



	<p>BIOLIFE TECH ABOMEY-CALI, BENIN WEBSITE</p>
---	---

ABOUT BIOLIFE TECH

- Company status: Start-up
- Year of registration: 2020
- Number of employees: 4



Ulrich Djido, co-Founder and President

Ulrich Djido is an agricultural engineer specialising in sustainable production systems, with expertise in waste recovery. He holds a bachelor's

degree in agronomy and crop science and a master's degree in plant production science and technology

from the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin, obtained in 2018. Committed to promoting healthier, environmentally-friendly agriculture, Ulrich is currently preparing a PhD in agroecology and sustainable agriculture at the University of Abomey-Calavi and the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

Ulrich has won several awards for his major contributions to sustainable agriculture and technological innovations in Benin.

BUSINESS MODEL

Mission: to strengthen the local economy through a credible and secure virtual platform.

Vision: to create a world where digital inclusion and innovation drive economic growth in communities. The company aims to develop the most efficient and important platform for Africa's agri-food supply chains and significantly improve the lives of producers, businesses, and consumers.



Funded by the European Union

Ever since he was a child, Ulrich has witnessed that difficulties in accessing the market lead to significant post-harvest losses and contribute farmer's impoverishment. Beninese pineapple growers face great difficulty to sell their produce, even more at competitive prices, not least because of the highly perishability of the crop which has an average shelf-life of no more than five days after ripening. At the same time, processors and exporters find it difficult to source pineapple of the quality they need. In analyzing these problems, Ulrich found that they were mainly due to a lack of communication between actors of the supply chain. Buyers seek information on production quantity, quality and price, while growers need visibility on their sales to avoid losing their produce when it reaches maturity. BioLife Tech has therefore developed a digital platform, called "e-pineA Solutions", which facilitates engagement and communication between players in

the pineapple supply chain by providing transparent information.

In order to enable as many operators as possible to use its platform, BioLife Tech operates on a remuneration model based on annual subscriptions and commissions charged on each transaction carried out via the platform. Use of e-pineA requires the creation of a data sheet to provide information, at a cost of \$5, and a subscription fee of \$10 per year. The commission charged on each transaction range from 5 to 10%. \$8 are for example charged for a ton of pineapple sold.

Thanks to its innovative technological solution, BioLife Tech has become one of the leaders in the agritech sector (a contraction of the words "agriculture" and "technology") in Benin.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH SMALLHOLDERS, COOPERATIVES...

BioLife Tech works closely with pineapple grower cooperatives, and particularly with representatives who act as "ambassadors" for the company.

BioLife Tech has trained over 1,000 stakeholders of the pineapple industry, mainly women and young people, on how to use its digital tool and, more generally, on digital literacy. BioLife Tech's field agents assist producers, processors and exporters with using the e-pineA application, such as adding pineapple fields to the dynamic map, creating a point of sale or adding products for sale.

In addition, the company has enabled over 20 women processors to develop their marketing and branding skills to facilitate the commercialization of their products (dried pineapple, pineapple juice, pineapple powder and other pineapple-derived products).

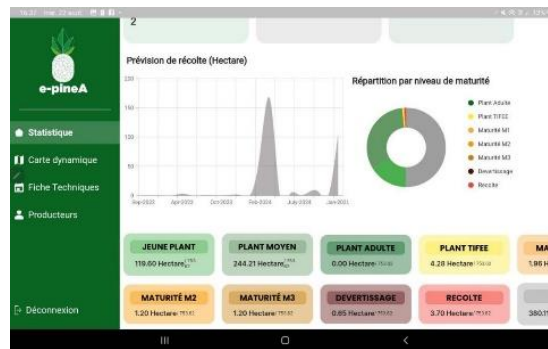
By 2023, e-pineA's user base included over 1,200 pineapple growers and 300 buyers (including local processing plants, exporters and traders). More than 700 transactions were carried out via the application, corresponding to the sale of 550 tonnes of fresh pineapple, 150 processing units and 150 deliveries.

PRODUCTS AND MARKETS

The e-PineA mobile application connects pineapple growers in Benin with local processors, exporters and traders. The app features a dynamic map that lists all the country's pineapple fields that are categorized in various colours representing the state of ripeness, to ensure ease of use. Growers add their pineapple fields, providing detailed information such as about the variety, area, planting and flowering dates, as well as the field's geographical coordinates. The map provides geolocation and filter functions that enable buyers to finetune their search for pineapples according to variety, proximity to producer, state of ripeness, etc.



BioLife Tech has also developed ClusterApp, a digital solution for organisations that cannot use e-pineA because they lack a system that tracks their agricultural activities. ClusterApp provides these organisations with technical monitoring, enabling users to track farming activities in real time, as well as plan and manage harvests and sales.



BioLife Tech develops solutions for the agricultural sector in Benin.

As a software engineering company, BioLife Tech also supports companies of all sizes and in all sectors with their digital transformation. It offers web and mobile application platform development services to meet companies' performance and growth needs.

INNOVATIONS: MILESTONES AND EXPANSION PLANS

BioLife Tech has developed an algorithm for its e-pineA application, which analyses the registered pineapple fields based on the data sheet that users have previously filled in. The company received support from the Belgian development agency, Enabel, to create the e-pineA platform.

The company also works with Benin's Personal Data Protection Authority (APDP) to ensure strict compliance with the provisions recommended by Benin's Digital Code.

e-pineA uses payment platforms such as KKIAPay and FedaPAy, which are aligned with international standards in terms of electronic payment.

Over the next three years, BioLife Tech aims to capture 40% of the national market for fresh pineapple and pineapple by-products, as well as 15% of the West African regional market (including Senegal, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali).

The company is also looking to develop its services for other agricultural products such as rice, cashew nuts and vegetable crops.

BioLife Tech also seeks its platform to help develop pineapple exports to the European market. Its goal is to double pineapple exports (fresh and processed) from Benin to the European market by 2026.

To achieve its ambitious goals, BioLife Tech is looking for investment, particularly through a fund-raising round by the end of 2024.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

e-PineA has created a community of stakeholders committed to the sustainable development of the pineapple industry, and continues to grow in popularity. Over 1,300 local producers have sold their produce at competitive prices using the application, generating more income while reducing post-harvest losses. The application also guarantees processors and exporters a reliable supply of quality pineapple, thus contributing to the development of Benin's pineapple industry.





This business profile has been developed as part of the PAFO-COLEAD Innovations series supported by the Fit For Market Plus programme. Fit For Market Plus is implemented by COLEAD within the framework of development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (EU).

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the EU and the OACPS. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and PAFO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or the OACPS..



**Funded by
the European Union**