

UCT GSB's e-Track programme takes 9 local startups to the next level

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The latest e-Track programme, an initiative of the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) Solution Space in partnership with the MTN Group, which seeks to accelerate the development of high-impact ventures, yields exceptional results as all participating teams progress to the next phase.



Nine South African startups participating in the latest e-Track Venture Exploitation Programme (VEP) at the UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) Solution Space have made the cut to progress to the third round of the schools e-Track programme. The startups were selected to participate in the VEP to accelerate the development of their venture by concretising the product and securing customer buy-in.

After an intensive 12-week journey, the teams' progress was demonstrated through a Demo Day celebration, which included pitching their ventures to a panel of judges and experts, among them MTN Group general manager: ecosystem development, Eero Tarjanne. According to Tarjanne, the quality of this cohort's pitches was exceptionally high. While only two to three ventures are usually selected to progress to the next level, Tarjanne commended all nine participants on the strength and viability of their products.

He singled out Little Fish as the venture with the most advanced capacity and potential to scale, awarding the startup a R50,000 bonus prize coupled with technological and business support to launch their app on [Ayoba](#). Co-founded by Brandon Roberts and Davith Kahwa, Little Fish is an e-commerce channel to enable Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with limited capital to experience the benefits of the growing digital economy.

"Essentially, we are a mobile-first platform that takes local businesses online. Digitisation is expensive and creates a range of new complexities for small business. But Little Fish enables users to engage, convert and retain customers on our easy-to-use digital platform, while being cost-effective, focused on growth and hyper-local," explains Roberts.

Co-founder of Little Fish, Davith Kahwa, says Little Fish's point of sale soft launch has already been widely accepted and adopted. "We have two thousand community members and 1,265 registered members in five countries. Our plug-and-play digital store gives members a digital distribution and presence. We also offer inventory management and payment acceptance tools while ensuring customers are engaged, as they would be on social media."

In partnership with the UCT GSB Solution Space, Little Fish is about to release its flagship new e-commerce platform. Kahwa and Roberts are optimistic that this will be a success, projecting that by 2024, their venture will be the e-commerce platform of choice, with over 10,000 MSMEs on board in at least two markets.

The co-founders say the e-Track programme has thus far been invaluable in helping them to refine their brand and realise

the potential of their product. “We’re thankful to the e-Track team and UCT GSB’s Solution Space for expanding our horizons and making our world big.”

Joining Little Fish on the third part of UCT GSB’s Solution Space e-Track Programmes are eight other participants.

- **Activity Hub**, an online marketplace for tours and activities, which offers real-time availability, secure payment and instant confirmation for experiences
- **CiTITA**, a sustainable development data and expert resourcing and networking platform with a database
- **Guardian Health**, a booking system for local clinics and community health workers to provide better resource planning
- **FynRoot Productions** sells a potted arrangement of fynbos plants and empowers individuals with the knowledge to grow and sustain fynbos plants
- **iAfrika**, an African language platform for content and digital skills development
- **Ikhaya Space**, a credit provider to high net worth individuals and businesses
- **Futures Academy**, an independent online high school that offers a flexible learning solution for grades 10–12
- **Go Themba**, an eco-friendly mobile car wash app

Founded in 2019, the e-Track programme at the UCT GSB Solution Space is a three-tiered programme designed to find and accelerate the development of high-impact ventures. The final 12-week long programme, Venture Scaling, will be facilitated by investors, partner and subject experts such as legal, tech and business development teams and is designed to support teams build scalable businesses with international potential.

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