

ICOSEED turns banana stems leftover from harvesting into fibre that can be used to make fabrics for bags, purses or table mats. The enterprise creates alternative income opportunities for farmers in the production of fibre and in the sewing of products.



## ICOSEED Enterprises, Kenya

### 🏆 SAG-SEED AWARD WINNER 2017 🏆

#### BUSINESS MODEL

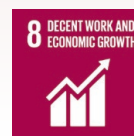
Experiencing rising market prices for products from sisal in Kenya, ICOSEED searched for an alternative and realised the potential of fibre made from banana stems. The enterprise buys banana stems, a by-product of harvesting, from farmers, processes it into balls of fibre and uses them to make marketable products.

The products – purses, table mats and other accessories – target middle-class women, including tourists. Slurry from fibre extraction is given back to farmers to make manure or use it for biogas.

#### ENTERPRISE FAST FACTS:

Location	Rural Kenya
Year founded	2013
Sector	Manufacturing
Product/Service	Bags, table mats and other accessories from banana fibre

#### Contribution to the SDGs:



#### Social impacts:

- Reducing crime among youth by offering job opportunities in transportation and fibre extraction.
- Strengthening the banana farmer groups with trainings in agronomy, increasing yields by 18 %.
- Providing an alternative source of income for farmers; so far 400 famers benefit every year.

#### Environmental impacts:

- Producing environmentally friendly accessories made out of 85 % decomposable material.
- Reducing carbon emissions by promoting the use of slurry for biogas digesters and manure.
- Decreasing the need for pesticides on farms by removing banana stems that serve as breeding grounds for plant diseases.

#### Economic impacts:

- Stimulating economy through income creation along the value chain; so far more than 100 jobs have been created in transportation and extraction of fibres, twining and colouring and accessory-making.
- Introducing a new fabric-making technology into the Kenyan market.

” The enterprise processes 8 tonnes of pseudo stems monthly which is approximately 400 pieces. This translates into at least 4,800 pieces annually and created already over 100 new jobs.

### Scaling up activities:

- Increase the number of farmers supplying banana stems from 400 to 9,000 by 2018.
- Scale up the production capacity of banana fibre by buying new machinery, including additional mobile fibre extractors.
- Diversify the product range to include sanitary towels within the next two years.
- Establish two new production sites in key banana growing areas, Meru and Kisii, to expand and secure raw materials by 2022.



### Partnership

● **ICOSEED** (Integrated Community Organization for Sustainable Empowerment and Education for Development) initiated the banana fibre extraction and runs the production and distribution of products.

● **Kenya National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND)** provides financial support for production needs and enhances business upscaling through technical and business skills support.

● **Banana Growers Association of Kirinyaga (BGA-K)** organises the farmers for raw material supply and gathers sites for the extraction of fibre.

### Contact

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The 2017 SAG-SEED Awards in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda are supported by SWITCH-Africa Green, which is implemented by UNEP with the assistance of the European Union.

### About SEED

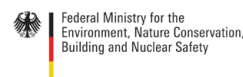
SEED is a global partnership for action on sustainable development and the green economy. Founded by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Union for Conservation of Nature at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, SEED supports innovative small scale and locally driven enterprises around the globe which integrate social and environmental benefits into their business model. The 2017 SAG-SEED Awards in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda are part of the multi-country project “Promoting Eco-Entrepreneurship in Africa” implemented by SEED under SWITCH-Africa Green (SAG). SAG is implemented by UNEP with the assistance of the European Union. Other project partners in SAG are UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). South African Awards are co-financed by the Government of Flanders.

[www.seed.uno/sag](http://www.seed.uno/sag)

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