tools such as budgeting apps, real-time spending analytics, automated savings features, and personalized financial advice.

d. Scalability: Virtual banks can rapidly scale their operations and introduce new services without the constraints of physical infrastructure, adapting quickly to changing customer needs and market demands.

e. Environmental Impact: By operating digitally, virtual banks contribute to reducing carbon footprints associated with traditional banking opera-



tions, aligning with sustainable business practices and ESG demands.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RISE OF VIRTUAL BANKS

Although virtual banks hold significant promise for revolutionizing the banking sector, they also come with inherent challenges and concerns that need careful consideration.

One of the primary concerns associated with virtual banks is the ownership structure, often dominated by traditional banking institutions. While virtual banks tout innovation and agility, their ownership by traditional banks raises questions about

their true independence and disruptive potential.

Shareholder influence from traditional banks may steer virtual banks towards maintaining status quo practices rather than fostering genuine innovation or challenging industry norms. This dynamic can potentially limit the transformative impact that virtual banks aim to achieve in the financial sector.

Also, customer trust and adoption present challenges. Many consumers may still prefer the assurance of physical branches and face-to-face interactions with bank staff. Convincing these customers of the reliability and security of virtual banking platforms requires extensive education and transparent

communication about the benefits and security measures in place.

Moreover, operational resilience is crucial. Virtual banks must ensure uninterrupted service availability, especially during technological upgrades or disruptions. Dependence on digital infrastructure means any technical issues could significantly impact customer experience and trust.

Another critical concern is cybersecurity and data protection. As virtual banks rely entirely on digital platforms for their operations, they are susceptible to cyber threats such as hacking, data breaches, and identity theft. Ensuring robust cybersecurity measures becomes paramount to protect sensitive customer information and

maintain trust.

Lastly, financial sustainability and profitability remain a concern. Despite lower operational costs compared to traditional banks, virtual banks must attract a critical mass of customers to achieve economies of scale and sustainable profitability. Competition from both traditional banks and other fintechs further complicates their path to profitability.

Addressing these challenges and concerns effectively will be essential for virtual banks to realize their full potential in transforming the banking landscape while ensuring the security, reliability, and trustworthiness that customers expect in their financial institutions.

CONCLUSION

The rise of virtual banks marks a significant shift in how we engage with banking services. Offering unparalleled convenience and accessibility, these digital institutions are reshaping the financial landscape. However, with this innovation comes the need for new regulatory approaches and careful oversight.

As we move forward, collaboration between regulators, traditional banks, and virtual banks will be crucial to ensure these changes benefit everyone. The future of banking is digital, and embracing this evolution will lead to a more inclusive and efficient financial system.

INDUSTRY PLAYERS' SPOTLIGHT





THE GHANA VENTURE CAPITAL TRUST FUND (GVCF) AND ITS ROLE IN FINANCING INNOVATION IN GHANA

The Venture Capital Trust Fund was established under the Venture Capital Trust Fund Act 2004 (Act 680) in 2015. The VCTF is a government-backed venture capital fund that focuses on investing in venture capital funds dedicated to small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). Since its inception, VCTF has played a crucial role in supporting entrepreneurship, SMEs, and innovation in Ghana.

The main objective of Act 680 is to establish a venture capital trust fund with the aim of providing investment capital to small and medium scale enterprises and the provision of monies to support other activities and programs for the promotion

of Venture Capital Financing. In accordance with the Government's growth strategy, a greater percentage of monies from the Trust Fund were to be invested in priority sectors of the Ghanaian economy. The fund began operations in January 2006 following extensive consultations between the office of the President, the Council of State, and the Sector Ministry towards the Fund's Structuring, i.e. appointment of its Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer – which finally took place in November and December 2005 respectively.

As a key player in the country's venture capital landscape, the VCTF has been instrumental in channel-

ing investment capital to promising startups and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across various development-based sectors of Ghana's economy. However, evaluating the financial performance and sustainability of a VCTF is essential to ensure its continued effectiveness and impact.

STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

The VCTF operates on a two-prong primary structure such that on one hand it is a Fund of-Funds and on the other a direct provider of debt financing to SMEs in certain sectors of the economy through its Special Purpose Vehicle

(SPV) initiative.

