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SINAKO

NEWSLETTER

WHAT MAKES ESCROW
GROUP TICK?

ZMX TO HOST THE LANDMARK
A-ACX ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WHAT IS C-TRADE ANYWAY?

TOP 10 USE CASES FOR
BLOCKCHAIN

COLLABORATION FOR SME
GROWTH

escrow//group



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Editor's note

Dear Readers,

Hello everyone. It is with great excitement that we present the first edition of Sinako, Escrow Group's quarterly bulletin. True to its name, which means "We Can" in isiXhosa, Sinako reflects our belief in the power of collaboration, innovation, and resilience in shaping the future of capital markets, financial services, and fintech.

This publication aims to provide valuable insights, thought leadership, and updates from our industry. In this edition, we spotlight key trends transforming the financial landscape, share updates on our initiatives as Escrow Group, and feature perspectives from thought leaders driving meaningful change.

We hope Sinako serves as a platform for fostering dialogue and collaboration among our stakeholders as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of this dynamic sector.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We look forward to your feedback and continued engagement as we grow together.

Warm regards,
Enacy Mapakame

group members:

corpserve registrars /// **escrow** /// fintech

efs registrars **FINSEC** Market Wise **zimX** Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange

CEO's Note

Dear Readers,

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to the inaugural edition of Sinako Newsletter. This newsletter represents a significant milestone for Escrow Group as we strive to engage meaningfully with our staff, stakeholders, wider capital markets and the entire Fintech community. Escrow Group is a leading financial technology and capital markets solutions provider, specialising in market place services, registry and investment administration, alternative banking solutions and trading platforms. Our mission is to drive efficiency, transparency, and accessibility within financial markets by offering innovative technology-driven solutions. From facilitating seamless pre-trade; trade and post trade activities to enhancing investor relations through digital platforms, we remain committed to empowering market participants and supporting the evolution of the financial ecosystems.

Our efforts and contributions to capital markets; financial markets and Fintech have not gone unnoticed in Zimbabwe and beyond our borders in the past year. Notably, we were honoured with the chairmanship of the Committee of SADC Stock Exchanges (CoSSE), further strengthening our influence in regional capital markets. FINSEC successfully facilitated new listings, including the Property X Fund and the Smartvest High Income Fund (SHIF), with a target to raise over US\$10 million. Additionally, our group secured several strategic partnerships across the region, such as supplying a broker office system to a leading bank in East Africa, entering a partnership with the stock exchange in Tanzania to launch the GEM-Portal for SME financing, as well as deploying Warehouse Receipt and Collateral Management Systems in Kenya. These milestones reinforce our commitment to driving innovation, efficiency, and financial inclusion across markets.

In this first edition, we are also particularly pleased to reflect on an important development in our market landscape; the Government's proposal to reduce the capital gains withholding tax on marketable securities to 1%, effective January 1, 2025. This policy shift is a commendable move, and Escrow Group is optimistic about its potential to invigorate market performance this year. By lowering the tax burden on market participants, the proposed reduction is poised to stimulate market liquidity, attract foreign investment and enhance market efficiency.

Escrow Group also remains committed to supporting such initiatives and advancing its mission of unlocking opportunities for our stakeholders. In line with this, the group is excited with its latest offering – Invoice Discount platform that will connect large corporates; SMEs and institutional investors to offer effective short term financing solutions to stimulate economic activity across various economic sector. Further, we will be announcing a new exciting innovative offering in the Real Estate sector in the second quarter of 2025. These products are driven by technology which is one of the Group's major strengths.

It is of special importance to note that all the systems used in the automation of the Group's business units as well as its clients are developed and maintained in-house. The software development arm of the Group also goes beyond providing systems internally but across Southern, Eastern and West African markets. The spectrum of the products on offer cuts across a diverse markets from capital, financial, and commodity markets among others. We have in our catalogue major systems like the Central Depository System (CDS), the Automated Trading System (ATS), the Fund and Investment Management System, the Broker Back Office System and respective mobile applications to aide the cores.

It is also our pleasure to announce that the Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX), operated within the Escrow Group, was selected to host the AfCFTA - Association of Commodity Exchanges (A-ACX) Annual Conference from March 26-27 at the Elephant Hills Hotel in the resort town of Victoria Falls. The theme for the conference is "Scaling Intra-African Trade: Leveraging Commodity Exchanges for Economic Resilience and Growth," which highlights the role of commodity exchanges in fostering regional trade in line with aspirations of the AfCFTA. Through this conference, we are excited to be at the centre of a significant step towards operationalisation of intra-continental commodity trade under the AfCFTA framework.

