

››› DEG promotes authenticity proof for pharmaceuticals in Africa

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German tech company authentic.network develops digital authenticity proof

Counterfeit medicine is a problem in many developing countries. This also applies to Côte d'Ivoire, where, according to the World Health Organization, 30 to 60 per cent of medicine offered is counterfeit, including ineffective medicine as cure for COVID-19. Chemnitz-based start-up authentic.network developed a digital authenticity proof that is to make medicine and protective equipment counterfeit-proof via blockchain technology. DEG - Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH is co-financing a pilot project to introduce this technology in Côte d'Ivoire contributing around EUR 340,000 from funds from the develoPPP.de programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). authentic.network and its partners contribute the same amount.

Using the technology developed by authentic.network, any physical product can be labelled with an encrypted code. This code can be photographed with a smartphone via an app and compared with its digital twin through blockchain technology. Within short time the end customer can check whether the product is an original or fake. authentic.network developed the encrypted code over a period of three years, in cooperation with, among others, the Blockchain Competence Center of Mittweida University of Applied Sciences, Chemnitz University of Technology and Leipzig University of Applied Sciences.

Pilot project to be launched in Côte d'Ivoire

"With this co-financing we are enabling authentic.network to implement its innovative technology in a pilot project. This will help to make medicines in Côte d'Ivoire counterfeit-proof while protecting human life", says Manuela Marques, Head of division Customer Solutions at DEG.

Frank Theeg, CEO of authentic.network, adds: "DEG's support allows us to export high technology to regions where counterfeiting causes massive social problems. In Africa around 200,000 people die every year from counterfeit malaria medicine alone. Our aim is to solve this problem by way of technology".

DEG contributes around EUR 340,000 from develoPPP.de funds

Measures during the first phase involves equipping Ivorian pharmacies with 50,000 respirator masks labelled with the digital encrypted code to help control the spread of COVID-19. These measures have been made possible thanks to the funds provided by DEG and donations from the Saxon economy. In addition, training for local pharmacy employees and a public information campaign are planned.

In a second phase the pilot is to be expanded to prove authenticity of malaria medicine. This does not only involve adapting the app but also provision of up to two million digital encrypted codes. This phase also serves to prepare for an authenticity proof for upcoming vaccines or medicine to treat COVID-19, which are already in circulation as counterfeit products. Beyond the pilot project, the technology is to be extended to all pharmaceuticals sold on the Ivorian market and then to West Africa.

Further Information

› [develoPPP.de](https://www.developpp.de)