

Digital inclusion in Africa – SME Aisle success story of Aion Sigma

Aion Sigma is a Swedish-Finnish company offering digital and financial inclusion e.g. smartphones to African entrepreneurs. The company joined the Central Baltic SME Aisle project in 2019, funded by the Central Baltic Interreg programme. The company has been active in project events within the ICT field.

So far, in Zambia, Aion Sigma has partnered with Musanga Logistics to provide smartphones with their employees. They can now access route and traffic information, location tracking and maps as well as instant messaging and productivity support applications. “Thanks to the SME Aisle project, we have been able to enter the market in Southern Africa” says one of the company founders **Joakim Hedenstedt**. In practice, experts of SME Aisle from the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences have supported the company during delegation trips and provided information on the market landscape of Southern African countries.

A smartphone with internet connection is what everyone needs for essential civic and cultural participation in today’s digital world. Aion Sigma aims to support the of 75% of Africans unable to afford a smartphone under the current market conditions. With their smart loans, they have already helped over 10,000 entrepreneurs across Zambia, Nigeria and Kenya get access to smartphones and develop their day-to-day business.

Also, in Namibia, the company is cooperating with the University of Turku Future Tech Lab at the shared campus at the University of Namibia and recently, Aion Sigma was one of the winners of the Pan-European Hackathon contest. The Jury identified the best solutions to support European and global initiatives in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

More about the company: <http://aionsigma.com/>

More about SME Aisle project: <http://sub.samk.fi/projects/smeaisle>



The SME Aisle project team/Nina Savela, company Aion Sigma/Joakim Hedenstedt and local partners Musanga Logistics (left) and Walvis Bay Corridor Group in Zambia Autumn 2019. The contact person from SME Aisle is Nina Savela.