As you explore the pages of this Sinako Newsletter, we encourage you to reflect on how we can collectively foster more dynamic and resilient financial, capital and commodity markets. Together, we can drive sustainable growth and innovation in our industry.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to sharing more insights and updates with you in the editions to come.

Best regards,

What makes Escrow Group tick?

From Zimbabwe to Africa transforming financial technology

Headquartered in Zimbabwe, Escrow Group is a leading financial technology (Fintech) with a footprint that spans across Africa (Botswana, Kenya, Kingdom of Eswathini, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia). Focused on Africa's emerging markets, the group drives innovation in financial services and capital markets by delivering state-of-the-art technology solutions and biggest share registry services in Zimbabwe through Corpserve Registrars.



Securities and capital market solutions

Through its subsidiary FINSEC, Escrow Group operates Zimbabwe's first Alternative Trading Platform. It provides advanced trading, clearing, and settlement systems to make capital markets more accessible and efficient. This includes pioneering platforms like C-TRADE, which enables seamless securities trading via mobile and online systems.

Banking and payments

The group offers comprehensive banking solutions, such as the C-PAY suite. This modular software enables efficient credit processing, savings management, treasury, and asset management, while integrating mobile and online capabilities.

Registry and investment administration

Escrow operates some of the largest share registry services in regions like Zimbabwe and Kenya, automating investor management and providing cutting-edge services like e-voting and electronic dividend reinvestment.

Commodity exchange solutions

The group supports agricultural and commodity markets through the Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX) and related systems like warehouse receipt and trading platforms.

Custom technology development

Escrow Fintech, the group's technology arm, has developed over 12 world-class systems for banking, capital markets, and financial services, emphasizing financial inclusion.

Footprint and impact

With operations in 10 African countries, Escrow Group supports over 250,000 retail clients and handles transactions worth more than \$600 million. By leveraging innovation, it empowers businesses, enhances financial inclusion, and drives economic growth across the continent.

Escrow's mission reflects a belief in homegrown solutions for Africa's challenges, with a strategic focus on inclusivity, efficiency, and sustainability.

Are you looking for both short-term and long term investment opportunities

Are you looking for both short-term and long term investment opportunities, look no further than the FINSEC Private Markets. Our comprehensive suite includes:



Business Exchange



Debt and or Equity Financing



Public or Private Securities Trading



Invoice Discounting

+ And many more



Footprints in the sands of 2024

Although the year 2025 was a challenging year due to a myriad of challenges, Escrow Group managed to leave a lasting impact that will be remembered in the many years to come. The group recorded several significant milestones made in 2024 that will serve as a mark of progress and set the foundation for 2025 and beyond.

As Escrow, we are happy to share a few of the key milestones from last year.

CoSSE chairmanship

In 2024, Financial Securities Exchange (FINSEC) chief executive officer Collen Tapfumaneyi was appointed chairperson of the Committee of SADC Stock Exchanges (CoSSE) following elections held at the 64th bi-annual meeting of CoSSE in Johannesburg, South Africa. With vast experience in capital and commodity markets spanning East, West and Southern Africa as well as South Asia, Tapfumaneyi has been instrumental in driving capital markets innovation, automation and financial inclusion and has worked closely with most securities and commodity exchanges across the continent. CoSSE is made up of 14 Stock Exchanges in SADC, operating in 13 SADC member states.

New listings

The Financial Securities Exchange (FINSEC) had a number of listings during the year. Among the listings were Property X Fund and the Smartvest High Income Fund (SHIF) expected to raise over US\$10

million through the issuance of its first tranche of one million units. FINSEC facilitated US\$100,000 Trade Finance on ZMX. The exchange also on-boarded 2 major buyers on its Invoice Discount platform.

Partnerships

The group, through its Escrow Fintech sealed a deal to supply a broker office system to one of the leading banks in East Africa. The bank was ranked the largest commercial bank in Tanzania as of September 2022. Apart from Tanzania, the bank is also present in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda,

Escrow Fintech also partnered with a stock exchange in Tanzania to provide and operationalise the Growth Enterprise Market Funding Platform (GEM-Portal) on the exchange. The GEM Portal is a dedicated online platform designed for Small to Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in need of raising capital for retooling operations, increase productivity, or to increase their product range and or to expand into diversified markets.

