

African startups Kubik and Emata win big at Global Startup Awards

Two African early-stage companies recently came out tops at the Global Startup Awards. Kubik and Emata won Startup of the Year and Best Newcomer respectively. The Global Startup Awards offer startups exposure in the international arena, as well as access to new markets, funding opportunities, and a global network of leaders. More than 120 techpreneur companies from 115 countries competed for coveted awards. The top ten trailblazer entries were announced at the gala event.



Left: Bram van den Bosch, Right: Kidus Asfaw | image supplied

This is the first year to see winners of the GSA Africa make it onto the list of global finalists at this event. Last year, the GSA Africa considered 7,589 nominees before crowning the continent-wide winners in 12 categories, including 'Women in Tech, HealthTech', AgriTech and Best Newcomer. Sixty regional winners were announced.

Kubik is an environmental technology company from Ethiopia that turns plastic waste into low-carbon, low-cost buildings. Its environmentally friendly alternative building materials are designed to interlock, thereby circumventing the need for costly and polluting materials.

Emata is a Ugandan fintech company that is revolutionising how smallholder farmers access financing. Not only has this startup automated the entire loan process from data collection and credit scoring to loan disbursement, but they also cater for small and remote farmers by offering loans as small as \$15.

“I represent Kubik, but more importantly, I represent Africa,” recalled Kubik CEO and cofounder, Kidus Asfaw, during his acceptance speech at the GSA. “It truly takes a village to build a company. It’s not without the support of our community and country that Kubik is where we are today as the global Startup of the Year.”

Asfaw further commented that he believes these awards will have “a massive positive impact on Africa’s startup ecosystem.”

“It brings a lot of exposure to the fact that Africa is a launchpad for innovation. The continent is often seen a beneficiary of others’ solutions. The GSA will help change this perception.”

“It will also create public awareness that Africa has unique and impactful solutions that are investment-worthy,” he says. “At Kubik, we want to be a voice for the many silent but phenomenal African entrepreneurs who are creating world-changing products and services.”

Bram van den Bosch, CEO and cofounder of Emata, shared that even though Uganda may be considered a small country, it is known as the ‘Pearl of Africa’. “The Best Newcomer award stands testament to Uganda’s significant contribution to Africa’s, and now the world’s, innovation ecosystem.”

“The award gives us exposure to a global audience and attracts the attention of investors who share our vision for supporting smallholder farmers. It also confirms that our innovative approach to financing agriculture is unique and effective.”

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