

# Nutrient-rich substrate blocks for mushroom cultivation



## Preamble

Mushroom production in East Africa is characterised by minimal value addition, weak market linkages, poor access to substrates, inadequate standard packaging, and measurement, among others. Mushrooms are not only nutrient-rich and a good source of proteins, but their production also reduces environmental pollution as they are considered to have the best economical biotechnology for lignocelluloses organic waste recycling. Mushroom cultivation is generally a low capital investment, yet profitable, venture that has great opportunities for job creation and potential to improve incomes for households.



## About the Products

Ready-to-use standardised substrate blocks are being commercially produced from a mixture of tropical crop residues. The blocks, which are cylindrical, portable, and rich in nutrients, are sold to mushroom farmers in Tanzania thereby minimising initial costs, lengthy and laborious traditional processes used to prepare substrates from dry biomass material. Additionally, farmers are provided with key market information and are technically supported to set up standard mushroom sheds (houses) to improve yields.



## The Venture

The substrate blocks are commercially produced by OKOA Mushroom Supplies Enterprises Limited which is based in Morogoro, Tanzania. OKOA is an agribusiness company incorporated in March 2019 and positions itself as a provider of mushroom inputs and agricultural support services to mushroom farmers. OKOA engages with private mushroom growers in Morogoro region through a one-stop-centre. The one-stop-centre model fosters collection, value-addition, and marketing of mushroom inputs (such as substrate blocks) and technical services. At the moment, sales annual turnover totaled USD 500 for minimum viable products of substrate blocks. The company also received a USD 3,000 cash prize by the Marc Cornelissen Brightlands in April 2019 to advance work on mushroom value addition.

## For More Information

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