Warehouse Receipt System in Kenya

Escrow Fintech has provided the Warehouse Receipt and Collateral Management Systems for their depository services to a Warehouse Receipt Council in Kenya. These are key solutions which automates the commodities platform to world class efficiency.



The Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX) to host the landmark A-ACX Annual Conference



In a major step toward strengthening intra-African trade and economic resilience, Zimbabwe has been selected to host the Annual Conference of the Association of African Commodity Exchanges (A-ACX) in March this year.

Running from 26 to 27 March at the Elephant Hills Hotel in the resort town of Victoria Falls, the conference will feature high level continental and global speakers and panellists ranging from agriculture commodities exchanges, financial and logistics services providers, Government officials and many others in the agriculture value chains.

The decision to select Zimbabwe for this momentous event underscores the country's growing influence in the continental commodities market and its commitment to the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The A-ACX, an alliance of 16 leading commodity exchanges across Africa, was established to foster collaboration and alignment with AfCFTA's broader goals of catalysing economic growth and promoting trade among African nations. The association aims to play a pivotal role in advancing intra-African trade in commodities and related services, providing a platform for innovation, market development, and regional economic integration.

The theme of the upcoming conference, "Scaling Intra-African Trade: Leveraging Commodity Exchanges for Economic Resilience and Growth," reflects the shared vision of enhancing Africa's trade ecosystem. The event is set to address critical issues, such as harmonising trade practices across African markets, building pan-African supply chains, promoting investment in the continent's-

- abundant resources, and advocating for policy reforms to unlock the potential of regional trade.

Zimbabwe, through the ZMX, has been a key contributor to the A-ACX's initiatives. As the host nation, Zimbabwe is tasked with managing a comprehensive agenda for the conference, which will bring together key stakeholders, including commodity exchange leaders, policymakers, and international organisations. The conference will feature a diverse array of sessions, discussions, and networking opportunities designed to share knowledge, build capacity, and explore innovative strategies for market development.

Hosting the A-ACX Annual Conference represents a significant milestone for Zimbabwe, offering numerous benefits. The event will also position Zimbabwe as a leader in the African commodities market, showcasing its advancements in trade infrastructure and economic policies. It is also expected to attract investments in agriculture and natural resources, sectors vital to Zimbabwe's economy. The ZMX, which has been at the forefront of transforming Zimbabwe's commodities market, will gain a platform to highlight its innovative frameworks and inspire other African nations.

The conference will also provide a boost to Zimbabwe's tourism and hospitality sectors, welcoming delegates from across the continent. Additionally, local stakeholders will have the opportunity to engage with international experts, gaining valuable insights and skills to further develop Zimbabwe's commodities market.

What is C-Trade anyway?

Revolutionizing investment across Africa

C-Trade is an innovative fintech platform designed to democratize access to capital markets, offering investors an easy and convenient way to trade a wide range of securities. Operated by Escrow Group, C-Trade serves as a one-stop hub for retail and institutional investors to engage with financial markets using cutting-edge technology.

A Platform for Everyone

C-Trade is accessible through multiple channels:

USSD Gateway: For non-smartphone users or those without internet access, C-Trade leverages Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), making it possible to buy and sell securities using a basic mobile phone.

Mobile Apps: Intuitive applications for Android and iOS devices provide secure and user-friendly access to real-time market data, order management, and portfolio monitoring.

Web Platform: Ideal for desktop users, the web version of C-Trade offers comprehensive features, including securities account registration and advanced trading tools.



What Can You Trade on C-Trade?

C-Trade opens the doors to a diverse array of investment options, such as:

Equities: Stocks from local and international markets.

Commodities: Through electronic warehouse receipts.

Derivatives: Including futures and options on stocks and indices.

Mutual Funds: Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and unit trusts.

This range of investment products allows investors to build diversified portfolios tailored to their financial goals.

How C-Trade Works

The process is simple:

Register: Investors create an account using their preferred access channel.

Fund the Account: Accounts can be funded instantly via integrations with banks and mobile money services.

Start Trading: Once funded, investors can place buy or sell orders, which are routed through broker portals and settled seamlessly.

C-Trade's Unique Selling Points

Currency Flexibility: Investors can trade securities in multiple currencies, such as Zimbabwean dollars and US dollars, on a single platform.

Comprehensive Ecosystem: C-Trade integrates trading, clearing, settlement, and portfolio management into a unified experience.