As a Fund-of-Funds, the VCTF provides matching equity and debt financing to Venture Capital Finance Companies (VCFC) who then invests these funds along with their funds directly into SMEs across several sectors of the Ghanaian economy in the form of equity.

Each VCFC is managed by a Fund Manager, licensed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

These VCFC fund vehicles act as intermediaries between SMEs requiring funds for viable business projects and the Trust Fund. The investment proposal process works as follows: The Managers of the VCFCs receive and review investment proposals from SMEs. These Managers have the mandate to decide on investments after an approval process by their respective Investment Committees or Boards.

This allows the VCTF to leverage the expertise and decision-making capabilities of the specialized VCFCs in providing necessary investment and funding to potential beneficiaries.

The key responsibilities of each VCFC include deal sourcing, selection, monitoring, and exit of invest-

ments. The structure enables the VCFCs to play a hands-on role in supporting the SMEs throughout their investment lifecycle, from identifying promising opportunities to facilitating successful exits.

It is worth noting that the VCFCs are encouraged to invest across all sectors of the economy, except for businesses that engage in direct imports for resale. Additionally, the VCTF Act defines an SME as a business with total assets (excluding land and buildings) not exceeding the cedi equivalent of USD 1 million and a total employee count not exceeding 100 persons. This targeted focus on SMEs is a key aspect of the VCTF's mission to support entrepreneurship and innovation in Ghana.

On the other hand, the Venture Capital Trust Fund uses its Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) initiative as a mechanism through which it directly invests funds into priority sectors it finds hold growth potential and importance to certain areas of the economy and may also have productive effects on people's lives. It refers to these programs as priority funding, but they may involve sectors that may not be at all attractive to most institutional investors. As such the Fund Manager selects these areas and targets them with special

schemes that may be facilitated by certain financial institutions in the country; in a sense the fund lends monies to those financial institutions who then on-lends them exclusively to participants of the special purpose projects.

VCTF has invested in six venture capital funds: Activity Venture Finance Company, Ebankese Venture Fund, Oasis Africa Fund, Bedrock Venture Capital Finance Company, Gold Venture Capital Ltd. and Fidelity Equity Fund II. Most of the funds are sector-agnostic, though the Oasis Africa Fund targets SMEs providing services and products in education, healthcare, finance, food services, housing and hospitality. Funds also evaluate the social and sustainability elements of prospective portfolio companies, such as the impact on women's empowerment, tax contribution, governance, sustainable youth employment and environmental improvement.

Interested companies need to prepare a business proposal with a three-year financial projection and other relevant documents. Companies can approach the funds directly, but VCTF sometimes also makes referrals.

To help develop the Ghanaian ecosystem, VCTF established the Ghana Angel Investors Network

(GAIN) in 2011, with the core mandate of building an ecosystem to enable access to funds for young entrepreneurs in order to build their startups in Ghana. GAIN bridges the funding gap for startups and provides a solution for investors who wish to participate in early-stage opportunities, while also providing coaching and mentoring opportunities to entrepreneurs.

ROLE IN FINANCING INNOVATIONS

The VCTF has played a significant role in financing innovations within the Ghanaian business ecosystem through the following means:

1. Seed and Early-Stage Funding: The Fund has provided crucial seed and early-stage funding to numerous startups, enabling them to develop their products, refine their business models, and scale their operations. This has been particularly impactful in the technology, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors.

2. Capacity Building: Beyond financing, the VCTF offers capacity-building programs for entrepreneurs. These programs include business development services, mentorship, and training, which help startups to enhance

their operational efficiencies and market competitiveness.

3. Job Creation: By supporting innovative SMEs, the VCTF has indirectly contributed to job creation. The businesses financed by the Fund have generated employment opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment rates and contributing to the socio-economic development of Ghana.

4. Attracting Additional Investment: The VCTF's involvement often serves as a signal of credibility, attracting additional investments from other venture capitalists and financial institutions. This multiplier effect has led to increased capital inflows into the Ghanaian SME sector.

5. Encouraging Diversification: The Fund has supported a diverse range of sectors, promoting economic diversification. By financing businesses in various industries, the VCTF helps reduce the economy's dependence on traditional sectors and fosters a more resilient economic structure.

