

Afrikrea launches SaaS platform to simplify global selling for African merchants

Ivorian e-commerce marketplace Afrikrea has partnered with DHL and Visa to build and launch Anka, a Software as a service (SaaS) platform that provides African micro retailers and small businesses with e-commerce, payments and global shipping services.



Afrikrea executive team L-R: Luc Perussault-Diallo (CTO), Moulaye Taboure (CEO), Guillaume Darnaudet (CFO), and Kadry Diallo (CMO)

Powered by Afrikrea, Anka is a global e-commerce aggregator of services for African micro retailers, and has been developed to reduce the friction of the global sales process for the 7,000+ sellers on the Afrikrea platform, as well as open new routes to market for sellers.

Launched to coincide with Afrikrea's fifth anniversary of operations, Anka allows merchants to:

- Sell via a customised online storefront (like Shopify), social media platforms or by links such as on Gumroad and also the Afrikrea marketplace. This is carried out via an omnichannel dashboard with a single inventory, orders and messages management.

- Get ease and affordable shipping in two clicks. For example, a 2kg parcel from Nigeria can be shipped to the US or UK for less than \$20, including DHL pickup and global tracking

- Facilitate and centralise payments (global and local) via a secure online wallet and receive payouts according to the merchant's preference. A dedicated Afrikrea Visa card is also available.

Bridge between Africa and the world

Speaking on the launch of Anka, Moulaye Taboure co-founder and CEO of Afrikrea says, "We see Afrikrea as the bridge between Africa and the world, empowering thousands of micro retailers and their clients globally. Those entrepreneurs currently lose time and energy managing multiple channels of sales, and also lose money through the multiple intermediaries needed to ship their orders or get access to their funds. Anka enables them to sell anywhere as well as get paid – seamlessly, from one place."



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Using the Anka service, vendors can search for competitive shipping rates; this is not limited to sales on the Afrikrea platform. Dropshippers looking to create jobs, produce goods and ship from the continent will also have the opportunity to manage their flow of business and get paid globally using the platform.

Anka costs €10 (approximately \$12) a month and the platform will also connect with MPesa, Orange and MTN, so customers looking to pay merchants can do so via mobile money, mobile banking, PayPal and a host of international payment cards. Merchants will also be able to transfer the funds from their wallets in any method of their choice, including their dedicated physical Visa card. From there, they can instantly pay or withdraw funds at an ATM as and when they prefer.

Founded in 2016, Afrikrea began as a marketplace for selling and buying African-inspired clothing, accessories, arts and crafts. The startup, which specialises in "all things made of Africa", reports to having increased its transactions to over \$15m in 170 countries worldwide, with sellers from 47 out of 54 African countries. The platform currently records over 500,000 visits a month with the majority of customers located in Europe and North America.

The African technology platform says it aims to be at the forefront of a shift in the commerce sector, using tech and scalable software to create localised customer experiences without the need for global storefronts. Afrikrea estimates the yearly spend of its major markets to be worth \$12.5bn. The African diaspora in Europe (\$1bn), those in America and the Caribbean (\$9bn) and non-Africans with links to the continent (\$2.5bn).



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By building the technical infrastructure for global African culture and allowing its merchants to reach the world using proprietary technology, Afrikrea says expects to power and empower tens of thousands more independent businesses inspired by African fashion and artisan items.

Taboure concludes, "In much the same way that international technology companies like Shopify and Alibaba have been central to inspiring and powering a new wave of global online retailers, and have created wealth for thousands of entrepreneurs via access to amazing e-commerce software, our plan is to achieve much the same, but for the growing and dynamic African market.

"By handling a safe and seamless process for our vendors – sales, payments, shipping – we expect to grow with them and

power commerce for thousands more online marketplaces and sellers who have a passion for Africa.”

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