Inclusivity: The platform is designed to cater to all types of investors, from individuals with basic mobile phones to high-net-worth clients managing complex portfolios.

Driving Financial Inclusion in Africa

C-Trade embodies the mission of financial inclusion by breaking down traditional barriers to investment. Its mobile-friendly approach enables millions of Africans, including those in rural areas, to access capital markets that were previously out of reach.

Since its inception, C-Trade has been instrumental in promoting economic empowerment, allowing small investors and SMEs to raise funds and grow through capital market participation. It aligns with Escrow Group's vision of creating a financially inclusive ecosystem across Africa and beyond.

Your one-stop mobile investing platform giving you access to all local bourses.



Invest on the Financial Securities Exchange (**FINSEC**), Victoria Falls Stock Exchange (**VFEX**) and the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (**ZSE**), all in One App.



www.ctrade.co.zw



Econet - 08080277
NetOne - 08010077

C-TRADE

Greater visibility of Zimbabwe's venture capital ecosystem needed

The recently held Zimbabwe Private Equity and Venture Capital Conference 2024 provided a platform for key industry players to discuss the challenges and opportunities in Zimbabwe's venture capital ecosystem. Among the prominent voices was Escrow Group COO Blessing Chipfunde who shared valuable insights into the sector's current state, innovative solutions, and pathways for growth.

Asked to describe Zimbabwe's venture capital and SME industry in one phrase, Chipfunde candidly remarked, "It's invisible." This observation underscores the pressing need for SMEs to raise their visibility and engage more actively with platforms such as FINSEC.

In his submissions, Chipfunde outlined the pivotal role of Escrow Group as an operator and enabler in Zimbabwe and the broader region. With four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) — FINSEC, Escrow Fintech, Corpserve, and ZMX — the company is committed to driving financial innovation and supporting the entrepreneurial landscape. FINSEC, a licensed securities exchange, and Escrow Fintech, recognized as one of the region's leading technology solutions providers, exemplify the group's mission of empowering businesses, both large scale and upcoming.



A highlight of the discussion was the differentiation between the FINSEC Private Markets and the GEM Portal platform. These platforms leverage technology to bridge the funding gap in Zimbabwe, offering tailored solutions for various market segments. Among the available deals on these platforms are trade finance, invoice discounting, debt and equity capital raising, and listings. A stringent pre-screening model ensures the quality of deals, fostering trust and reliability within the ecosystem.

Chipfunde also outlined one of the firm's success stories - the Stratus IPO, which raised funding channeled into Zimbabwe's agricultural value chain, a clear demonstration of how venture capital can make a tangible impact.

Looking ahead, Chipfunde called for strategic reforms to strengthen Zimbabwe's startup ecosystem. He outlined several key recommendations such as inculcating business and financial literacy at an early stage within the country's education system.

"It is important to introduce business studies and capital markets knowledge at earlier stages in the education system to build a foundation for future entrepreneurs," he said.

He also underscored the need to enhance the ease of doing business in Zimbabwe by simplifying the registration processes to remove barriers for new businesses, as cumbersome procedures can deter potential entrepreneurs.

Another recommendation proffered was to increase the number of incubation centers and develop robust business networks to help startups transition from ideation to value creation, in addition revamping the tax policies. Chipfunde singled out the presumptive tax structures that discourage profitability in nascent stages.

In all these, Government has another critical role to play to ensure a robust funding pipeline dedicated to supporting SME growth and scalability.

The Zimbabwe Private Equity and Venture Capital Conference 2024 underscored the critical need for collaboration among policymakers, private investors, and industry stakeholders. Chipfunde's insights painted a hopeful yet pragmatic picture of the road ahead, emphasizing that meaningful reforms and innovative solutions can unlock Zimbabwe's untapped entrepreneurial potential.

Corpserve Registrars Zimbabwe: A legacy of Innovation in Share Register Management and Financial Services

In 2024 Corpserve Registrars Zimbabwe celebrated its Silver Jubilee, a journey marked by several significant milestones, including its evolving role as a leader in share register management in Zimbabwe.

Looking ahead, Corpserve is poised for a transformative phase of growth and excellence in share register management and corporate finance services. The company's Managing Director, Paradzai Mangunda, outlined ambitious plans for the future, including the automation of most services to enhance efficiency and client satisfaction.

