



SAIS 2

# RE:innovation

CHALLENGE PROJECTS



“Boosting local economies through social commerce solutions in COVID-19 times”

## DODIGI

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

DoDigi is a pilot project seeking to enable and empower 60 entrepreneurs in low-income communities to increase their business revenues with e-commerce, specifically chatbot-powered sales channels over Whatsapp. Doing so, the project aims to mitigate losses and closures of businesses due to curfews, lockdowns, and restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project offers a unique and innovative learning experience that combines academic study with real-world surroundings and activities (trading through the Meeticks platform) to improve their beneficiaries' academic, business, and economic outcomes. DoDigi's beneficiaries are trained in digital technologies so that they can use the Meeticks platform as well as other digital platforms effectively, bridging the gap between those with access to technology and those without. These beneficiaries, about 60% of whom are women, are enabled to market their businesses and connect with potential customers and suppliers. These skills will increase their opportunities to make sales, which will lead to higher incomes and improve their SMMEs' abilities to continue operating.

DoDigi is run as a consortium led by the Dream Factory Foundation, which empowers youth and women in marginalised urban and rural communities through education with skills for sustainable livelihoods, and Meeticks, a Botswana-based startup that bridges the digital divide through social commerce. As project partners, the Dream Factory Foundation and Meeticks are working together to empower marginalised entrepreneurs in the Cape Flats townships of Cape Town, South Africa, and the youth business community in Francistown, Botswana, with possibilities for synergies between the two countries.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- Pilot an innovative technological solution for 60 SMMEs based in low-income communities in order to support the shift of their business activities towards digital channels (social commerce) so they can continue doing business and become more resilient in the face of economic challenges during and after COVID-19 restrictions.
- Align with SDGs 1,5 and 8: no poverty in any of its forms; gender equality and empowerment of women; and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all. This is to be done by facilitating trading for all beneficiaries (60% being women) on Meeticks to enable them to continue and sustain their businesses.
- Address the lack of skills, knowledge, and access to economic opportunities which affect SMMEs' ability to sustain their business – especially in times of crisis – by connecting 60 entrepreneurs with mentors and training them in digital technologies, financial management, and resilience-building skills and techniques through the Dream Factory Foundation's Emergent Business Academy.
- Promote and facilitate local and cross-border trade and knowledge exchange initiatives/ transactions between SA and Botswana through the project's beneficiaries interacting and marketing their products on the Meeticks platform.



#### Project Partner

Meeticks (Pty) Ltd, Botswana



#### Project Coordinator

Dream Factory Foundation,  
South Africa



#### Implementing Countries

South Africa, Botswana

