

BCX, GE co-creates Digital Farm solution tailored for SA and African agriculture

Information and communications technology company, BCX and digital industrial company, GE have partnered with the aim to provide end-to-end digital technology solutions to the agri-processing sector. In collaboration, the companies developed an integrated agri-tech solution tailored for South African and African agricultural needs.



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Leveraging Predix, GE's application development platform for the industrial internet, the team co-created the Digital Farm solution. Predix was purpose-built to meet the scale, complexity, speed and security requirements of the industry.

The Digital Farm, created by BCX and GE, allows stakeholders to The solution will incorporate components, or software applications (apps), that will allow visibility for varied types of user information and benefits per stakeholder sector – farmer, financial intermediaries, government, retailer, logistics partner, and ultimately, the consumer.

Agriculture currently represents approximately 2.6% of South African GDP and contributes to around 10% of formal employment in the country. According to Statistics South Africa, agriculture has been one of the sectors to contribute most to GDP growth, showing a 33.6% growth in the second quarter of 2017.

The potential of digital disruption to transform agriculture

“Agriculture plays such a vital role in the South African economy,” noted Ian Russell, CEO of BCX. “With the advances in digital industrial technology, we recognised that there were significant opportunities to leverage that technology to increase efficiencies, profits, and ultimately the broader economy.”

Ali Saleh, SVP and chief commercial officer for GE Digital Middle East, Africa and Turkey, said of the collaboration: “We are delighted to work with BCX as our partners in the region in developing solutions that are integral to the success and survival of all our continent's citizens.” He added, “One of our key capabilities is leveraging solutions from one sector or industry and applying them to another – what we call the GE Store. We now look forward to applying this significant legacy as we enter a key sector with the goal of increasing efficiency.”

Announcing the partnership at the BCX Disrupt 2017 Summit on 16 November, Russell noted: “The partnership shows the potential that digital disruption can have to transform an industry and further, an economy. Beyond increasing output and

efficiency for farmers, the solutions should have a trickle-down effect for South African consumers as well.”



Ian Russell, CEO of BCX (Image Supplied)

The solutions will be rolled out over the course of next year and will focus primarily on small to mid-sized farmers.

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