



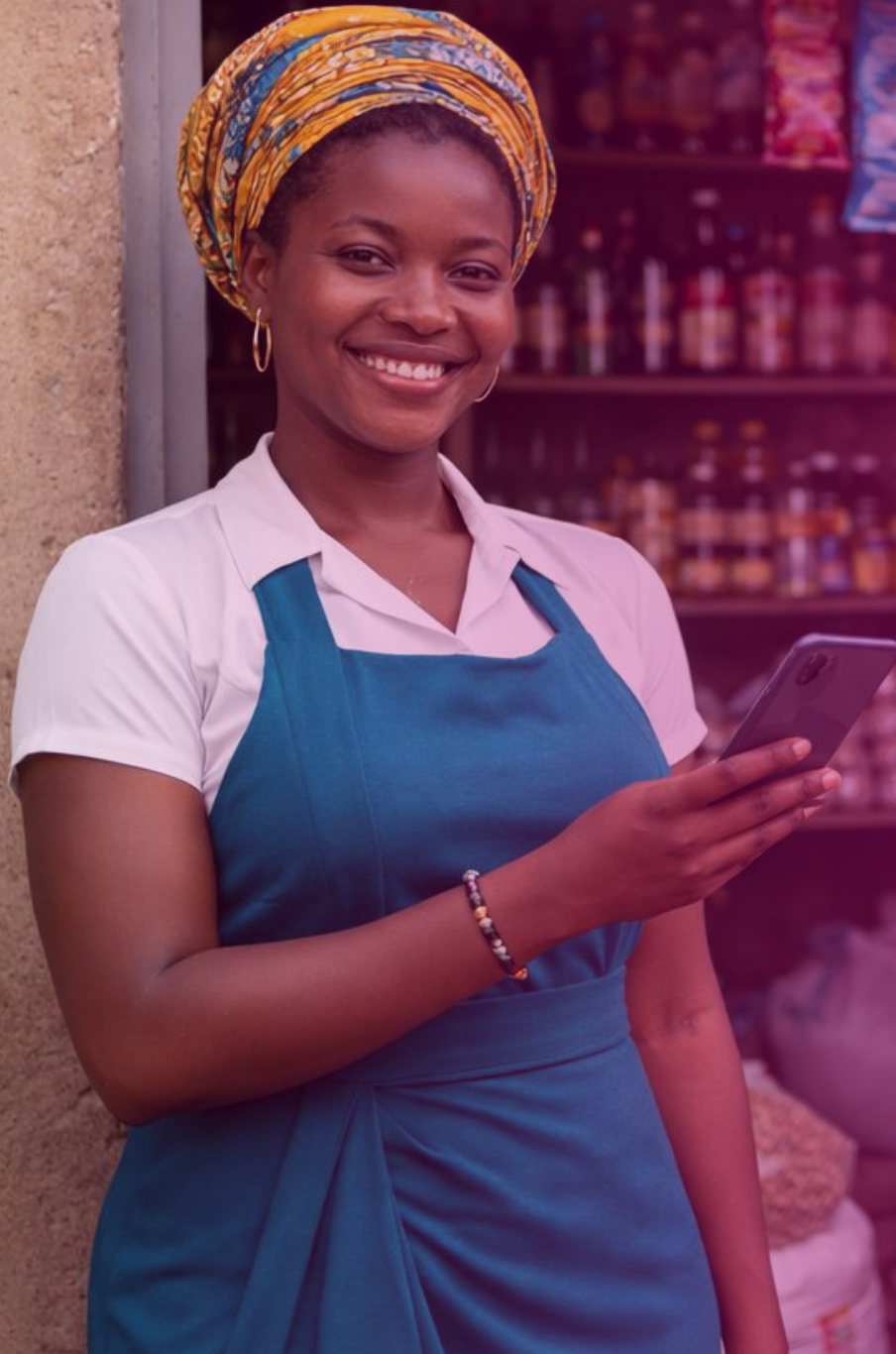
Powered by



BFA GLOBAL

Digitising microenterprises sector scan

How jobtech platforms can plug
workflow gaps and
value leaks



Microenterprises dominate African economies



Microenterprises are nano and very small businesses – typically with fewer than five people involved, and often just one. Think of a corner shop owner, a street vendor, or a tailoring business in someone’s home.

These businesses currently **exist to survive, not to scale**. Only a [small percentage](#) of those who start off with one or no employees are ever able to progress to multiple employees. Most African microenterprises are **not small firms in the making**.

These businesses mostly operate informally, without registration, official payroll systems, accounting, or access to traditional finance. They are led by individuals who perform almost **every major function themselves**, selling, stocking, delivering and collecting payments. As such, they rarely keep formal records, often don’t know their profit margins, and may only notice stockouts when customers points them out.

Across Africa, these microenterprises are the **dominant form of business and employment**. Sub-Saharan Africa alone has over [44 million MSMEs, of which 97% are microenterprises](#). Microentrepreneurs alone account for [64% of the total workforce in Africa](#). Their livelihoods, however, remain **informal and precarious**, even though they are essential to the flow of goods and services in local economies.

Microentrepreneurs face extreme limitations: local market saturation, unreliable infrastructure, little to no working capital, and fear of hiring. They worry about trust, payroll obligations, and attracting regulatory attention. They avoid formalising their business and paying taxes due to perceived risks and limited upside. While a tiny percentage will graduate to small businesses, the vast majority will stay as microenterprises.

That is why it is critical to explore how microentrepreneurs can be empowered to **increase sales, reduce costs, drive efficiencies** and thus improve livelihoods.

What is in this scan

In this scan, we explore how jobtech platforms can strengthen African microenterprises by closing workflow gaps, reducing value leaks, and improving business performance and livelihoods

- **Mapping the challenges and opportunities**
Where do workflow gaps show up in African microenterprises, and why do they matter so much for productivity, income, and survival?
- **Identifying working solutions**
How can jobtech platforms reduce fragmentation, bring order to daily business operations, and help microenterprises sell more and run better?
- **Charting the future**
What kinds of platforms are emerging, and how should founders, funders, and ecosystem actors think about the future of microenterprise digitisation in Africa?

