

Press Release

New software transforms how businesses collect data across Africa

November 1st, 2010

Scout, a new feature on the web and mobile Esoko platform, will change forever how businesses and projects collect data from the field with the introduction of SMS polling

ACCRA, Ghana – Esoko, a Ghanaian software firm, has developed a sophisticated polling tool to add to their mobile –based market information system.

“It was a purely market-driven application” says Sarah Bartlett, Communication Director at Esoko, “businesses and projects came to us again and again needing a way to collect and manage information from the field in a less expensive and more efficient way. We realized that the opportunity was enormous”

Scout allows managers to setup automatic polls by choosing participants, writing simple poll questions, and then scheduling times for those questions to go out via SMS. Participants receive the SMS messages and respond, and those answers are immediately available in online reports.

In the developing world, data collection involves driving to visit hard to reach areas, making phone calls, or waiting for paper forms to be sent in from the field. Receiving this information in real-time with Scout actually allows for real-time decision making for the first time. Business can know the inventory in each shop across the country, and make decisions on when and where to send more stock. Large buyers can track crop and planting activities to better forecast harvest yields. Health projects can know how many people are unwell in a given community and to send supplies or help in time. The possibilities are endless, and Scout was built so that it can be easily tailored for each and every group that uses it.

The GSMA (Global System for Mobile Communications Association) in London states that 67% of the African population has mobile coverage today, and the rates are increasing faster than anywhere else in the world. “Mobile technology can be used in ways we never imagined to help manage value chains and pull information from the field”, adds Bartlett. “Applications like Scout, built here and based on the needs of the market here, are shaping the future of how business is done on the continent.”

Contact: Sarah Bartlett communications@esoko.com (233) 0302 211583 www.esoko.com

About Esoko

Esoko is a mobile-based Market Information Exchange that is changing the way markets work in Africa. Individuals, businesses, and projects can push and pull market information in a quick and affordable way using text messaging. Working with partners in 9 countries across Africa, the Esoko platform provides automatic and personalized price alerts, buy and sell offers, extension messages, contact profiles, and much more by SMS. Esoko also offers strategy, support and trainings to projects rolling out MIS. Esoko was built in and operates out of Accra, Ghana.