

Winners of AfricArena startup pitch battles

The first AfricArena took place this week and welcomed over 450 delegates, 100 entrepreneurs, 80 startups, 22 exhibitors, 42 speakers, 67 investors. It also witnessed more than 40 live startup pitch battles.



Described as a first-of-its-kind annual two-day investment conference, AfricArena is spearheaded by Silicon Cape and La French Tech, partnered with some heavyweight corporates to create a live battle arena for startups from across Africa to pitch their winning solutions to 10 open innovation challenges.

The series of open innovation challenges were established as an opportunity for companies to sponsor a conference beyond a simple financial investment while simultaneously benefiting from the expertise of startups to solve a problem identified by the company. Funding raised for AfricArena was used to cover the cost for the selected startups, removing typical emerging market barriers that typically prevent access, and thereby ensuring a concentrated pool of talent and investors.

French Ambassador Christophe Farnaud said the French government through La French Tech had contributed 25% of the funding for the conference as it considered it important to facilitate investment into startups by big corporates.



AfricArena tech innovation conference kicks off next month

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"The basis is not only to give support, it's to create a supportive environment that allows for the development of the startups," he said.

Farnaud said the French tech hub framework — through which local startup ecosystems partner with the French tech ecosystem — was allowing the French government to work with African startups.

"Bringing investment to Africa"

"The aim of AfricArena is to bring investment to Africa," added Ellen Fischat, MD of Silicon Cape, "We need to attract more

international investment – this is our biggest challenge. Africa will be the next biggest tech startup ecosystem. We need to show the world what we are capable of and what we can do.”

Says Christophe Viarnaud, CEO of Methys and lead organizer of AfricArena: “Entrepreneurs are passionate and want to change the world. There are limited angel investors in Africa and we need to change the fact that only 1% of the global seed investment is coming to Africa. We need to give the world confidence in African tech startups and attract international investors and that is what AfricArena aimed to do.”

Winners

After two days, the following startups emerged victoriously:

1. AirFrance Challenge 1: GoMetro
2. AirFrance Challenge 2: WeCashUp
3. Leroy Merlin Challenge: Droppa
4. RCS Challenge: UFSL.
5. Schneider Electric Challenge: The Sun Exchange
6. City of Cape Town Challenge: We do Tourism
7. The Refiners Challenge: iPay – selected for next round selection process enabling to gain entry to San Francisco based the Refiners
8. BIP // NxSE Challenge: Doctor Smart
9. French South African Tech Labs (supported by SEDA): Challenge Winners (4): Good Tree, Stockapp, Guardian Gabriel, DataPlait

Each of the startups won a year-long subscription to YueDiligence which will provide them with a dashboard to calculate their due diligence. The majority of the other prizes consisted of inclusion in various incubators and accelerators.

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