



Women's underrepresentation in formal entrepreneurial activities has great consequences for Africa's overall development. The dearth of female scientists and techies has left major untapped potential issues for national economies and future employability. Without access, understanding and participation, women are at greater risk of being left behind as agents of change and leaders in a rapidly changing global society. FemBioBiz is addressing these issues with a program designed to support, connect and inspire women entrepreneurs. The call for application for entrepreneurial students and female businesses owners is open until mid-April 2019.

FemBioBiz

Since 2015, as part of the Youth and Gender Mainstreaming activities, NEPAD SANBio with support from the Finnish-Southern Africa Partnership Programme to Strengthen NEPAD/SANBio (BioFISA) Phase II initiated the FemBioBiz programme to support women entrepreneurs in biosciences.

This third season of FemBioBiz is implemented in collaboration with Hivos, an international NGO that has been working on gender inclusion and entrepreneurship support for over 50 years (including setting up over 100+ co-working spaces, supporting CSOs, implementing microfinance and SME finance since the 1980s.

“The FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme has been created to develop leadership, technological and business skills in female-owned businesses in the SADC region to support deal-making and business acceleration in the Biosciences arena. This programme creates a platform for peer learning and will empower women to lead in health and nutrition through science and technology”, BioFISA II Programme Manager Zvikomborero Tangawamira.

The overall objective

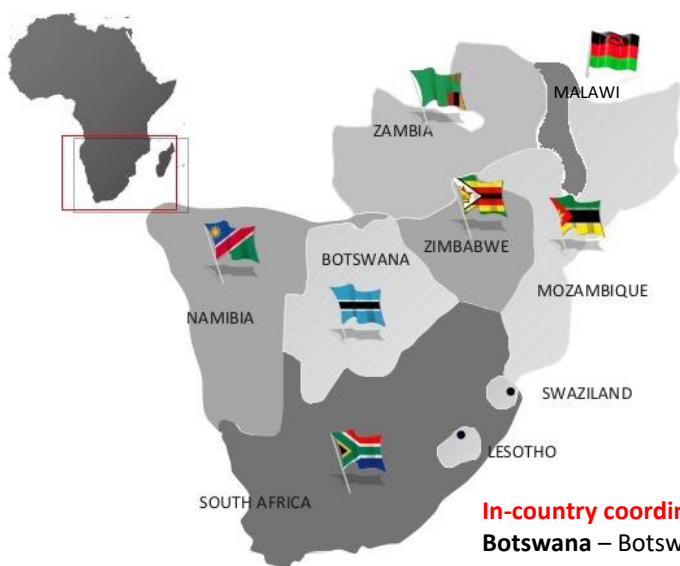
For the benefit of the continent, girls and women must be empowered and supported in becoming more entrepreneurial and competitive. The creation and support of economically viable businesses is linked to promoting gender-equality between men and women in working life. The international alliance of SANBio and Hivos aims to achieve this by supporting in-country incubators and providing young entrepreneurs with opportunities to start and/ or scale their own businesses. The programme focuses on the bio-sciences sector but also appeals to linked industries and cross-cutting themes. In order to contribute in the long-term to the creation of job opportunities and employability of (young) women, the alliance aims to achieve the following **objectives**:

- By end of 2019, the FemBioBiz program (phase 3) has significantly contributed to the visibility of and opportunity for (young) women in biosciences-sector in Southern Africa.
- By end of 2019, the FemBioBiz Program (phase 3) and its network have significantly contributed to the capacity-level (business and technical skills) and investment-readiness of women-led businesses in the biosciences-sector in Southern Africa.
- By end of 2019, the FemBioBiz Program (phase 3) has significantly contributed to the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Southern Africa (including access to finance, knowledge and enabling policies/ government involvement) business ecosystems and regional and international networks tailored for female entrepreneurs

The program

The FemBioBiz program is Southern Africa's biggest women's economic empowerment program focusing on viable business ideas and gender inclusion in the agri-food, health and nutrition sector. It promotes a paradigm shift through supporting the overall business support ecosystem in Southern Africa, providing training of trainers support and bringing in experts and financiers. The program is co-designed and implemented through a network of in-country partners, empowered and supported by the FemBioBiz program. These country coordinators drive the program nationally, while tailoring to the needs within the country and providing local insights, linkages and expertise to the program.

Key components of the program include the development of peer-to-peer networks, awareness creation, business and life skills training, access to market and information, online/ offline support and mentorship and financial investments (including the aligned Hivos Impact Investments Food & Lifestyle Fund). Additional national, regional and international 'network and pitching' events provide platforms to showcase businesses as well as active match-making with investors and financial institutions (these events include the African Innovation Summit, Disrupt!-events and Slush Startup in Finland).



FemBioBiz supports women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses



FemBioBiz Season 1 (in 2017): 101 women-led businesses have participated and incubated under the program.

FemBioBiz Season 2 (in 2018): 150 women-led businesses have participated and incubated under the program.

In the past two years, over 650 businesses have applied for the national training programs. Exceptional companies have gotten additional exposure through collaboration with the African Innovation summit (ASAIF) and international entrepreneurship event Slush (Finland).

In-country coordinators:

Botswana – Botswana Innovation Hub // **Malawi** - mHub
Mozambique - DEV Mozambique // **Namibia** - NCRST
Seychelles – NISTI // **South Africa** - AWIEF
Zambia - WeCreate // **Zimbabwe** - NBA

CALL FOR APPLICATION IS ONLINE AT
surveymonkey.com/r/9Q8SBFY

Join us!

The FemBioBiz team and all country coordinators are inviting both entrepreneurial female students as well as female business owners in the agri-food, health and nutrition domain to join season 3 of this regional program. Individuals from all SADC member states are encouraged to apply; successful applicants will take part in the nearest country's programme. The FemBioBiz program runs from April 2019 to October 2019 including multiple public events.

Additionally, the program and its country coordinators are looking for sponsorship to amplify outreach and scale impact of the program within the countries as well as the region.

For general information please contact: entrepreneurship@hivos.org and fembiobiz@nepadsanbio.org