In the microenterprise context, jobtech encompasses platforms and digital services that enable solopreneurs, nano, micro and very small businesses, to thrive. In practical terms, these are jobtech platforms that **improve access to markets, business performance, or productivity for individual entrepreneurs and microenterprises**.

Contents

[Sector overview and the role of jobtech](#)

[Platform taxonomy and showcase](#)

[Sector analysis](#)

[Investment thesis](#)

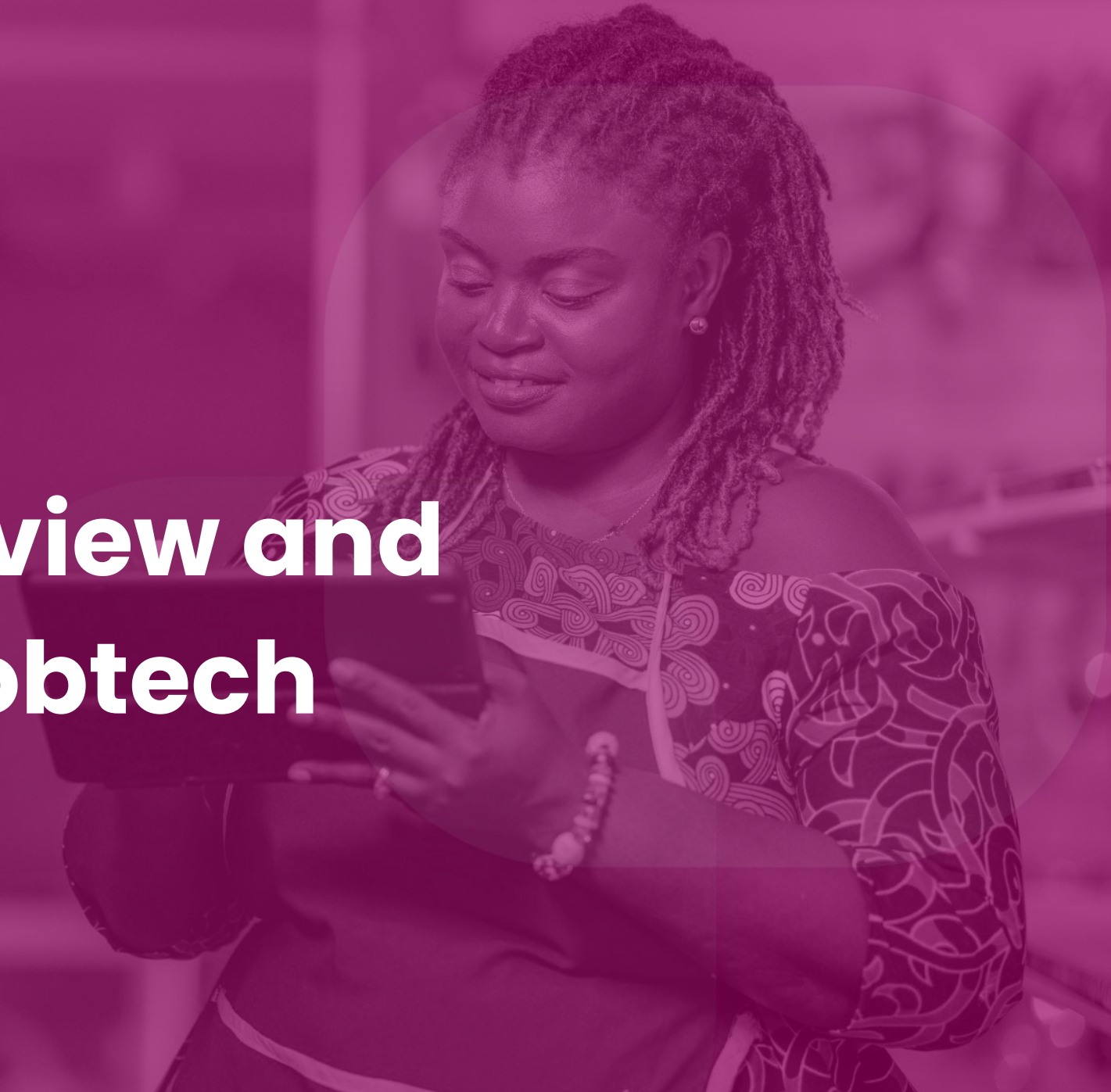


Powered by



BFA GLOBAL

Sector overview and the role of jobtech



Where the gap is

Across Africa, most microenterprises **do not run on systems. They run on people.** A shop owner sells on WhatsApp, tracks stock in a notebook, remembers who owes money, calls a rider when an order appears, and reconciles payments at night from memory.

The binding constraint for microenterprises is not a lack of effort or even a lack of tools. It is the gap between the steps. In effect they have huge **workflow gaps.**

Work gets done, but **it rarely flows through a consistent process.** This is the hidden structure of the microenterprise economy: millions of businesses **operating through fragmented (or non-existent) workflows.**

Digital tools can of course change that, but adoption remains shallow even into 2026. Each tool typically solves a small, isolated task. Very few, if none connect the full loop:

customer → order → payment → delivery → restock → cash

Even where smartphones exist, many businesses still operate offline, managing stock by memory and relying on cash and trust.

The result is what we call a **workflow gap**, a missing operational layer where the day-to-day mechanics of running a business should live.