"In the next five to ten years, we aim to automate most of our services, ensuring faster, more efficient client reporting and transaction processing," Mangunda explained.

Corpserve also intends to deepen its partnerships with other market participants, expand its client base, and refine its offerings through continuous research and technological innovation. These forward-thinking strategies underscore the company's commitment to staying ahead in Zimbabwe's competitive financial services sector.

Market Leadership and Achievements

Corpserve's impressive dominance in managing share registers for companies listed on the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange (VFEX)—holding 95% of the market share—highlights its leadership position. Its prestigious clientele includes industry giants such as Seed Co, Padenga Holdings, Caledonia Mining Corporation, and Nedbank.

The company has expertly handled complex activities such as dividend payments, share consolidations, and rights issues, solidifying its reputation as a trusted financial partner.

Pioneering Innovations

A hallmark of Corpserve's success is its trailblazing role in introducing digital solutions to Zimbabwe's corporate finance sector. Notably, it was the first transfer secretary in the country to host virtual Annual General Meetings (AGMs) during the global pandemic, enabling seamless remote business operations. "We were the first to conduct virtual meetings, not only for our clients but also for some of our competitors' clients," Mangunda shared.

The company has also embraced digital shareholder platforms, which, although temporarily disabled, are undergoing enhancements to provide a robust and user-friendly experience for shareholders to access their accounts online.

Groundbreaking Corporate Transactions

Corpserve's pioneering efforts extend to facilitating complex corporate transactions, including Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). It played a pivotal role in listing Zimbabwe's first ETF, the Old Mutual Top 10 ETF, and managing the issuance of depository receipts for foreign entities such as Caledonia Mining Corporation and Nedbank. This involved navigating intricate international regulations and opening nominee accounts in global markets, including the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

"These achievements required us to navigate complex international regulations and market requirements, which was a significant milestone for us," Mangunda reflected, emphasizing the company's adaptability and expertise.

Challenges and Lessons

Despite its many successes, Corpserve has faced challenges, including its foray into back-office support for fund managers, which did not meet expectations. Mangunda views these setbacks as opportunities for growth, reaffirming the company's focus on areas of proven strength, such as share trading, settlement, and corporate transactions.

A Legacy of Innovation and Growth

Since its inception in 1998, Corpserve has evolved from a focus on share registry administration to offering a diverse range of value-added services, including trade settlements, corporate transactions, and digital platforms for shareholders. Its journey is marked by adaptability, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to its clients.

As Corpserve looks to the future, it remains dedicated to enhancing service quality through digital transformation and strategic partnerships, ensuring its position as a leader in Zimbabwe's financial services industry for years to come.

SMEs at the heart of Africa's capital markets revolution

Botswana – The role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in driving economic growth and their inclusion in African capital markets took center stage at the recent CoSSE Conference in Botswana. Leaders in African finance, including ESCROW Group CEO Mr. Collen Tapfumaneyi and Stock Exchange of Mauritius CEO Mr. Sunil Benimandhu, explored how financial systems can better serve SMEs and foster entrepreneurship across the continent.

Mr. Tapfumaneyi stressed the critical need for capital markets to focus on SMEs, which he described as the backbone of Africa's economies. "There is a growing trend of entrepreneurship among African youth that needs to be supported. SMEs must be given access to capital markets if we are to unlock the full potential of this entrepreneurial spirit," he said. Despite SMEs comprising a significant portion of Africa's economic landscape, access to funding remains a challenge, often limiting their ability to scale.

Reducing Barriers for SMEs

The ESCROW Group is spearheading efforts to make capital markets more inclusive for SMEs. By leveraging technology, the group has introduced innovative platforms that simplify access to these markets. For example, mobile-based solutions partnered with securities exchanges in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, and Tanzania are breaking down traditional barriers such as physical infrastructure and high transaction costs.

"These platforms integrate mobile networks and payment systems, allowing SMEs and individual investors—many of whom operate outside the traditional financial ecosystem—to participate in capital markets with ease," explained Mr. Tapfumaneyi.

This focus on SMEs aligns with broader efforts to democratize African capital markets, where current participation rates remain low—less than 5% of the population engages in these markets. These initiatives not only aim to bring more individuals into the financial fold but also to ensure that SMEs have a pathway to raise the capital needed for growth -



-and innovation.

