

# Learn About Esoko

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## What is Esoko all about?

Esoko is trying to improve revenues for smallholder farmers. Originally this started off just as market prices via SMS. Now Esoko takes a much more holistic view of agricultural value chains, providing tips and advice to farmers via SMS, IVR, Call centres... and additionally, it provides a range of communication tools to projects and businesses so that they can better manage their information. Typically, this can include simple SMS polling, complex smartphone survey forms, targeted SMS push, etc. etc. Esoko is the most advanced and developed Agric Communication Platform. Over time, Esoko adds additional applications that manage outgrower programs, certification, stock inventory, buying and selling, loans and more. Uniquely, we provide a business model to our resellers in other countries, and we provide extensive deployment support and consulting throughout Africa.

## Why are you based in Ghana?

Esoko was a product born out of a software R&D lab called BusyLab, which itself was a product of the BusyInternet Incubator program established in Accra in 2001. Being close to the market and our customers, understanding the dynamics of smallholder agriculture, and contributing a meaningful role to the development of the West African ICT sector are all reasons why we love being in Ghana.

## How did Esoko get started?

Technoserve (a US NGO) started it all by suggesting to our founder in 2005 that farmers need market prices. Esoko went to investigate (at the urging of FAO) how FoodNet in Uganda was pioneering this and realized there was an opportunity to build the technology layer linking farmers to market information via SMS. Over time we realized that you have to actually collect the content, help with distribution and deployment, and build out a much broader range of content and services that both farmers and traders require. Esoko was in R&D mode for the early years, and then officially launched in 2009.

## Who funds Esoko?

Esoko has some fantastic blue chip investors, IFC and SEDF, who have built upon the early investments of Mark Davies and Jim Forster. Esoko has been totally privately funded up to this stage, although many of our subscribing clients are NGOs and projects. Esoko has recently closed grants from AECF in East Africa to rollout in Kenya, Ethiopia and Zambia, and has also secured a matching grant from USAID Ghana to extend the service to Northern Ghana.

## What are your products & services?

Generally Esoko has a farmer club which provides market prices, bids & offers, weather, agricultural advice and tips to consumers. This is done over SMS, IVR and live operators sitting in a call centre (in some countries). In addition, Esoko has the following apps that it makes available to its project and business clients:

- field surveying using Android smartphones to profile people, events, farms, activities
- upload forms for java, web, sms to allow agents to upload prices, stock, transport prices
- SMS polling to allow cheap and fast crowdsourcing for things like crop protocol compliance, logistical monitoring etc.
- powerful reports and mapping capabilities to render the data
- SMS broadcasting, with scheduling, templates, airtime send – powerful targeting to demographics & groups
- Automated market alerts (prices, weather, offers, tips)
- Knowledge+ – an android and desktop app that builds technical data and pushes it to the field

We are constantly being pushed to develop new technologies and applications by merchants and clients, such as inventory, profiling, certification, coupons, payments etc.

## What technology do you use?

We use Google Web Toolkit for our front end development, postgres as our database and a host of other standard internet applications and software.

## How big is your team?

We have about 40 people in Accra. There are many part time field agents and contractors that support our efforts.

## Where are you in Africa?

Esoko is located in Ghana. We work with partners to deploy Esoko in the following countries: Malawi, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe.

## How can i contact you?

If you are applying for a job, please fill out the application forms listed on your left. For anything else, please email us at [info@esoko.com](mailto:info@esoko.com).