African microenterprises **do not lack tools. They lack flow.**



How value leaks

For most African microenterprises, the problem is not just selling more. **It is keeping more of what is already earned. Small operational leaks have outsized consequences.** A lost order, a missed restock, or an uncollected payment is no longer an accounting issue, but a livelihood one. These leaks show up in everyday coordination problems such as;

- Missed follow-ups that kill repeat sales
- Stockouts that push customers to another shop
- Credit given informally and never collected
- Delivery disputes that erase margins
- Cash that disappears because records live in memory

Customer enquiry	Order capture	Stock check	Fulfillment	Payment	Record keeping	Repeat sales
WhatsApp message, DM, call, or walk-in customer asks about product, price, or availability	Customer confirms what they want to buy	Business checks if item is available and whether to reorder	Order is packed, handed to rider, or collected	Customer pays in cash, credit or mobile money	Sale, payment, and stock movement should leave a usable record	Business follows up with past customers and re-engages them
Missed messages, slow replies, lost sales	No written confirmation, errors, prone to disputes	Stockouts delivered too late, overbuying, late reordering	No proof of delivery, delays untracked	Payment not matched to order, partial payments forgotten	No usable history, weak margin visibility, credit readiness	No follow ups, no customer memory

What it means for the economy

[Research from Kenya](#) shows that microenterprises could produce significantly more **without a single new hire, machine, or price change** — purely by eliminating idle time and coordination gaps. This slack is most severe in low-income markets, making it Africa's most overlooked productivity lever.

[MSMEs in emerging markets](#) reach only **24% of the productivity of large firms** — less than half the 60% ratio seen in developed economies. Closing this gap in Africa alone could unlock value equivalent to **10% of GDP**.

Starved of working capital, microenterprises cannot smooth demand fluctuations, forcing them to sit idle rather than produce. The [World Bank](#) estimates a **\$331 billion credit shortfall** for African SMEs, with only 1 in 5 accessing formal finance — less than half the rate in Asia.

What it means for individual livelihoods

$$\begin{array}{rcccc} \text{Revenue} & - & \text{COGS} & - & \text{Operating costs} & = & \text{Take home} \\ \$500 & & (\$350) & & (\$100) & & \sim \$50 \end{array}$$

At this margin, small leaks matter enormously



Take a typical neighbourhood shop. Monthly revenue, in economies such as Kenya and Nigeria, may sit somewhere between **\$400 and \$800**.

But most of that money immediately flows back out. Approximately 70-80% goes to restocking goods, followed by rent, transport, airtime, and other daily costs. What remains for the owner is often as little as **\$40 to \$120 a month**.

This is why plugging leaks can create real livelihood change without any headline growth. **A 5% improvement in flow can mean a 20-30% increase in take home income.**

How it impacts women

Closing the gender productivity gap in microenterprises might be one of Africa's largest untapped growth levers

Women-led microenterprises operate with **thinner margins, higher idle capacity, and greater vulnerability** to demand shocks than men-led equivalents. This is the compounded result of less capital, more informality, and greater exposure to risk.

Sub-Saharan Africa is a global leader of women entrepreneurs – yet women-led businesses contribute only **33% of Africa's GDP**. The gap is structural: women-owned microenterprises are disproportionately **informal, unregistered, and without employees.**

African women make up 60% of the self-employed and start 6 in every 10 small businesses on the continent. Yet they face a **\$42 billion financing gap**. Less than half the rate of their male counterparts access to formal capital.

The role of jobtech

African microenterprises' **main constraint is not effort or ambition. It is structure.** Africa's digital infrastructure is already widespread, from smartphones to mobile money, yet most businesses still operate without a **coherent system linking demand to cash.** Closing this gap is one of the most important opportunities in the digitisation of microenterprises.

This is where jobtech platforms can really make the difference. From restocking and inventory tools to digital bookkeeping and delivery coordination, they **bring order to disorder.** They help businesses track, plan, and trade with more confidence. **They plug the value leaks**

Jobtech platforms do three generalised things for microenterprises:

Sell more

By opening access to wider markets and customer segments previously out of reach, revenue growth creates the conditions to hire and expand.

Run better

By bringing structure to cash flow, stock, and daily operations, jobtech reduces losses, smooths income, and lifts margins — the stability that keeps a business alive long enough to grow.

Stabilise jobs

Steadier operations mean steadier hours, clearer roles, and a path from day-to-day hustle into something more sustainable.

Of course, workflow structure alone does not replace demand or capital, but it determines whether businesses can actually convert demand into cash reliably. This creates the conditions for better jobs — **steadier hours, clearer roles, livelihood pathways.**

How the sector is evolving

African e-commerce has been chasing promises for over a decade. The evolution of African digital commerce is shifting **away from simple marketplaces toward a model of integrated workflow management** designed to empower the continent's 44 million MSMEs. Where earlier jobtech platforms in this sector digitised isolated tasks and plugged specific leaks, the next generation of platforms is beginning to **run the whole workflow of the microenterprise.**

First gen: B2C marketplace

High trust deficits and logistics costs make unit economics nearly impossible



Second gen: B2B retail

Digitising the last mile is vital, but high-volume/low-margin models remain fragile