Collaboration for SME Growth

Mr. Sunil Benimandhu underscored the importance of collaborative frameworks to support SME inclusion across borders. He highlighted the African Exchange Linkage Project, which seeks to harmonize regulatory frameworks and streamline market access across the continent. "Standardized systems and reduced transaction costs will be crucial in ensuring that SMEs can benefit from cross-border investments," he stated.

Additionally, Mr. Benimandhu pointed out that African SMEs must be positioned as competitive players on the global stage. By demonstrating strong growth potential and robust business fundamentals, SMEs can attract not only local investors but also international capital, unlocking a new era of prosperity.

SMEs as Catalysts for Financial Inclusion

The discussions at the CoSSE Conference brought into sharp focus the need to view SMEs not just as beneficiaries of market reforms but as active participants and catalysts in reshaping Africa's financial landscape. Leaders agreed that supporting SMEs with accessible, technology-driven solutions could foster broader economic inclusion and strengthen the continent's financial resilience.

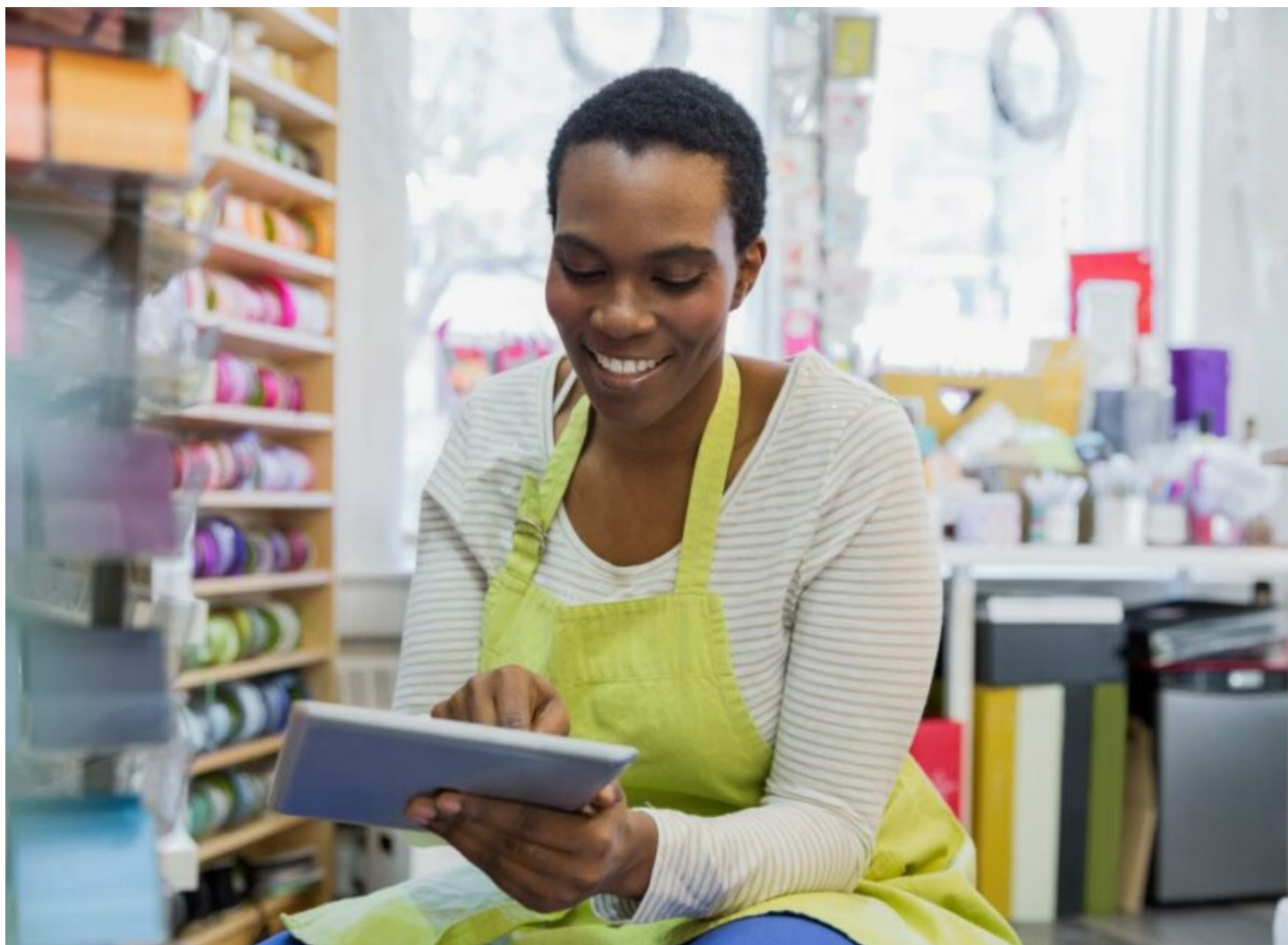
By putting SMEs at the forefront of capital market reforms, African exchanges aim to tap into the continent's vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, ensuring that financial systems evolve to support its most dynamic economic drivers. Collaborative initiatives and innovative technologies hold the promise of transforming Africa's capital markets into a hub of opportunity for SMEs and investors alike.

