



Press release

**Start-up Challenge  
Digital Africa  
(#DigitalAfrica)**

**The Agence Française de Développement and Bpifrance have together launched a digital innovation competition open to African and French start-ups working for development in Africa.**

**Applications may be submitted until 15 November 2016 via the platform:**

<http://digitalafrica.afd.fr>

#DigitalAfrica

*Paris, 11 October 2016 - For the first time, the Agence Française de Développement, which for almost 75 years has been funding development projects in Africa, and Bpifrance, have joined forces to launch the "Digital Africa Start-up Challenge", an innovation competition to promote the development of digital start-ups in Africa. African and French start-ups have until 15 November 2016 to submit their applications in the fintech, health, environment-energy and agricultural sectors.*

### ***What motivated this challenge?***

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Africa is more and more connected, particularly due to the rapid adoption of mobile telephony, and has become a continent of digital innovation. The development of mobile payments and the increasing adoption of smart phones and broadband Internet are among the many factors that now enable digital entrepreneurs to propose new products and services in all economic sectors. The dynamism of digital ecosystems has led to an increase in the number of technological hubs, co-working units, laboratories and incubators, of which there are now more than 300 on the continent.

Given this context, the **AFD and Bpifrance wanted to pool their experience** in the financing of digital innovation and development. The "**Startup Challenge Digital Africa**" should **encourage and support new players in the digital economy, accelerate the sharing of know-how and facilitate the emergence of new solutions for development.**

**Four sectors** have been chosen for their dynamism and potential impact for development of the continent:

- fintech
- health
- environment/energy
- agriculture

### ***What are the rewards for the winners?***

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A jury will choose two start-up winners, one African and one French, in each of the four sectors (i.e. eight start-ups).

Another two start-ups, one African and one French will be selected by online voters.

In all, 10 start-ups will thus be rewarded.

They will be invited to come and present their project and meet partners during the **27th Africa-France Summit, to be held at Bamako on 13 and 14 January 2017.**

**PRIZES AVAILABLE FOR EACH WINNING STARTUP**

**AFD ACCELERATION PACK**  
for the 5 winning African startups

**Goal:** providing you with professional support to develop your project.

You could benefit from services including **mentoring, incubation, networking and funding!** The prize is fully **customizable** – you'll work with AFD to build **your own pack** to suit your needs!

MAXIMUM VALUE OF **€30,000** for each winner

**BPIFRANCE SUPPORT PACK**  
for the 5 winning French startups

**Goal:** boost your knowledge and develop new opportunities for expansion in Africa.

This pack will include registration on any training programme from the Bpifrance Université catalogue. And also a trip offering the opportunity to **network** and to discover the Abidjan and Cape Town **ecosystems**, organized by **French Tech Abidjan** and **French Tech Cape Town**.

MAXIMUM VALUE OF **€10,000** for each winner

**THE 10 WINNING STARTUPS WILL BE INVITED TO THE AFRICA-FRANCE SUMMIT IN BAMAKO**  
(FLIGHT AND ACCOMMODATION – 2 NIGHTS)

### ***How to apply?***

African and French entrepreneurs should submit the key elements of their entrepreneurial project online at <http://digitalafrica.afd.fr> before **15 November 2016**, and must indicate in which of the **four categories they wish to compete**, namely **fintech, health, environment/energy or agriculture**.

### ***A qualified jury and two renowned sponsors***

The jury will be made up of qualified African and French personalities and representatives of the AFD and Bpifrance. The **Digital Africa Start-up Challenge** is sponsored by two influential entrepreneurs in the world of technology and innovation:

**Karim Sy**

An entrepreneur based in Dakar  
Founder of the Jokkolabs network (the 1st African collaborative working space)



**Gilles Babinet**

A French entrepreneur, Founder of Africa4Tech  
First chairman of the French Digital Council  
France's "Digital Champion" and one of the European Commission's Digital Ambassadors

### ***The AFD and Bpifrance***

**Rémy Rioux, Director General of the AFD** claims: "*Digital technology may be an incredible accelerator of sustainable development in Africa, on condition that each entrepreneur is able to benefit from the innovation springboard. The Agence Française de Développement wants to accompany this wave of transition, which offers new trajectories for growth, by supporting southern entrepreneurs whose projects are promising for the continent and by promoting interactions between northern and southern entrepreneurs. This is why the AFD and Bpifrance decided to work together to launch this competition.*"

**The Agence Française de Développement** (AFD), a French public financial institution that implements French government policy, acts to fight poverty and stimulate sustainable development. The AFD, which is active on four continents via a network of 75 offices, finances and supports projects that improve the living conditions of populations, while supporting economic growth and protecting the planet. In 2015, the AFD devoted €8.3 billion to fund projects in developing countries and overseas French territories.

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**Nicolas Dufourcq, Director General of Bpifrance**, declares: "*The technological leaps occurring in Africa and the emergence of a young middle-class have created exceptional development opportunities for African and French companies. We are proud to participate in this competition, which is in line with our actions for promoting the internationalisation of companies and cooperation with the African continent.*"

### **About Bpifrance**

**Bpifrance**, a subsidiary of the *Caisse des Dépôts* and the French state, a trusted partner of French entrepreneurs, supports companies from start-up to flotation on the stock exchange by granting loans, acting as guarantor and by investing. Bpifrance also provides support services that reinforce innovation, external growth and exports, in partnership with Business France and Coface. Bpifrance offers companies a complete range of financing for every key stage of their development, and offers that are adapted to regional specificities.

With 47 regional branches (90% of decisions are taken in the regions), Bpifrance is an economic competitiveness tool at the service of entrepreneurs. Bpifrance acts to implement French government policy and Regional policies in order to achieve three objectives:

- reinforce the growth of companies;
- prepare their competitiveness for the future;
- contribute to the development of an ecosystem that favours entrepreneurship.

In **Bpifrance**, companies have a powerful and effective partner, who **follows their development closely in order to meet all of their needs for financing, innovation and investment.**

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