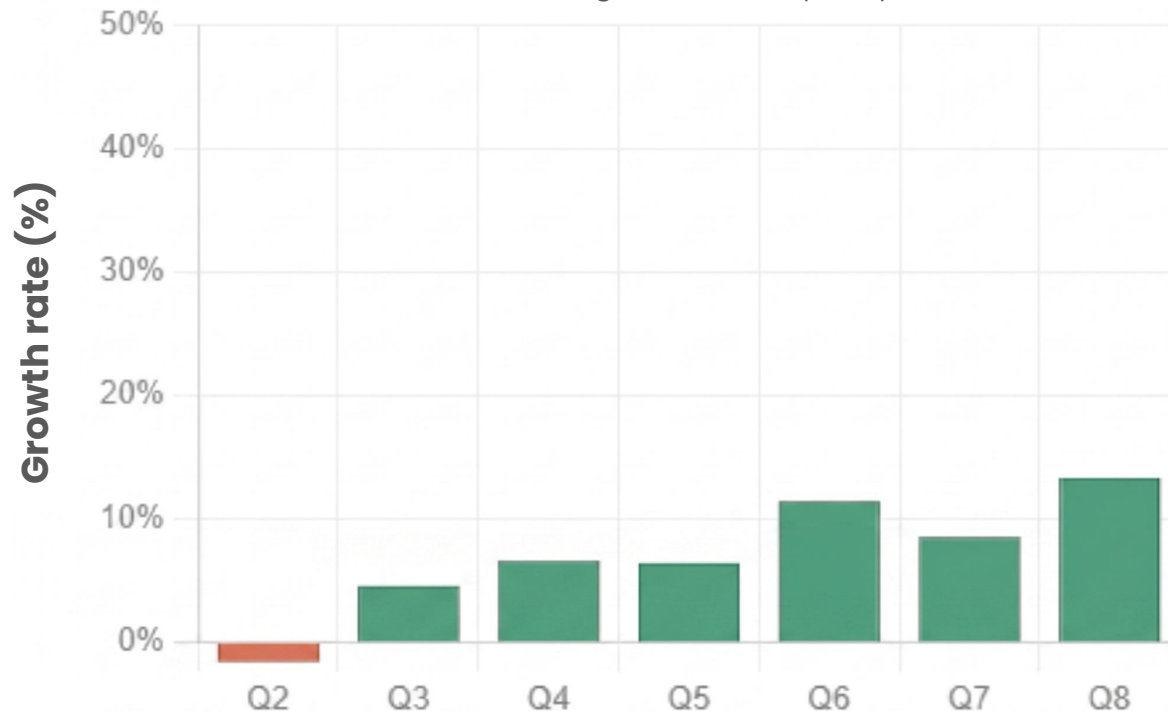


Next gen: the entire workflow

Success requires plugging "value leakages" by managing the entire business lifecycle

What our data shows

Typical enterprise quarterly revenue growth
Median of individual user growth rates per quarter



Jobtech platforms enable microenterprises to grow their revenue over time.

Drawing on our own jobtech platform portfolio data, most microenterprises – i.e. users on the platforms – saw their revenues gradually increase quarter-on-quarter for the first ~2 years, as illustrated to the left.

Men have slightly higher revenue growth rates than women overall, although this continual growth's impact on livelihoods is significant for both men and women.

Jobtech platforms can be drivers of inclusivity



Over 45 million people are displaced across the African continent. [With the majority of refugees \(71%\) residing in low and middle-income countries](#), they usually access the labour market through informal waged employment or own-account work. Refugee microenterprises face the same workflow gap described previously but with **additional layers of exclusion**. Some of the design principles that make such platforms work for displaced entrepreneurs apply to other underserved populations e.g., trust-first onboarding or simplified identity verification.

The workflow gaps and value leaks affecting all African microenterprises are amplified for displaced entrepreneurs by additional barriers: legal restrictions on the right to work in many host countries, exclusion from formal financial services (including mobile money in some markets), lack of recognised identity documents, [limited freedom of movement](#), and restricted access to supply chains. In Kenya, for example, refugees are prohibited from fully accessing M-PESA — the most critical financial and commerce tool in the market.

Jobtech platforms that address such constraints — offline capability, ID-light onboarding, local language interfaces, mobile money workarounds — can also offer better, more inclusive products for the broader informal economy.

In just over a decade, [Inkomoko](#) has invested over \$35 million in small and micro businesses, [supporting more than 100,000 entrepreneurs and impacting over 1.2 million people in refugee camps across East and Central Africa](#). Its clients report 70% average revenue growth in the first six months of support, and a 96% loan repayment rate. [Women comprise more than 60% of Inkomoko's clients](#), and the organisation bridges digital gaps in refugee camps by offering offline training alongside AI-driven tools for loan assessment. Across its lifetime, clients [have directly created over 72,000 jobs](#). The model performs in camps, border towns, and fragile cities where banks are absent.

The critical question of capital

No serious conversation about African microenterprises can avoid the bottleneck everyone feels: **capital**. You cannot grow your business if you cannot restock. You cannot hire help without cash flow. You cannot keep perishables cold without a working fridge.

Entire fintech ecosystems have formed around solving this problem. From microloans to invoice factoring to embedded credit in marketplaces, the landscape is rich, well funded, and still evolving. Many jobtech platforms might integrate financial services and that might well be where eventual revenue and profitability lie.

Access to capital probably remains the single **greatest constraint on microenterprise growth**. But credit alone does not build resilience. Without strong operational foundations, capital often leaks, gets wasted or stalls out.

That is why Jobtech Alliance focuses on platforms that **make businesses work better, not just bigger**. That means helping entrepreneurs sell more, serve more customers, restock faster, and run smoother operations. It means using technology to strengthen how microenterprises function every day, not simply how much debt they can carry.

'Fintech and jobtech solve different problems in the same business loop. Fintech improves access to money. Jobtech improves how that money turns into sales, stock, fulfilment, and margin. The most durable platforms increasingly do both, but in the right sequence: **better operations first, richer financial services second**.



The promise and peril of AI for microenterprises



It is our belief that AI will not sweep through Africa’s microenterprises overnight. Its role will be **quieter and more assistive than disruptive**. The clearest near-term opportunity is not replacement. It is plugging the small workflow gaps that quietly drain income every day.

For many MSEs, value leaks in the ordinary moments. These failures are rarely dramatic, but across thin-margin businesses they **compound quickly**. AI’s role here should be practical. It can help owners respond to customers faster, turn chats into structured orders, predict demand, prevent stockouts, track deliveries, match payments, and keep cleaner records. For time-poor entrepreneurs, that really matters. It **reduces friction, cuts waste, and creates more space to focus on running and growing the business**.