As Africa moves toward deeper market integration and financial inclusion, the inclusion of SMEs will remain a cornerstone of these efforts, ensuring that economic growth is both equitable and sustainable.



Financial humour

- 1 **Q:**Why did the stock market go on a roller coaster?
A:It wanted to experience some "ups and downs"!
- 2 **Q:**What's a coin's favourite sport?
A:"Currency" racing!
- 3 **Q:**Why did the banker switch careers?
A:She lost interest!



ARE YOU A TRANSPORTER?

WE HAVE BUSINESS FOR YOU.

The Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX), is inviting interested transport providers to apply for registration and certification.

The vehicle must be certified fit by the Vehicle Inspection Department (VID).

Capacity specification (tonnage) of vehicle and location.

The vehicle must be insured.

Eligibility Criteria

Provide proof that the driver of the vehicle has a valid driver's license, police clearance and a valid Defensive Driver's certificate.



Musika Wenyu, Umkambo Wenu



For more information on the registration process and requirements contact:

 www.zmx.co.zw  +263 77 518 8102

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 Available on the App Store

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  Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange

Individuals And Organisations May Apply

***727#**

Spotlight

FINSEC boss Tapfumaneyi appointed SADC bourses chair

Financial Securities Exchange (FINSEC) chief executive officer Mr Collen Tapfumaneyi has been appointed chairperson of the Committee of SADC Stock Exchanges (CoSSE).

This follows elections held at the 64th bi-annual meeting of CoSSE on June 18, 2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Mr Tapfumaneyi takes over from Mr Thapelo Tsheole, former CEO of Botswana Stock Exchange, who led CoSSE with distinction for the past seven years. Lusaka Securities Exchange (LUSE) CEO Mr Nicholas Kabaso was elected CoSSE vice-chairman.

<https://www.herald.co.zw/finsec-boss-tapfumaneyi-appointed-sadc-bourses-chair/>



Positive start for pilot cotton seed trading on ZMX

Buyers purchased 401 tonnes of cotton at an average price of US\$223 per tonne following the convergence of cotton seed bids and offers at the Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX)'s pilot trading of the commodity this season.

This follows the Government's recent decision to add cotton and its by-products to the basket of commodities to be traded under the ZMX warehouse receipt system (WRS) to aid in financial inclusion and price discovery following the gazetting of Statutory Instrument (SI) 173 of 2024, Warehouse Receipt Act (Chapter 18:25), substitution of schedule notice 2024.

ZMX chief executive officer, Mr Collen Tapfumaneyi said the pilot cotton seed trading followed the successful registration of suppliers and cotton merchants as potential buyers of cotton seed on the ZMX platform.

<https://www.herald.co.zw/positive-start-for-pilot-cotton-seed-trading-on-zmx/>



Finsec targets unit trusts in new listings drive

THE Financial Securities Exchange (Finsec) is working on a plan to promote existing unit trusts to graduate into mutual funds as it eyes more listings on the bourse, NewsDay Business understands.

A unit trust is an unincorporated mutual fund structure that holds assets and provides profits to individual unit owners instead of reinvesting into the fund.

Finsec's interest in growing these trusts comes as it recently listed another unit trust, Smartvest High Income Fund, which seeks to deliver a high level of income and moderate capital growth over time for investors.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/business/article/200033961/finsec-targets-unit-trusts-in-new-listings-drive>

Property X now trading on FINSEC platform

THE Financial Securities Exchange (FINSEC) has announced the admission of Property X as a quoted security on its Mutual Funds Board, offering...

<https://dailynews.co.zw/property-x-now-trading-on-finsec-platform/>

FINSEC admits new security on bourse

THE Financial Securities Exchange (FINSEC) has admitted Property X, as a quoted security, on its Mutual Funds Board, widening the spectrum of investment options in Zimbabwe.

