



Adeoluwa Micheal Adeshola, the Arzikin Noma Managing Director and CEO, receives a gift from local farmers during the launch of the company's operations in Kenya in Uasin Gishu County. Photo Credit: Arzikin Noma

West African Agribusiness Unicorn expands its operations to East Africa

By Murimi Gitari

A WEST African agribusiness company, which provides grain aggregation and supply services, has expanded its operations to East Africa, beginning with Kenya.

Arzikin Noma CEO Adeoluwa Micheal Adeshola told *PanAfrican Agriculture* in an interview that the East African expansion is aligned with the company's vision of working with over one million smallholder farmers in Africa by the year 2030.

The company, which specialises in aggregation and supply of maize, sorghum, millet, soybean, rice, and

sesame, currently has 350,000 smallholder farmers signed up in the northern states of Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

Adeshola said smallholder farmers on the continent need solutions to the myriad of challenges they face, including price exploitation by brokers, lack of quality seeds and other agricultural inputs for production.

"It is for this reason, that we come in as an aggregator and offer everything that is required for

grain production to these farmers and walk through the production journey with them till harvest. We partner with agri-input companies and provide farm inputs to the farmers and after harvesting, we then buy the produce from them and sell it to large off-takers," said Adeshola, whose company also offers farmers inputs like seeds and fertilisers through credit arrangements and extension services.

The company buys the grains directly from the farmers at fair prices, guaranteeing a reliable market for their produce.



Representatives from Uasin Gishu County Government, Tuiyo Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd., and Arzikin Noma Kenya during the company's launch at Tuiyo, Uasin Gishu. Photo Credit: Arzikin Noma

It works with smallholder farmers organised into groups, clusters, or cooperatives. They sign a memorandum of understanding or contract farming agreements for market guarantee.

The farmers are then supplied with farm inputs at the beginning of every planting season. They are also offered extension services contracted by the company from planting all the way to harvesting. This is to ensure their farming is productive, quality grains, and consistent supply to the market.

“We provide the farmers with the right seeds, the right fertiliser, and the right crop nutrition products, then guide them accordingly for quality and safe production of the grains,” said Susan Wabocha, who is stewarding Arzikin Noma’s expansion in Kenya and into the region.

The company has been working for over three decades now in Nigeria and neighbouring countries and now intends to replicate its success in these countries in the East African region.

“Our aim is to get these farmers to be self-sufficient and get them from the bottom of the pyramid and from poverty through better farm production and productivity. Once we uptake the grains from the farmers, they receive their payment within 24 hours through mobile money,” Adeshola said.

Before engaging the farmers, the company maps the farmers’ fields to determine the type of fields and type of crops they need to plant, and other aspects required for production so as to ensure there is good output from the production.

“Working in partnership with agro-input manufacturers and distributors, we provide farmers with essential inputs, including seeds, fertilisers and agrochemicals through input financing,” he said.

With this, the company is able to enter into agreements with the farmers and guarantee them premium markets for their produce and also ensure there is no adulteration of input the farmers are getting. They are also helped in acquiring knowledge on the type of inputs they require for their farms and getting the soils from their fields tested for acidity.

Once the farmers harvest the grains, Arzikin Noma then conducts simple processing of the grains for cleaning and sorting to ensure they meet the required standards for the market and are safe for use.

The company’s extensive network then connects it with off-takers such as food processors, manufacturers, and exporters to whom they supply top-tier grains tailored to their unique requirements.