Customer enquiry	Order capture	Stock check	Fulfilment	Payment	Record keeping	Repeat sales
Missed messages, slow replies, lost sales	No written confirmation, errors, prone to disputes	Stockouts delivered too late, overbuying, late reordering	No proof of delivery, delays untracked	Payment not matched to order, partial payments forgotten	No usable history, weak margin visibility, credit readiness	No follow ups, no customer memory
Auto-reply, message triage	Structured order capture in chat	Demand forecast, reorder alerts	Delivery confirmation and exception tracking	Auto-match payments to orders and flag balances	Auto-log, margin clarity, credit-ready	Smart reminders and reorder prompts

There are, of course, real risks. If AI tools remain expensive, poorly localised, or hard to trust, they may widen the gap between better-run businesses and everyone else. Poor deployment could also **displace support roles, create new data privacy concerns, and concentrate advantage** in the hands of already digitised firms.

The near-term question is not whether AI will replace microenterprise owners. It is whether AI can act as lightweight operational support. Turning chats into orders, flagging missed payments, matching deliveries, and helping overstretched owners make better decisions.



Powered by



BFA GLOBAL

Platform taxonomy and showcase



Jobtech taxonomy on digitising microenterprises

	Sell more			Run better		
	Demand capture platforms	Workflow orchestration platforms	Vertical operating systems	Fulfilment and operating platforms	Business management platforms	Embedded financial infrastructure
What it does	Helps microenterprises attract, convert, and retain customers	Connect core business functions into a single, continuous commercial workflow	Provides a workflow-native operating system for a specific business model, trade, or sector	Helps the microenterprise deliver once demand exists	Brings structure, visibility, and discipline to day-to-day running of the business	Integrate financial services directly into business workflows, enabled by usage and data
Typical platform wedges	Storefronts, conversational commerce, order capture, customer engagement, repeat purchase tools, and demand aggregating marketplaces	Systems linking orders, payments, inventory, fulfilment, records, and customer follow-up into one operating layer	Retail and FMCG systems, pharmacy systems, restaurant systems, beauty, trade and service business platforms, creator commerce systems	Inventory, procurement, supply chain, delivery, shared logistics infrastructure	Bookkeeping, reconciliation, cash tracking, record-keeping, compliance, lightweight admin tools	Payments, credit, insurance, merchant wallets, working capital tools

Jobtech platforms digitising microenterprises

Sell more

Run better

Demand capture platforms	Workflow orchestration platforms	Vertical operating systems	Fulfilment and operating platforms	Business management platforms	Embedded financial infrastructure
<p>Storefronts</p> <p>Catlog, peppa.io</p> <p>Marketplaces</p> <p>ANKA, dabchy, shopzetu, Plendify, ILEY'COM, tuShop, foonema, Pricepally</p> <p>Customer Engagement</p> <p>simpu, tappi, turn.io, sendchamp, chpter, beam</p> <p>Social Commerce</p> <p>JUMIA FORCE, BRIMORE, paza, tendo, AVUNJA, Kapu, Taager</p>	<p>Bumpa</p> <p>Flowcart (PREVIOUSLY sukhiba)</p> <p>LUMI Business, VerifiBUY, traction, OmniRetail</p>	<p>Restaurant / Hospitality</p> <p>orda, vendease, mafalia</p> <p>Retail FMCG</p> <p>OmniBiz, alerzo, Trade Depot, maad, WA SO KO, Kyosk, JEMLA, Shoptreo, SHEMACH</p> <p>Creators as Businesses</p> <p>Selar, Klas, coachli, hustlesasa</p> <p>Healthcare & Pharma</p> <p>CribMD, DrugStoc, Maisha Meds, LIFESTORES HEALTHCARE, ZURI HEALTH</p> <p>Specialised Services & Trades</p> <p>k: kandua, Fitted, ginger</p>	<p>LETA, sabi</p> <p>Gokada, Shipbubble</p> <p>eBee, sendbox</p> <p>Afridoo, paps</p> <p>LogisticsHub CORPORATION, RENDA</p> <p>sendstack</p>	<p>Lipabiz, Oze</p> <p>Xnomba, built</p> <p>LEJA, SANIFU</p> <p>DUHHA, workpay</p>	<p>salad, NUMIDA</p> <p>Lidya, pezesha Inawezesha</p> <p>Oze, FlapKap</p> <p>sevi, shara</p> <p>prospa</p> <p>hiveonline, float</p> <p>PalmPay, Moniepoint</p> <p>flutterwave</p> <p>KopoKopo</p>

Demand capture platforms

Tappi

 <https://tappi.app/>

 Kenya



Tappi helps micro and small businesses get discovered online and turn that visibility into consistent customer demand. It enables merchants to create business profiles, collect and manage reviews, run targeted digital campaigns, and improve search visibility across platforms like Google and Meta.

From there, it routes customers into direct engagement channels such as WhatsApp, where relationships and repeat transactions can be built. The platform is designed for businesses moving beyond word of mouth, offering a structured way to attract, convert, and retain customers in a digital environment.

Catlog

 <https://catlog.shop>

 Nigeria



Catlog gives social sellers a simple way to turn conversations into transactions. It allows merchants to create shareable product catalogues that function as lightweight storefronts, enabling customers to browse, select, and place orders without needing a full e-commerce website.

Built for sellers operating across WhatsApp and Instagram, it reduces the friction between product discovery and purchase by introducing structure into informal sales flows. The result is a more consistent and scalable way to convert interest into orders while maintaining the flexibility of social commerce.

Fulfilment and operating platforms

Leta

 <https://leta.ai/>

 Kenya



Leta helps businesses run delivery operations with greater precision and efficiency by layering intelligence onto existing logistics systems. Its platform provides route optimisation, automated dispatch, fleet management, and real time tracking, integrating directly with tools such as ERP, POS, and order management systems.

Rather than owning the logistics itself, Leta improves how goods move through the system, reducing costs, shortening delivery times, and giving operators clearer visibility across the supply chain. It effectively turns delivery from a manual coordination problem into a data-driven operational function.

Paps

 <https://www.paps.sn>

 Senegal



Paps provides a unified logistics layer that allows businesses to move goods with greater reliability and transparency. Through its platform, users can schedule pickups, track deliveries in real time, manage shipments, and integrate logistics directly into their own systems.