The mutual funds and alternatives market admits, lists and facilitates trading of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), Unit Trusts and Real Estate Investments Trusts REITs. This widens the investors choice beyond company stocks and various forms of the money market investments in Zimbabwe.

FINSEC said Property X, which is managed by Southpeople Capital Asset Management, gives a unique opportunity to potential investors to invest in property development or projects and earn towards establishing their own separate properties.

<https://www.herald.co.zw/finsec-admits-new-security-on-bourse/>

EY: European Banks Struggle with Gen AI Adoption



A recent EY survey reveals that European financial institutions face challenges adopting generative AI (Gen AI) despite plans to increase investment. Of the 106 institutions surveyed, 90% have integrated AI, yet only 9% consider themselves ahead of competitors, and just 31% feel on track with overall AI integration.

Omar Ali, EY's Global Financial Services Leader, emphasizes that while Gen AI offers unprecedented productivity gains, implementing this evolving technology across a workforce within risk and budget constraints is complex.

Skills Gap Hinders Progress

Though 72% of firms plan to boost Gen AI investment, 78% acknowledge their workforce lacks experience, with only 25% having established training programs. Data science and innovation departments have the highest demand for AI expertise (54%), followed by back-office operations (46%) and IT (40%).

Recruitment priorities include adaptability (77%), innovation (70%), and collaboration (44%), while technical proficiency ranks lower (34%). However, the workforce faces significant disruption, with 66% of executives expecting AI to impact up to 25% of roles, and 93% predicting up to 10% redundancies.

Regulatory and Ethical Challenges

The upcoming EU AI Act adds pressure, with only 11% of firms prepared for compliance. While 15% lack an AI risk framework entirely, 70% report partial readiness. Concerns about output quality, transparency (54%), and data privacy (53%) dominate discussions.

Despite these challenges, Ayman Awada of EY underscores the importance of upskilling employees and raising regulatory readiness to drive deeper adoption. Ethical concerns have fallen in priority, replaced by worries about implementation speed (35%) and costs (26%).

Gen AI holds transformative potential for European financial services, but overcoming skills gaps, regulatory uncertainty, and operational hurdles remains critical for success.

- Fintech Magazine

Top 10 Use Cases for Blockchain

Blockchain, the foundation of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum, is now transforming various industries by offering transparency, immutability, automation, and decentralization. Here are the top 10 use cases today:

1. Capital Markets

Blockchain enables faster, cheaper access to capital by reducing intermediaries and lowering settlement risks. Smart contracts automate processes like dividend payments, and tokenized assets enable fractional ownership of stocks and bonds.



2. Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs)

Blockchain powers CBDCs for retail and wholesale, offering transparency and programmable features like wallet limits. It enhances financial access and efficiency while ensuring privacy.

3. Financial Services

Traditional financial services benefit from blockchain through faster, cheaper, and more secure cross-border payments. It reduces counterparty risks and increases liquidity in financial instruments.

4. Decentralized Finance (DeFi)

Built on Ethereum, DeFi offers peer-to-peer finance alternatives, such as decentralized exchanges and lending platforms, bypassing traditional institutions and expanding financial access.

5. Digital Identity

Blockchain supports self-sovereign identity (SSI), where individuals control their digital identities. Decentralized identifiers (DIDs) allow users to prove identity without central registries, enhancing privacy and security.

6. Insurance

Blockchain streamlines claims processing, reduces fraud, and creates immutable records of ownership and provenance. It also improves KYC and AML compliance, cutting duplication efforts.

7. Global Trade & Commerce

Blockchain digitizes trade documents, ensures product traceability, and secures supply chains. Initiatives like IBM Food Trust enable ethical sourcing and food safety.



8. Sustainability

In energy, blockchain facilitates peer-to-peer renewable energy trading and transparent carbon tracking. Projects like Brooklyn Microgrid demonstrate its potential for efficient energy markets.

9. Healthcare

Decentralized electronic health records ensure data integrity and streamline credential verification for providers, reducing forgeries and improving trust.

10. Government & Public Sector

Governments use blockchain for fraud-proof citizen records and identity management. Examples include the Illinois Blockchain Initiative and Delaware's public records program.

Blockchain continues to redefine industries, enhancing efficiency, trust, and transparency.

-FinTech Magazine-

<https://fintechmagazine.com/articles/top-10-use-cases-for-blockchain>



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