CONCLUSION

The Ghana Venture Capital Trust Fund has played a pivotal role in financing innovation in Ghana, sup-

porting the growth of SMEs, and fostering economic development.

Despite facing challenges such as limited capital and regulatory hurdles, the VCTF has made significant contributions to the entrepreneurial ecosystem and technological advancements in the country. By expanding its capital base, improving regulatory frameworks, and increasing public awareness, the VCTF can continue to enhance its impact and support the sustainable growth of innovative ventures in Ghana. As Ghana continues to strive towards economic development and competitiveness, the role of the VCTF in financing innovation remains more critical than ever.

PAST INDUSTRY EVENTS



10



SUCCESSFUL 3i AFRICA SUMMIT HELD IN GHANA

The first-ever digital economy summit in Africa, the 3i Africa Summit, held from May 13th to 15th, 2024, at the Accra International Conference Centre, set a precedent in establishing that inter-country collaboration is key to the success of initiatives aimed at boosting the payment systems in Africa.

Over three days of intense discussions and activities, the maiden FinTech summit in Accra underscored the necessity for players in the space to avoid working in silos to achieve the needed impact.

The 3i Africa Summit, the only one of its kind in Africa held so far, successfully brought together high-level policymakers, industry experts, business leaders,

and change-makers under one roof. It further highlighted the critical need for a digital identification (DI) system and network interoperability across the continent.

Organized by the Bank of Ghana (BoG), Development Bank Ghana (DBG), and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) through its subsidiary, Elevandi, the summit was themed "Unleashing Africa's Fintech and Digital Economic Potential."

Initially targeted at 2,500 participants, the 3i Africa Summit exceeded expectations with over 8,700 registered participants, including more than 7,500 physical attendees. This number comprised 1,724 policymakers, 4,786 industry experts, and 1,230 researchers from 95 countries worldwide. Additionally, the event featured 240 speakers and discussants, 58 sessions, 15 tracks, nine stages, and 10 innovator pitches.



President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo opened the summit with a keynote speech, which was anchored on the pillars of innovation, investment, and impact.

The event drove an agenda towards transformation for sustainable development across Africa. These pillars were also aimed at addressing key opportunities in the FinTech industry and exploring how markets and companies are leapfrogging legacy technologies.

The 3i Africa Summit proved to be a pioneering platform for change-makers to initiate and execute creative solutions tailored to address Africa's unique challenges and leverage its wealth of opportunities.

The summit, targeted at players in Africa's digital economy, was overwhelmingly successful in catalyzing investments, fostering economic growth across the continent, and generating global partnerships for sustainable develop-

ment.

One of the significant outcomes of the summit was the \$100 million deal between DBG and Proxtera, a Singapore-based open and neutral hub that digitally connects Business to Business (B2B) marketplaces, service providers, and trade associations to simplify and boost trade for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

This deal is earmarked for supporting SMEs via the Ghana Integrated Financial Ecosystem (GIFE) platform, a joint initiative of BoG, DBG, and MAS. GIFE aims to provide a digital journey for SMEs, offering them financial literacy, the creation of trusted credentials through the Universal Trusted Credentials framework, and access to working capital and other opportunities for cross-border trade with Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, comprising ten countries.

Furthermore, BoG announced the successful

completion of the first Proof of Concept (POC) as part of its Digital Economy Semi-Fungible Token (DESFT) project, demonstrating the successful execution of a cross-border transaction payment using digital credentials, the eCedi, and an approved stablecoin from Singapore. Initiated in June 2023, this project is a collaboration between the Central Bank and MAS. Project DESFT aims to support SMEs in Africa, particularly those in Ghana, by removing significant obstacles they face, such as establishing trust with trade partners overseas and obtaining support in cross-border payments and supply chain finance.

In conclusion, the 3i Africa Summit has set a high bar for future digital economy conferences in Africa, establishing a robust framework for collaboration, innovation, and investment that will drive sustainable growth and development across the continent.





MTN HOSTS 2ND EDITION OF CTIO ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE

MTN Ghana hosted its 2nd edition of the CTIO Roundtable Conference in Accra on 27th April 2024. The event brought together Chief Technology Innovation Officers (CTIOs) from across Africa to discuss the latest trends in digital transformation and emerging technologies.