It combines last-mile delivery with broader capabilities across warehousing and fulfilment, helping businesses coordinate the physical side of commerce more effectively. In markets where logistics has historically been fragmented and opaque, Paps introduces structure, visibility, and consistency into how goods are moved.

Business management platforms

Oze

 <https://getoze.com/>

 Nigeria



Oze helps small businesses understand and improve their financial performance by turning everyday transactions into structured, usable data. Through its mobile app, merchants can track sales, expenses, and cash flow, while also receiving insights and recommendations on how to manage and grow their business. The platform goes beyond basic record-keeping by analysing behaviour over time, helping users identify patterns, manage working capital more effectively, and make better decisions.

By translating informal activity into clear financial visibility, Oze creates a more reliable picture of business health. This not only improves day-to-day management, but also builds a foundation for access to credit and other financial services, linking operational discipline to longer-term financial opportunity.

Lipabiz

 <https://www.lipabiz.com/>

 Kenya



Lipabiz focuses on helping businesses stay in control of their money by making everyday financial flows visible and actionable. It captures income, expenses, payments, and informal credit in a way that reflects how small businesses actually operate, surfacing issues such as missing payments, unmatched transactions, and revenue that quietly slips through the cracks.

By turning daily activity into a clear view of cash movement, it enables tighter control and more disciplined decision making. Its value is immediate and practical: helping businesses stop losing money they did not realise they were losing.

Workflow orchestration platforms

Bumpa

 <https://www.getbumpa.com/>

 Nigeria



Bumpa brings together the core activities of running a small business into a single, mobile-first system. Merchants can create a digital storefront, manage inventory, process orders, send invoices, accept payments, and track performance, all from one interface.

Built for sellers operating across social and messaging channels, it connects what are often fragmented tasks into a more continuous and manageable workflow. By linking customer engagement, sales, and operations, Bumpa allows merchants to run their business with greater consistency and control.

Flowcart

 <https://www.flowcart.ai>

 Kenya



Flowcart enables businesses to manage the full customer journey within messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, turning conversations into structured, trackable transactions. It allows merchants to engage customers, convert chats into orders, process payments, and manage follow-up from a single interface.

By keeping acquisition, conversion, and retention within one continuous flow, it reduces the drop-offs that occur when these steps are handled across disconnected tools. The result is a more seamless and coordinated way to manage customer interactions from first contact through to repeat purchase.

Vertical operating systems

Orda

 <https://orda.africa>

 Nigeria & Kenya



Orda provides a unified operating system for restaurants, bringing together orders, payments, inventory, and performance tracking into a single workflow. It works across multiple demand channels, including in-store, delivery, and messaging, and translates these fragmented transactions into structured, real time data.

This gives restaurant owners clear visibility over sales, stock, and operations, replacing manual coordination with a system that allows the business to run with consistency and control. Its design reflects the specific realities of food businesses, rather than applying generic tools to a complex environment.

Lifestores

 www.lifestoreshealthcare.com

 Nigeria








Lifestores empowers small, independent pharmacies with a sector-specific system that improves how they procure, manage, and deliver essential medicines.

The platform aggregates demand to strengthen purchasing power, streamlines inventory management, and supports more consistent access to quality drugs. By embedding itself into the daily operations of independent chemists, it helps them run more efficient and reliable businesses while improving affordability and availability for patients.

The curious case of vertical FMCG platforms

African jobtech FMCG retail businesses may look similar from the outside, but they differ substantially in who owns the chain, how logistics are handled, when credit enters the workflow, and where profit really comes from.

Platform subtype	Core model	Logistics approach	Primary margin logic	Role of credit	Example(s)	What makes it different
First-party, infrastructure heavy distributor	Buys, stores, and delivers inventory with tighter operational control	Owns more of warehousing and delivery	Commerce margin plus tighter control of service and supply	Often added after distribution is established		Built to control more of the chain in fragmented, low-trust retail environments
Brand and retailer distribution platform	Connects informal retailers to supply with a strong manufacturer route-to-market lens	Mixed, but more oriented toward efficient brand distribution	Distribution margin, brand access, exclusive supply, sometimes private label	Can support retailer stickiness		More manufacturer-facing in its logic, with upside in exclusive distribution and owned brands
Asset-light orchestration layer	Coordinates retailers, distributors, and supply partners without owning most infrastructure	Relies heavily on third-party logistics and partner networks	Lower asset intensity, platform coordination, transaction efficiency	Layered in once transaction data is strong		Focuses on orchestrating the chain rather than owning it
Fintech-led retail operating system	Uses commerce as the wedge, then monetises through payments and working capital	Usually lighter logistics to preserve margins	Financial services, payment flows, and merchant operating data	Central to the model, not peripheral		Real value creation increasingly sits in payments, credit, and merchant services rather than pure restocking
Market-specific margin play	Same broad restocking logic, but in markets where inefficiency creates more room for value capture	Varies by market structure	Higher gross margin opportunity where wholesale markups or supply frictions are worse	Often important, especially where working capital is constrained		Geography changes the economics, so not all "FMCG platforms" face the same margin reality



Powered by



BFA GLOBAL

Sector analysis and investment thesis



The market context

Microenterprises are not informal outliers. They are the dominant infrastructure of African economies. 44 million businesses power trade, services, and food systems. They are not waiting to be onboarded, they are already operating, daily.

