

Entrepreneurship bootcamp for West Africa startups

BAMAKO, Mali - Twenty top Francophone African startups have been chosen for the World Bank Group tech acceleration programme. L'Afrique Excelle's startups specialise in tech solutions for the African market designed to expand reach and access to services.



The [L'Afrique Excelle](#) residency in Mali is a full-week bootcamp set to kick off the Francophone edition of the World Bank Group's [XL Africa](#), tech start-up accelerator. From March 24 to 30, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to network and learn from leading industry experts, increase their regional visibility and network with potential corporate partners and investors.

L'Afrique Excelle is the francophone adaptation of the popular XL Africa program which seeks to foster a stronger connection between entrepreneurs in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, while providing support to those from less developed digital ecosystems, particularly in fragile countries such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo and Mali.

The launch of L'Afrique Excelle coincides with several new ecosystem initiatives from the public and private sectors, including the French Development Agency's [Digital Africa](#) initiative, the recently established Africa-focused investment funds extending their reach beyond Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa in addition to the upcoming [Francophone Africa Investor Summit](#) (FAIS), a regional West Africa event designed to convene early-stage investors, large companies, and business-supporting organizations.

L'Afrique Excelle's start-ups specialise in tech solutions for the African market designed to expand reach and access to services. These include fintech, transportation, healthcare, cleantech, data analytics and enterprise software. Companies in the program have their products or services currently available in one or more Francophone African markets, have strong revenues, and are well-positioned for growth and cross-border expansion.

During the Mali Residency, this cohort will benefit from training, individual consultations and peer-to-peer learning. The Residency will conclude with a venture showcase at the [Francophone Africa Investor Summit](#).

A select 10 companies will advance to the France Residency in May 2019, where they will receive intensive training and mentoring at [thecamp](#) with [Sophia Business Angels](#), coaching by experts at Deloitte's and Google's offices, and get exposure to investors at the upcoming AfroBytes and VivaTech conferences to be held in Paris on May 15-18, 2019. With participation from Africa's leading investment groups, L'Afrique Excelle will help these start-ups attract early stage capital between US\$250,000 and US\$5 million.

"Similar to the XL Africa program, L'Afrique Excelle has attracted a number of growth-oriented digital start-ups from Francophone Africa. Many of them have already raised seed funding, totalling over \$11 million, and are active in several African markets. This is a strong signal regarding the competitiveness of Francophone African start-ups and their contribution to Africa's digital economies," said Sebastian Molineus, director of the finance, competitiveness and innovation global practice at the World Bank Group.

The selection process for L'Afrique Excelle is led by an external investor committee. Over 30 VC funds and investment groups have come on board as official program partners, with the fund managers vetting the companies, reviewing their applications and conducting interviews. The selection was completed by a panel of industry experts from prominent Africa-focused funds.

"Supporting a new generation of African entrepreneurs in building innovative business models to solve the continent's challenges is at the core of our mission" said Babacar Seck, investment officer at Proparco, one of the panel experts. "Our participation in L'Afrique Excelle enables us to meet with exceptional entrepreneurs who dedicate their efforts to solving significant challenges on the continent."

L'Afrique Excelle is powered by the [World Bank Group](#) and the [Tubaniso Agribusiness and Innovation Center](#) (TAIC) with financial assistance from the [Italian Agency for Development Cooperation](#) (AICS) and implemented by [VC4A](#), [Suguba](#) and [Sahel'Innov](#).

The selected start-ups participating in the event are:

1. [StarNews Mobile](#): Media, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast
2. [Lifi Led](#): Cleantech, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, CAR, Liberia, Madagascar
3. [GiftedMom](#): Healthtech, Cameroon, Ivory Coast
4. [Paps](#): Logistics, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast
5. [LONO](#): Cleantech, Ivory Coast
6. [Tripafrique](#): Transport, Ivory Coast
7. [Firefly Media](#): Adtech/Transport, Senegal
8. [Solaris Offgrid](#): Fintech/SaaS, Solar, Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Cameroon, Rwanda
9. [Optimetriks](#): Retail Technology, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Ghana, Kenya
10. [MaTontine](#): Fintech, Senegal, Ivory Coast
11. [LAfricaMobile](#): Connectivity/SaaS/API, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Burkina Faso
12. [Quicarry](#): Logistics, Senegal, Benin, Mali, Togo
13. [Sudpay](#): Fintech, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Guinea
14. [Exportunity GBC2](#): Fintech/Import/Export, Mauritius, Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Togo
15. [SmartOne](#): Big Data, Madagascar, Mauritius
16. [CityTaps](#): Water & Sanitation, Niger, Senegal

17. [Diool](#): Fintech, Cameroon
18. [OniriQ](#): Cleantech/Offgrid Energy, Senegal
19. [Eyone](#): Healthtech, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger
20. AmA: Fintech, Senegal

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