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Côte d'Ivoire: blockchain stops the activities of drugs counterfeiters

Many of the drugs in circulation in Africa are counterfeits. A start-up that makes it possible to identify counterfeit drugs.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around 10 per cent of countries and emerging economies are counterfeit and have no active ingredients, even higher in some parts of Africa. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the countries where, for financial reasons, many Ivorians have to obtain the drugs on local markets, which are often unchecked.

A start-up based in the German city of Chemnitz has now developed a solution: a blockchain-based technology. The application devised by authentic.network uses a decentralised ledger stored on a series of networked computers to provide information that cannot be tampered with. The generated code cannot be tampered with, so it acts as a guarantee of the authenticity of the product. Pharmaceutical companies and importers can label their products with the code. to scan the code with their smartphone and within a few seconds, the app reveals whether it is a genuine drug or a counterfeit.

Forgery-proof: a digital solution to tackle the trade in fake drugs

The technology is currently being trialled with anti-malaria drugs in cooperation with the Ivorian Ministry of Health and industry associations. The project is receiving support from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) GmbH, which is implementing the project on behalf of the Federal Government for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As a Business Scout, Megela facilitates arrangements between Côte d'Ivoire and German companies.

As he explains, 'What is important is to find the right local partner for companies so that market entry is as smooth as possible.' However, he also finds himself answering questions, such as how to register a business locally, how to retrieve containers from a surveyor or a reliable notary.

Business Scouts are GIZ experts based in around 40 countries worldwide. They advise local companies on opportunities for promotion, financing and cooperation and facilitate development cooperation, facilitate networking with potential partners and in

Digital technology offers potential for other sectors and countries

The success of 'his' German companies in Côte d'Ivoire encourages Rene Megela. 'Doing it is a hot topic,' he says; 'the trade in counterfeit drugs is a multi-million dollar industry. Digital technology can help save lives. And the technology roll-out is just starting.'

uses. The project has launched cooperation arrangements with a German cons COVID-19 tests in Côte d'Ivoire and to label them with a code to prove they are already working with the Chemnitz start-up on rolling the technology out in African countries, including Niger and Rwanda.