- **The digital layer is in place.** The translation layer is often missing. Mobile money, smartphones, and WhatsApp are widespread. But most platforms fail to turn these tools into real value for microbusinesses. The tech exists, but the orchestration layer does not.
- **Informality is a functioning system, not a problem to solve.** Microenterprises have adapted to survive without reliable electricity, formal contracts, or enforcement. They value speed, liquidity, and trust above everything else. Platforms that ignore this logic tend to lose users quickly.
- **Commerce in Africa will not centralise. It will remain distributed and hybrid.** The repeated failure of large e-commerce platforms proves a simple point: most trade still happens in local loops, part digital and part physical. This is not resistance to progress. It is adaptation to reality.
- **Microenterprises are not reluctant to adopt, but to waste time.** When a tool just works, they use it daily. When it adds friction, they stop. Platforms that treat “adoption” as a training problem misunderstand what’s really going on.
- **Net firm creation is low once you account for churn.** Every year, thousands of new businesses replace others that quietly close. Net firm creation is low once exits are counted, which means platform impact must be measured on business survival, not just new sign-ups.
- **Microenterprise demand follows seasonal and cash-cycle rhythms.** Sales rise during harvests, school terms, or festive periods, then fall sharply when liquidity tightens. Platforms that adapt to these rhythms through flexible repayment plans or short-term inventory credit build credibility with users who live month to month.
- **Stockouts are rarely caused by the entrepreneurs themselves.** They often result from supply chain inefficiencies, such as distributor stock allocation, transport delays, or fuel costs. Platforms that help businesses connect directly to suppliers or coordinate restocking at the network level solve deeper systemic issues than those that focus only on shop-level management.

Business models

Platforms that layer sales, payments, inventory, logistics, and credit lock in users and create compounding value, while single-use tools quickly get replaced.

- **Sector focus beats feature depth.** Platforms that build for specific verticals (restaurants or retailers) understand workflows better than generic SaaS ever will. Vertical plays win on trust, stickiness, and monetisation.
- **For most microenterprises, standalone software fees are a hard sell.** Entry models work best when value is immediate, pricing is low-friction, and monetisation is tied to outcomes, enterprise partners, or adjacent financial services
- **Pricing models work best when they charge for outcomes, not for entry.** Platforms can link fees to verified deliveries, settled invoices, or completed payments, ensuring that users pay only when real value is created.
- **Distribution through existing enterprise channels is a real scale unlock.** Scale comes from distribution through existing enterprise channels, not door-to-door acquisition. Platforms that help FMCGs, banks, or aggregators digitise their networks will tend to grow more efficiently.
- **Credit works when it follows behaviour, not when it leads it.** The strongest models treat lending as an outcome of demonstrated reliability, not an incentive for sign-up.
- **Data transparency is becoming a new form of trust.** Allowing merchants to see and control how their data is used, and to share in the benefits of anonymised insights, can turn compliance into participation and improve data quality for everyone.
- **The drift toward SMEs is structural and resisting it must be intentional.** Every platform faces pressure to move upmarket. We have seen most platforms drift with growth. The ones that remain useful to micro users over time have designed that outcome into the core product.

A shift in how microenterprise platforms are built

For many years, digital tools targeting African microenterprises have **focused on individual functions / tasks**. Payments apps processed transactions, POS systems tracked sales, delivery platforms coordinated riders, and bookkeeping tools digitised records. Each solved a specific problem, but the broader workflow of the business remained fragmented.

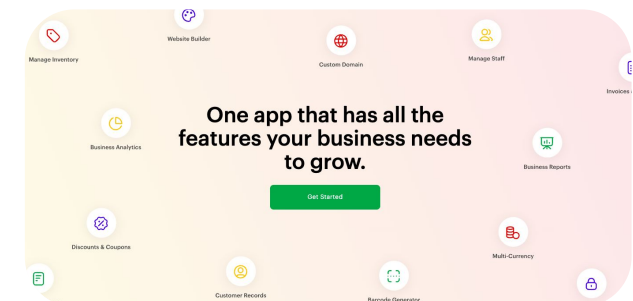
Increasingly, a different model is emerging. The most durable platforms are not built around single features. They structure **the sequence of work itself**, linking customer demand, orders, payments and fulfilment into a continuous operational loop. Instead of sitting alongside existing tools, these platforms begin to organise how the business actually runs.

This shift is relatively nascent, but it can change the role of the platform entirely. Where earlier products digitised isolated tasks and plugged specific leaks, the next generation of platforms is beginning to run the **whole workflow of the microenterprise**.

Bumpa is an excellent example of this. It moves beyond isolated features, to provide the "rhythm" for social-commerce merchants in Nigeria. Bumpa centralises all business functions into a continuous loop, becoming the essential tool that keeps the microenterprise ticking. By reducing manual errors and fostering repeat customer behaviour, the platform does more than just digitise records – it stabilises the merchant's income and improves overall job quality. Ultimately, Bumpa could become the primary infrastructure through which a microentrepreneur actually runs their business.



- Sell Online**
Get a website, custom domains, run sales etc.
- Collect Payments**
Receive Local & Intl. payments for your business.
- Manage Inventory**
Generate barcodes and manage multiple products.
- Manage Business Operations**
Manage Staff, Store Locations and Expenses
- Automate Order Processes**
Get stock updates, automate order emails & process deliveries
- Create Business Records**
Share invoices, receipts & record sales



Inclusion as a design principle



Designing for women is one of the clearest tests of whether a platform can actually work in fragmented, low-trust, low-bandwidth contexts. Women don't sit at the margins of Africa's MSE economy. They are the market.

Platforms that intentionally design for women – by localising tools, embedding safety protocols, integrating business training, and enabling flexible participation – **can radically shift user outcomes for underserved communities and recognise commercial returns.**

Inclusive design starts with recognising the **difference between access and usability**. Owning a smartphone doesn't mean being digitally fluent. A mobile wallet isn't enough if the UI assumes literacy or time flexibility. And selling online doesn't work if harassment [drives women off the platform](#). Equally, reaching women requires intentional acquisition. Agent models, referrals, and tapping into trusted communities – like church groups or WhatsApp networks – are consistently more effective at building trust and onboarding women users.

True inclusion means:

- Embedding tools in vernacular languages and voice-based formats.
- Designing for feature phones, not just Android apps.
- Offering community support models that reduce isolation and risk.
- Embedding continuous upskilling so women can learn by doing.
- Building for women-led sectors like social commerce and community distribution.
- Collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) to track women's participation and performance over time.

