

Ghana aims to be an innovation leader in Africa

Skills development and collaboration is key to reaching ambitious digital economy and growth priorities in the West African region of Ghana, in its rise as an innovation leader in Africa.



SAP Innovation Day, Ghana.

"With the correct digital skills and technologies, and close collaboration between the public and private sectors, Ghana can build the capacity to play a leading role in the story of Africa's reinvention as an innovation powerhouse during the Fourth Industrial Era." This was the message from Kathryn Tindale, director channel and general business at SAP Africa, at the opening of the SAP Innovation Day Ghana, which coincided with the 4th Ghana CEO Summit, held in Accra, Ghana.

Tindale cited the company's efforts to improve the workforce readiness among African youth as a measure to reducing unemployment and closing the digital skills divide. "Africa will be home to more than 400 million youth by 2055 whose work and contribution could power more than \$29-trillion in economic output. However, this will only be realised by implementing the correct digital technologies and fast-tracking youth skills development to allow youngsters to use technology to shape their futures."

SAP's skills development initiatives on the continent have introduced millions to coding and helped build sustainable local skills development capacity through the training of teachers. "Over the past four years, our Africa Code Week initiative has introduced more than 4.1 million youth to coding through more than 70 000 coding workshops across the continent," said Tindale. "Through our Skills for Africa graduate program, more than 540 young adults have also received technical training in the latest SAP technologies, with most going on to permanent employment in the SAP ecosystem."

The company also hosted coding and design thinking workshops in Ghana as part of its SAP Social Sabbatical initiative, which brings global volunteers to key African regions to facilitate knowledge transfer and mentorship opportunities.

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The 2019 Ghana Innovation Day follows a highly successful event in 2018 that brought together key industry stakeholders from across sub-Saharan Africa. This year's event coincided with the 4th Ghana CEO Summit, which attracted more than 400 CEOs from across the African continent around the theme of 'The Futuristic Economy', and included customer showcases, presentations from key industry partners, innovation tours and Q&A sessions to unpack key digital economy priorities such as the Intelligent Enterprise and customer experience.

Pedro Guerreiro, Managing Director: Central Africa at SAP Africa, said Ghana has taken major steps over the past few years to digitise its economy and build a more inclusive digital ecosystem. He cited the recently-held Ghana Roadmap Conference, which brought public and private sector role-players together to review the country's ICT for Accelerated Development (ICT4AD) policy document and generate ideas to develop a digital strategy and implementation plan.

"Ghana has set a clear objective for its future plans: to become a leader in ICT innovation in sub-Saharan Africa by 2023. This is perfectly aligned with SAP's mission to help the world run better and improve people's lives. This will require wide-ranging collaborative efforts to address key challenges faced by Ghana's public and private sectors. Recent projects in this regard show immense promise for how bilateral and multilateral cooperation around key development priorities can make a significant positive impact."

Guerreiro mentions recent efforts to support the country's farmers through SAP Rural Sourcing Management Solution, connecting small farmers with the agricultural value chain. Through a prototype mobile app, farmers can access farming information and market data that brings transparency to the buying process and closes the gap between the informal and formal economic sectors. A geographical information system also equips policy makers with vital information that improves planning and forecasting processes."

Tindale added that, while each project is impactful in their own way, isolated efforts are not enough to transform Africa's economic fortunes. "Our partnership with the Social Enterprise World Forum, which is set to take place in Addis Ababa in October, will further unlock opportunities for SAP to collaborate and innovate with social enterprises with a track record of tackling big economic issues, transforming lives and revitalising communities. All these partnerships, when woven together, gives us the opportunity to drive sustainable digital transformation and skills development in Ghana and throughout the African continent.

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