

Africa's next generation of infrastructure specialists complete inaugural training program

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After more than two months of intensive training on infrastructure public-private partnerships (PPPs), the inaugural cohort of the Africa Infrastructure Fellowship Program (AIFP) graduated today. Developed by the Global Infrastructure Hub (GI Hub) and Meridiam with the support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the AIFP is a unique public-private initiative designed to upskill African government infrastructure specialists and enable them to facilitate increased investment in a pipeline of new sustainable infrastructure developments.

The 10 Fellows from five partner countries: Ethiopia, Gabon, Namibia, Cameroon, and Senegal, undertook the program in Paris, France which included academic training at the Ecole des Ponts ParisTech.

"I am glad to have been a part of the first edition of this prestigious training on PPPs. I gained theoretical and practical knowledge on all aspects of PPPs and we had the opportunity to meet experienced practitioners in the field, some with 30 years' experience. They were all very engaging and open to sharing their experience with us. Our goal now is to implement all the knowledge acquired to improve the procurement and execution of PPPs in our countries," Moustapha Djitte, AIFP Fellow 2020, Magistrate, Senegalese Public Procurement Regulation Authority.

The Fellows of the 2020 cohort are the first alumni of the AIFP and the initiators of a Pan-African network of experienced PPP practitioners who will share knowledge and experience with other Fellows. A first AIFP alumni meeting will take place in Paris in July 2021 and the next cohort of the AIFP is planned for October 2021.

"The Global Infrastructure Hub is so pleased to be a key partner of the Africa Infrastructure Fellowship Program. I am confident that with their prior knowledge and the new knowledge they have gained from the program, the graduates will be influential in shaping sustainable infrastructure in Africa for decades to come. I look forward to continuing our work with them, to increase the impact and value of the program for their home countries," the GI Hub's CEO, Marie Lam-Frendo said.

The AIFP is the first Pan-African training program and offers a unique approach focused on practical knowledge and the sharing of expertise and cooperation between the private and the public sector for infrastructure projects with a tangible social and economic impact within communities. The training included a series of online workshops by multilateral development banks and other public and private entities, the APMG Public-Private Partnerships Certification Program and an internship with one of the program's private or public sector partners.

Partners of the program include the French Treasury, the International Finance Corporation, MIGA (World Bank Group), the French Development Agency, Société Générale, the African Legal Support Facility, Colas among many others.

"The AIFP Foundation is pleased with the success of the first edition of the programme and will continue to work with its partners to perpetuate and expand the initiative. This pilot session

represents an essential first step towards the development of larger projects for capacity building in Africa that could be strongly supported by Europe in other crucial sectors such as health, economy and finance.” Thierry Déau, Chairman of the AIFP Foundation.

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Editor’s Notes

About the African Infrastructure Fellowship Program (AIFP)

Developed by Meridiam and the Global Infrastructure Hub (GI Hub), with the support of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and several African countries, the AIFP is a public utility foundation which aims to mobilise stakeholders across government, the private sector and multilateral development banks: academic experts and infrastructure professionals will deliver a program of tailored practical training to public sector infrastructure practitioners. The AIFP is a public-private initiative designed to upskill African government infrastructure specialists and enable them to facilitate increased investment in a pipeline of new infrastructure developments. The program is the first of its type to link the private and public sectors in African infrastructure procurement and delivery, designed in partnership with African governments and investors.

Over two months, participants will gain a robust understanding of infrastructure procurement, governance and the role of the private sector in infrastructure projects. Fellows will experience a mix of theoretical and practical training, opportunities to work within major private sector companies, and lead to the establishment of a strong network of infrastructure practitioners across Africa.

AIFP is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of each participating country, but at its core will comprise an academic component, a practical or ‘internship’ component, and an ongoing network of practitioners. <https://www.africainfrafellowship.org/fr>

About the Global Infrastructure Hub:

The Global Infrastructure Hub (GI Hub) is supporting the G20 to drive an ambitious agenda on sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure through action-oriented programmes. Based in Sydney, Australia and Toronto, Canada the GI Hub team provides data, insights and best practice and works towards creating a common language on infrastructure. Strategic partnership is at the core of what the GI Hub delivers through events, thought leadership and tools. It is the G20’s only dedicated infrastructure entity. www.gihub.org

About Meridiam:

Meridiam was founded in 2005 by Thierry Déau, with the belief that the alignment of interests between the public and private sector can provide critical solutions to the collective needs of

communities. Meridiam is an independent investment Benefit Corporation under French law and an asset manager. The firm specializes in the development, financing, and long-term management of sustainable public infrastructure in three core sectors: mobility, energy transition and environment, and social infrastructure. With offices in, Addis Ababa, Amman, Dakar, Istanbul, New York, Luxembourg, Paris, Toronto and Vienna, Meridiam currently manages US\$8 billion and more than 80 projects and assets to date. Meridiam is certified ISO 9001: 2015, Advanced Sustainability Rating by VigeoEiris and applies a proprietary methodology in relation to ESG and impact based on United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). www.meridiam.com