When platforms lower friction for women, they can expand market reach, unlock dormant talent, and **build trust in places where formal systems have failed.**

Investment thesis

We back platforms that close the core workflow loops for African microenterprises by turning fragmented daily activity into structured data, and structured data into credit and enterprise services. The future will not be built by teaching new habits, but by turning the ones already here into systems that scale. Platforms that scalably reduce frictions of onboarding and upskill participation (possibly through AI) can win.

The most resilient platforms do not present themselves as software. They function as **invisible infrastructure**. Some specialise deeply within a sector, while others embed quietly into existing financial and communication flows. They bundle the essentials: orders, payments, inventory, fulfilment, and credit. Bundling is what makes the economics work in fragmented, low-margin markets.

The future we aim to back will take two main shapes. Some platforms will go deep within a single vertical sector, embedding tightly into daily workflows and unlocking value through context, repeat usage, and verified behaviour. Others will enter through a high-frequency wedge within the existing workflow, then expand across adjacent functions as trust, usage, and dependency grow. In both cases, the end state is the same: platforms that sit at the centre of how the business runs, generating high-quality behavioural data as a byproduct of real activity. Over time, this data becomes the foundation for credit, decision support, and embedded services. The platforms that treat this data as a core asset, govern it responsibly, and translate it into meaningful utility for the user will define the next generation of microenterprise infrastructure.

The gap platforms should close is between steps, not in the steps

Microenterprises already sell, stock, and pay informally. Value leaks in the handoffs: order to payment, sale to restock, transaction to credit.

Workflow closure generates data that funds itself

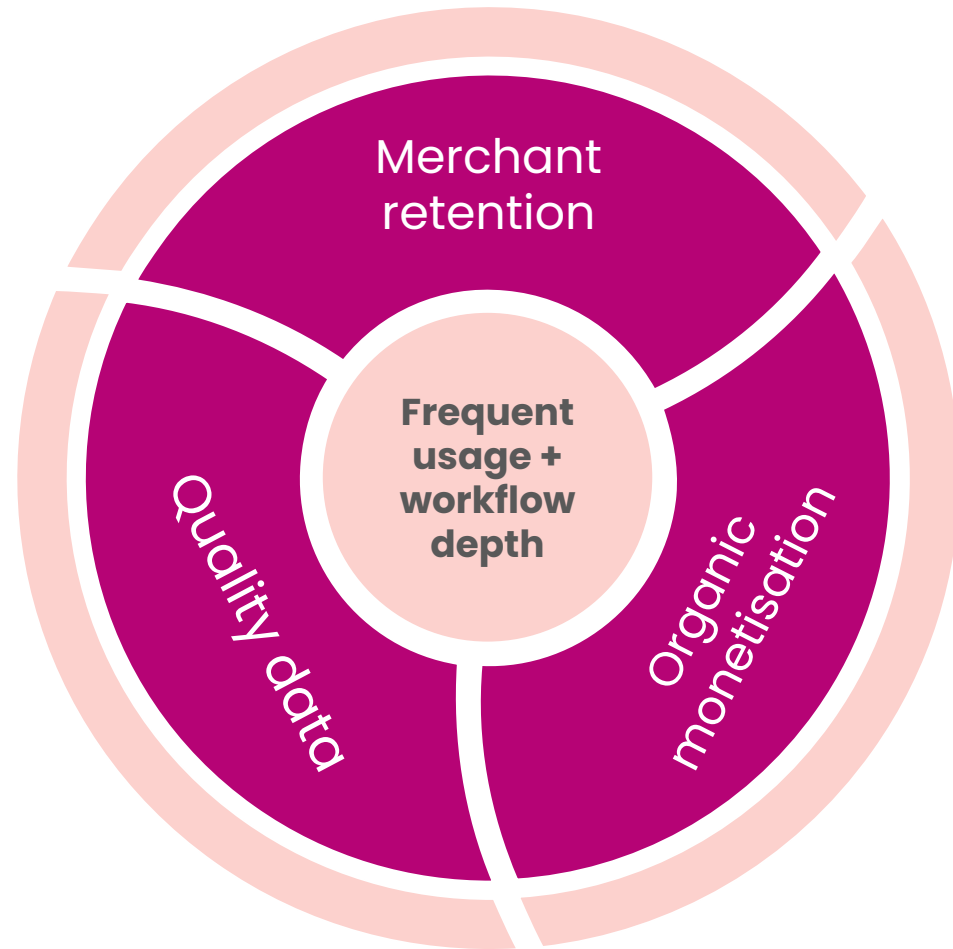
Bundling the critical loop produces behavioural data, which underwrites credit, which in turn is the margin unlock.

AI front-end, structured back-end

Conversational or low-UI surfaces lower adoption friction. But the real moat is clean structured data underneath, which is the layer many platforms overlook.

As platforms scale, many drift toward SMEs & larger enterprises. Pricing rises, interfaces become more complex, and the micro layer is left behind. The real opportunity for the sector lies with those that **resist this pull and stay radically simple on the surface while becoming more intelligent underneath.**

What makes a platform worth backing



The strongest platforms do not just add tools. They close the workflow.

They embed deeply into daily microenterprise operations, becoming part of how work actually gets done. High-frequency usage is the proof that a platform sits inside the core loop of the business. From this position, three things follow:

- Retention becomes structurally embedded. Merchants do not churn because leaving would break how their business runs.
- Monetisation becomes organic. Revenue is earned from transactions, fulfilment, or financial services that emerge from real usage, not imposed pricing.
- Data becomes reliable. Daily activity generates clean, behavioural data that compounds over time and unlocks credit, insights, and enterprise value.

The best platforms resist upmarket drift and design for inclusion from day one, ensuring they remain usable, valuable, and trusted by the microenterprises they serve.