MTN Business used its second edition of the annual CTIO Roundtable Africa event to highlight the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) and data, with the aim of driving their adoption and adaptation by businesses in Ghana.

The event, themed “Driving Business Value through Data and AI,” brought together AI and data experts, as well as corporate clients of MTN, for candid discussions about the significance of

AI and data. This was despite the persistent fears in Africa that AI could lead to job losses and invade the privacy of businesses and individuals.

Chief Information Officer (CIO) of MTN Ghana, Bernard Acquah, who served as the keynote speaker, emphasized to journalists that businesses today must abandon outdated practices. He stressed the necessity for businesses to understand their own data, as well as that of their customers and competitors, and to prioritize AI for enhanced efficiency.

Acquah underlined the importance of MTN engaging its corporate clients in discussions about the value of data and AI, aiming to help businesses improve their performance. He dispelled fears about AI displacing

human jobs, asserting that AI is a tool to handle mundane and repetitive tasks, allowing humans to focus on critical and creative roles that require a human touch.

He acknowledged that some concerns about AI, particularly ethical ones, are valid. For instance, AI tools designed for facial recognition can identify and photograph people without their consent. Acquah also highlighted the impact of the quality of data fed into AI tools, noting that the performance of an AI tool depends on the accuracy of its data. Erroneous or biased data can lead to problematic outcomes.

Acquah mentioned the concept of the Black Box, where AI tools sometimes behave in ways that are inexplicable to humans.

Despite these challenges, he stressed that experts are available to help minimize risks and ensure businesses optimize their AI benefits.

He urged businesses to seek advice from industry experts, particularly MTN, to identify the best AI tools for their needs.

Senior Manager for Enterprise Marketing Portfolio Management at MTN Ghana, Benedict Bentil, stated that MTN is committed to staying ahead of the curve. He noted that most of MTN's business solutions are AI-backed and designed to be user-friendly, requiring

minimal training for adoption.

Bentil observed that businesses in Ghana have moved beyond the fear of AI and are becoming more curious. This shift has prompted MTN to ensure that as more businesses adopt AI, they can do so in a secure environment that protects their data and operations.



EMTECH'S COMPLIANCE MIXER HIGHLIGHTS COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO FINTECHS AND REGULATORS

EMTECH hosted a highly successful Compliance Mixer on Friday, May 10 at StartOA in Accra, Ghana. The event underscored the company's commitment to the fintech ecosystem, driving innovation for fintechs, and supporting regulators in mitigating risks more effectively.

The Compliance Mixer served as a platform for fintech leaders and experts to share their insights and visions. Keynote speaker Dr. Arnold Kaavarpuo, CEO of StacAi, and master of ceremonies Mr. Kwasi Okrah of n.dowuona & company, were among the prominent figures who addressed the attendees. The event also featured Jumo Ghana CEO Mr. Jeremy Quainoo as

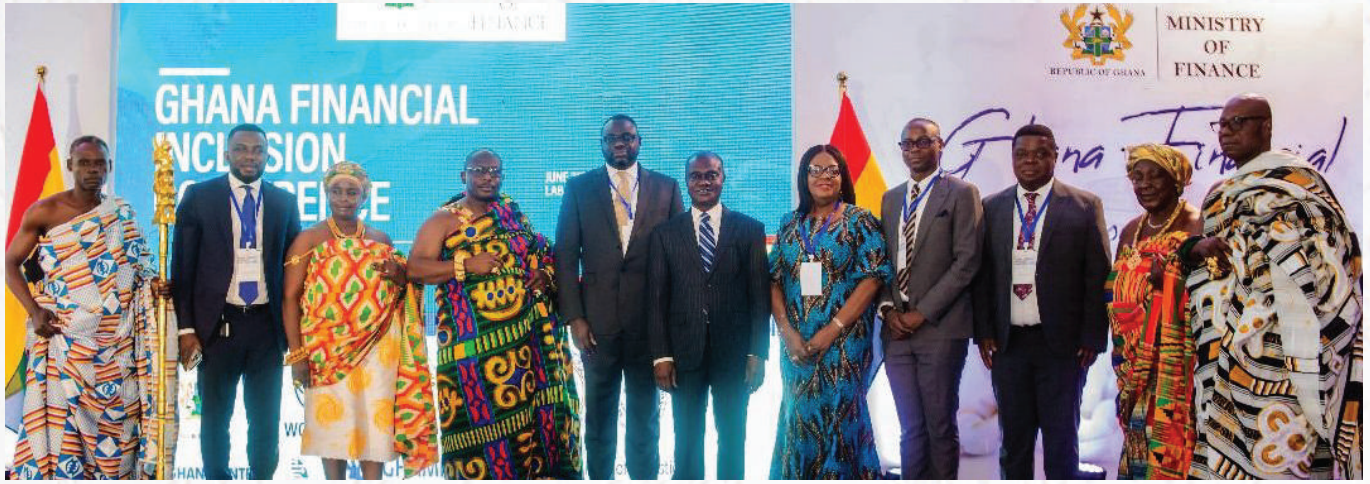
moderator, with panelists including Sustineri Attorneys managing partner Mr. Richard Nunekpeku and EMTECH founder & CEO Carmelle Cadet.

