

Forum challenges African businesses to dive into the Blue Economy

Aiming to raise awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of the Blue Economy, the Africa Blue Economy Forum (ABEF) is coming to Tunis, Tunisia from 25-26 June 2019. Confirmed speakers include Government ministers and officials from Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Somaliland, Tunisia and Seychelles.



African businesses are being challenged to wake up to the economic, social and environmental power of the Blue Economy. Momentum is gathering for companies based in Africa's coastal nations to fully recognise and understand the benefits of backing a Blue Economy, which covers a wide range of productive sectors that are crucial for the continent's sustainable development, including fisheries, aquaculture, transport, energy, trade and tourism as well as extractive industries.

Research indicates that the Blue Economy has the potential to be a major source of wealth and prosperity for the continent and help advance the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Businesses interested in learning how they can be part of the rising tide involved in the Blue Economy are invited to attend the second Africa Blue Economy Forum (ABEF2019).

The ABEF2019 builds on the inaugural event in London last year, which explored what the Blue Economy was. This year's forum aims to take it a stage further and explore how business and government can implement actions that will proactively boost the economic, social and environmental welfare of the continent.

The importance of a cohesive strategy that will protect and utilise Africa's coastal waters cannot be overstated:

- 70% of Africa's nations are coastal
- 90% of the continent's imports and exports are done via sea transportation
- Africa's maritime industry is estimated to be worth \$1 trillion per year
- The asset value of ocean economy eco-systems is valued at \$24 trillion
- Plastic pollution costs \$13 billion per year due to damage caused to marine ecosystems

ABEF2019 will deliver a strong focus on business and government collaboration, highlight investment opportunities and reveal environmental and social impact. Discussions will explore the opportunities and innovations in emerging and frontier sectors of the blue economy and how they can help accelerate Africa's transformation, create jobs, sustain livelihoods and communities and offer low cost but impactful climate change measures.

Leila Ben Hassen, organiser and founder of ABEF2019, said: "There needs to be more awareness of the Blue Economy and a realisation of how important it is to the future of Africa. Governments are beginning to understand this and beginning to implement policies but it still needs the private sector to grasp this and to look at how they can work in partnership with governments and other organisations to make this succeed. Collaboration is necessary to make this work and deliver huge benefits for the continent enabling it meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. ABEF2019 will begin to lay the foundations for this collaboration process."

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