“Challenges’ Access Africa Programme reduced the risks and cost of exploring export opportunities, giving vital support on the business development and our social mission.”

– Alison Wood, CEO Lilypads –
The Access Africa Programme enables Scottish social enterprises and social entrepreneurs to explore and expand into African markets.

It provides market research and business development support, funded by the Scottish Government, to enterprises and individuals who have an idea, product, service or model that could make a real impact in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Delivered by Edinburgh-based The Challenges Group and our teams in Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, we have so far supported more than 20 Scottish organisations and individuals to take their first steps into African markets.
Why take part in our programme?

Expand your business and social impact in some of the world’s fastest growing markets with our Access Africa Programme. Between now and 2030, the majority of global economic growth will come from developing countries and emerging markets. The solutions that their communities, consumers and businesses need might come from products and services from social enterprises in Scotland!

**Challenges will help you explore your idea and make it ready for export, quickly access opportunities and provide practical business advice.**

- Our teams of associates will give you first-hand market insights and accurate local knowledge from potential customers or partners.
- We will rapidly test to see if your products or services are a good fit or need optimised.
- Together, we will accelerate your plans to internationalise and export into Africa.
What you get:

We provide a two-month package of funded support to eligible social enterprises and entrepreneurs, including:

1. Advice from Challenges’ UK team to identify the right market and design a brief for your project
2. A dedicated Challenges’ associate in your chosen market (Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda or Zambia), who will conduct market research and/or business development support on your behalf
3. Regular updates with the Challenges UK and local teams
4. A market insight report and workshop to share the findings and recommendations and plan your next steps for international expansion
5. Promotion of your AAP project through our social media and other comms channels
6. Access to hot desk space at Montgomery Street Lane, Challenges’ HQ and Edinburgh’s newest social innovation hub.

How it works:

Get in touch with us using the details below to find out more about the AAP and request a short application form.

Funded support is limited and provided on a first-come, first-served basis if you meet the following eligibility criteria:

• Be a social enterprise (your enterprise is registered as a CIC, registered charity, SCIO or Company Limited by Guarantee) based in Scotland

Or

• Have an idea for a product or service that will create social impact, but not yet be legally registered.

At the moment we have a particular focus on business ideas in tourism, renewable energy, fintech, sustainable packaging, and healthcare. But even if you don’t fit these categories and have a product or service that you believe could work in Africa, we would still love to hear from you!

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