Carmelle Cadet highlighted the significance of the event, stating, "Today's event was very enlightening in sharing how important compliance is going to be as part of the resilience journey in Fintech. From sandbox to compliance, we're continuing to build for Fintechs to be stronger and for regulators to mitigate risk more effectively."

Since its inception, EMTECH has consistently pioneered solutions for both regulators and financial service providers. In April 2022, EMTECH

launched its API-first Digital Regulatory Sandbox, a multi-party platform that enables streamlined regulatory reviews and fintech innovation. That same year, the company announced its collaboration with the Bank of Ghana and the Central Bank of Nigeria.

In 2023, EMTECH partnered with the Bank of Ghana for the launch of the eCedi Hackathon. Through the recent Compliance Mixer, EMTECH reaffirmed its commitment to building the future of compliance in the fintech and Web3 sectors with its Beyond Suite of solutions, set to launch between June and July this year.



MINISTRY OF FINANCE HOSTED THE MAIDEN EDITION OF THE GHANA FINANCIAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE

The Ministry of Finance in partnership with industry players in the financial sector hosted the maiden edition of the two-day Ghana Financial Inclusion Conference, at the Labadi Beach Hotel.

The conference, themed “Accelerating Financial Inclusion in a Digital Era,” underscored the pivotal role of digital technologies in advancing financial access and inclusion.

The two-day conference brought together heads of government agencies, banking sector, financial regulatory organisation, representatives from industry, academia, and

the World Bank.

During the opening session, Dr. Alex Ampaabeng, Deputy Minister for Finance, acknowledged the invaluable contributions of industry stakeholders and the World Bank in Ghana's journey towards enhanced financial inclusion. He highlighted Ghana's achievements under the National Financial Inclusion and Development Strategy (2018-2023), citing significant progress facilitated by global initiatives.

Although Ghana achieved 96% financial inclusion in terms of access to financial services, the 2022

Composite Financial Inclusion Index, which provides an overall assessment of financial inclusion by combining the three dimensions of access, usage, and quality, shows that about 52.76% of the population are multidimensionally financially included.

Chief Director at the Ministry of Finance, Eva Mends, also emphasized that financial inclusion is a global agenda aimed at leaving no one behind.

She noted that the development of Ghana's inter-bank payment and settlement systems, along with achievements like mobile

money interoperability, has been crucial in this effort.

In a keynote address delivered on behalf of the Vice President, Prof. George Gyau Baffuor, Chairman of the National Development Planning Commission, commended the introduction of mobile money interoperability as a landmark initiative that has expanded financial inclusion across Ghana.

The conference featured a range of informative presentations, including Richard Nunekpeku's insightful session on the "Current Landscape of Fintech in Ghana and Development Strategies." In his presentation, he shared key trends, future projections, and strategic developments within Ghana's fintech ecosystem, highlighting its evolving role in driving financial innovation and

inclusion.

The two-day conference aimed strengthening commitment to promote financial inclusion and the use of digital technology to improve the lives of all Ghanaians. It also provided a platform for industry players to comprehensively delve into significant themes, challenges, and possibilities in the domain of financial inclusion, with special emphasis on leveraging digital innovation for a meaningful change.

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