

# Zambia's eMsika helping farmers buy agricultural inputs

 By Tom Jackson <sup>4 Jun 2018</sup>

Zambian startup [eMsika](#) is helping farmers find, buy and receive agricultural inputs in a fast, trustworthy and convenient way, as well as access markets for their produce.

Launched in 2016, eMsika is an e-commerce store for farmers, listing over 300 different products in 10 different categories of agricultural input, including poultry, crop protection chemicals and seeds.



Image Source: [eMsika](#)

“We enable our clients to source inputs and even contact suppliers in their local language. In a nutshell, eMsika is a service that helps farmers,” Gilbert Mwale, the startup’s chief executive officer (CEO), told Disrupt Africa.

## Expanding beyond their borders

Bootstrapped initially and now growing with its own revenues, eMsika has had a good two years since it launched, even expanding outside of Zambia. “We have grown to reach all corners of our country, and indeed beyond our borders, servicing areas in Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Namibia and Mozambique.”

eMsika plans to eventually spread across the entire continent and has established partnerships with leading local companies and organisations. “We have six suppliers across different agricultural sectors, including livestock, poultry and horticulture, plus a database of 500 farmers and 200,000 from affiliates,” said Mwale

Helping these suppliers, mostly Lusaka-based, access bigger markets is the startup’s main goal.

“There are 60 agriculture suppliers that supply to 1.3 million farmers and 2,500 agro-dealers across Zambia making the ratio of suppliers to farmers one to 7,000,” Mwale said. “This has led to farmers and agro-dealers having to travel long distances, losing valuable time and money while being exposed to accidents and theft. We save farmers almost half their expenses and all their time wasted when buying farm inputs.”

## Ushering in a new way of buying products and services

The solution also helps farmers sell their own produce.

“Farmers complain after harvesting of lacking markets from which to sell their produce. Those that exist either under-price them or take a very long time to pay the farmers for their goods,” said Mwale. “We offer

farmers a more efficient and affordable process.”

He said it had been seen elsewhere in the world that e-commerce and m-commerce were disrupting business and ushering in a new way of buying products and services.

“We have introduced m-commerce features that supplement the use of our website for all customers that are in areas of no or limited internet,” said Mwale. “We have also introduced a call centre for farmers who want to know more about certain products before buying them. Now those in remote areas have the same opportunity as those in urban areas to get any farm inputs from suppliers of their choice, as though it were just next door. We are receiving an impressive and growing demand for our offering.”

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## ABOUT TOM JACKSON

Co-founder @DisruptAfrica. Tech and business journalist in Africa. Passionate about the vibrant tech startups scene in Africa, Tom can usually be found sniffing out the continent's most exciting new companies and entrepreneurs, funding rounds and any other developments within the growing ecosystem.  
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