

## WINFUND: NEW FUND MINTS NFT COLLECTION TO ACCELERATE AFRICA'S WOMEN-LED START-UPS TACKLING HEALTH CHALLENGES

### Non-profit fund and public mint of new WINFUND NFTs will help to drive improvements in access to healthcare

**London, UK, 27 Feb 2023:** Today we are announcing the public launch of the 100% non-profit WINFUND NFT Africa collection, a group of unique digital artworks that will create a community of innovators, investors and supporters to champion the next generation of African women tackling some of the continent's biggest health challenges.

Behind the mint is the new Women in Innovation Fund (WiNFUND), which has been co-founded by consumer goods company Reckitt and the Health Innovation and Investment Exchange (HIEx), in partnership with the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Eco Bank Foundation. The fund aims to address two significant areas of inequality – 1 in 2 people, or half the world, lack access to essential healthcare, and less than 2% of venture capital funding globally goes to women despite evidence their ventures generate stronger returns. WiNFUND will unlock the potential of women entrepreneurs to address both of those gaps.

WiNFUND will invest directly in women entrepreneurs who are already implementing home-grown solutions to some of the continent's most urgent health challenges.

WiNFUND will be partly financed through the sale of WiNFUND NFTs, unique works of digital art designed by Rwandan artist Christella Bijou. The collection has been supported and made available in close collaboration with technology partner, Tokenproof. Additional funding will come from mission-aligned donors, partner organisations, and high net worth individuals, who together with WiNFUND NFT holders will create a global community of mentors and supporters committed to improving access to healthcare and women's entrepreneurship.

WiNFUND NFT holders will gain access to invite-only events on Sustainable Development Goals and will be invited to join a mentorship scheme to directly support the successful women entrepreneurs.

Since applications opened in September, WiNFUND has received more than 300 applications from women entrepreneurs in seven African countries - Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. A shortlist of applicants will be announced on International Women's Day on 8 March. All shortlisted applicants will receive business support to help them scale, while the top few selected will receive direct funding from WiNFUND.

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Applicants include **Shamim Nabuuma Kaliisa** from Uganda, who launched **Community Healthcare Innovation Lab (CHIL)** to screen women in remote locations for cervical and breast cancer using artificial intelligence (AI), after being treated for breast cancer herself.

Also in Uganda, **Dr Mercy Ashaba**, is helping people manage the cost of healthcare through the fintech company she co-founded, **Peleyta Health**. Its micro savings and lending platform helps Ugandans on low incomes afford quality healthcare.

And in Kenya, **Umra Omar**, founder and director of **Safari Doctors**, is leading her team of medics delivering primary healthcare to some of the country's most remote regions.

By investing in companies like these, WiNFUND will directly support women entrepreneurs to scale their enterprises, extending their reach and helping more people than ever access high-quality healthcare. WiNFUND's ambition is to replicate this model on other continents in the future.

WiNFUND builds on Reckitt's Fight for Access (FFA) Accelerator, a programme to support and scale early-stage social enterprises across the world, which has improved access to healthcare for 1.5 million people in its first year alone.

**Patricia O'Hayer, Global Head of External Affairs for Reckitt and co-founder of WiNFUND said:** "Women-led companies are already achieving amazing things: improving access to healthcare and saving lives. WiNFUND is an innovative model that will help entrepreneurs grow by building an engaged, global community that will provide business support and financing through the sale of unique NFTs. These entrepreneurs are addressing some of the world's biggest challenges, and through them, we believe WiNFUND can transform access to healthcare for the people who need it most."

**Pradeep Kakkattil, Founder and CEO of Health Innovation and Investment Exchange and co-founder of WiNFUND, said:** "Three out of four healthcare workers globally are women. Women on the frontlines of healthcare are innovating and finding solutions to challenges that plague the health system. WiNFUND is about enabling equitable access to investments and accelerating women-led health enterprises – it can be transformative. It is a win-win as it impacts healthcare access and builds economic resilience."

To learn more, or to purchase NFTs, please see <https://winfundnft.org/>.

<http://www.reckitt.com/thisisreckitt>

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Interviews and more information available on request**

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### **About WiNFUND**

Reckitt and the Health Innovation and Investment Exchange co-founded WiNFUND in September 2022 to support innovative, women-led, health companies improve access to healthcare. Initially launched in Africa, WiNFUND was open to applications from women entrepreneurs from Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda during H2 2022 and received more than 300 applications. WiNFUND provides investment, business support and mentoring for female entrepreneurs developing innovative healthcare solutions. In a unique funding model, WiNFUND will partly raise capital through the sale of NFTs as well as through mission-aligned donors, corporate partners and HNWIs. Other WiNFUND partners include the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Eco Bank Foundation, and Tokenproof. Further information can be found on the WiNFUND website.

### **About Reckitt:**

Reckitt\* exists to protect, heal and nurture in the relentless pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world. We believe that access to the highest-quality hygiene, wellness and nourishment is a right, not a privilege.

Reckitt is the company behind some of the world's most recognisable and trusted consumer brands in hygiene, health and nutrition, including Air Wick, Calgon, Cillit Bang, Clearasil, Dettol, Durex, Enfamil, Finish, Gaviscon, Harpic, Lysol, Mortein, Mucinex, Nurofen, Nutramigen, Strepsils, Vanish, Veet, Woolite and more.

Every day, more than 20 million Reckitt products are bought globally. We always put consumers and people first, seek out new opportunities, strive for excellence in all that we do and build shared success with all our partners. We aim to do the right thing, always.

We are a diverse global team of c. 40,000 colleagues. We draw on our collective energy to meet our ambitions of purpose-led brands, a healthier planet and a fairer society. Find out more, or get in touch with us at [www.reckitt.com](http://www.reckitt.com)

\* Reckitt is the trading name of the Reckitt Benckiser group of companies

### **About Health Innovation and Investment Exchange:**

The Health Innovation and Investment Exchange (HIEx) is a Geneva based non-profit partnership platform bringing together policymakers, innovators and investors to leverage health innovations and investment to save and improve lives around the world. HIEx fosters public-private partnerships that can help scale proven technologies and innovations to maximize reach and health impact, especially for the

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most vulnerable communities. The HIEx Investor Coalition convenes a range of investors committed to building sustainable healthcare businesses to reach the Sustainable Development Goal targets.