

NABC

MAGAZINE

Edition 2024

Annual magazine of the Netherlands-African Business Council. **Now in English and French**

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Preface

Dear reader,

The 2024 edition of the Netherlands-African Business Council's annual magazine focuses on Africa's Green Industrialisation. Africa has a significant opportunity to leapfrog industrialised nations and build a thriving low carbon manufacturing sector from the ground up. That's why we chose "Made in Africa" as the overarching theme for all our activities in 2024.

We increasingly notice that African governments are pushing for value addition in domestic industries, including agriculture, energy, and infrastructure. When speaking to government representatives, members of the private sector, and public institutes from the continent, we are often being asked questions like "how many jobs are your members creating in our countries?" or addressed with statements like "we need to move away from the exclusive export of raw materials. Investment in our industrialisation is paramount." Indeed, no country or region in the world has achieved prosperity and a decent socio-economic life for its citizens without the development of an industrial sector. It is time for Africa to start producing its own products, thus, enhancing value addition to the continent's commodity sector. Africa can industrialise in a sustainable way: develop green industries. For this reason, Made in Africa also sets the stage for the sixth edition of our flagship conference Africa Works! this year.

What green industrialisation on the continent can look like is portrayed in this magazine with stories about renewable energy expansion in Namibia and Nigeria and the power of a young, skilled workforce. Another story explains the importance of local food processing for agricultural value addition in Togo and Ethiopia, as well as ecological landscape restoration for agricultural infrastructure that is resilient to climate change in Rwanda.

NABC itself has, to a certain extent, also become more 'African.' In 2023, we took a step unprecedented in our 77-year long history: we opened the Nigeria-Netherlands Business Hub (NNB Hub) in close collaboration with our enthusiastic local team in Abuja and Kano. Companies active in Nigeria with a strong link to the Netherlands, as well as Dutch companies active in Nigeria, are welcome to join the NNB Hub. We are proud to present to you the first NNH Hub members in the 2024 magazine. You will find them next to our Africa-based members.

A truly Netherlands-African membership network is the future I envision for the NABC: moving away from mere Netherlands-African trade and towards a strong network of Dutch and African companies on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. I am looking forward to working towards these efforts in close collaboration with you - our esteemed members - throughout this year, and in particular during Africa Works! 2024.

Rosmarijn Fens,
Managing Director



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COLOPHON

Editor in Chief

Jana Kock

Stories

Jana Kock, Arne Doornebal,
Mattijs Renden, Guna Alvika

Translations

Djamila Benabdallah

Proof reading

Guna Alvika, Rosmarijn Fens,
Arne Doornebal, Ibrahima Sangho

Layout

Koen Verbeek
www.studiokoenverbeek.nl

Advertisements

info@nabc.nl

Image Credits

Sabine van Nistelrooij, ARCOS,
DIBcoop, Embassy of Namibia to
the Netherlands, Holland Dairy,
Independent Energy, Mattijs
Renden, Netherlands Embassy to
Côte d'Ivoire, R&D Entrepreneurship
and Outsourcing Center, Tradin
Organic, Young Africa International

Cover

Young Africa International

Printing

Drukwerkconsultancy
info@drukwerkconsultancy.nl

Contact

NABC

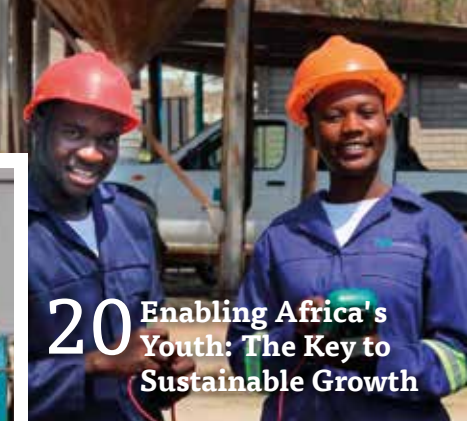
E-mail: info@nabc.nl
www.nabc.nl

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NABC Activities in 2023

NORTH AFRICA

EGYPT

7 February: Africa Expert Breakfast Egypt in The Hague, Netherlands
12 – 16 March: Waste Processing & Circular Economy Mission to Cairo, Egypt
8 – 11 May: NL-Masr Knowledge Exchange Mission on Climate and Water Smart Agriculture (CWSA) to the El-Wadi Exhibition in Luxor, Egypt
14 – 18 August: Scoping Mission for the Impact Cluster on Climate and Water Smart Agriculture (CWSA) in Sharkia governorate, Egypt

MOROCCO

11 – 15 September: Incoming Economic Exchange Mission from the Souss-Massa Region, Morocco
9 – 12 October: NABC joined the trade mission to Morocco on Water, Agriculture, and Horticulture led by the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ms. Liesje Schreinemacher.

WEST AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

24 – 26 May: Exhibiting with AgriBoost Business Champions at Africallia in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

2 – 6 October: Regional Trade Mission on Poultry and Horticulture from Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Chad, to the Salon Internationale de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Animales (SARA) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

GHANA

22 – 27 April: WTC Multisectoral Trade Mission to Accra and Tema, Ghana

NIGERIA

28 - 30 March: Netherlands Pavilion: Farming the Future at the Nigeria Agrofood Fair
18 – 22 September: Launch of the Nigeria-Netherlands Business Hub (NNBH) in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria

SENEGAL

13 – 17 March: Poultry Fact-Finding Mission to Senegal

EAST AFRICA

TANZANIA

14 November: Tanzania-Netherlands Trade and Investment Forum
14-15 November: Incoming Public-Private Trade and Investment Delegation from Tanzania to the Netherlands as part of the Tanzania-Netherlands Trade and Investment Forum

UGANDA

5 – 9 June: Trade mission for the 'Uganda Best Farmers' winners of the 2019 edition to the Netherlands
9 – 13 October: Trade mission for the 'Uganda Best Farmers' winners of the 2020 edition to the Netherlands

SOUTHERN AFRICA

BOTSWANA

6 September: Botswana Business Cocktail in The Hague, Netherlands
11 – 12 October: Business Trip to the EU-Botswana Business Forum in Gaborone, Botswana

MOZAMBIQUE

16 May: Netherlands-Mozambique Business and Investment Forum in The Hague, Netherlands

SOUTH AFRICA

15 - 20 October: NABC joined the Trade Mission to South Africa on Green Hydrogen, Waste Management and Future proof Agri and Horticulture with Dutch Minister Adema, that took place parallel to the state visit of His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima to South Africa.

PAN-AFRICAN ACTIVITIES

20 January: New Year's Reception in Amsterdam, Netherlands
15 March: Round Table: Access to Finance in Agribusiness for Female Entrepreneurs in Amsterdam, Netherlands
13 April: Africa Business Club Start-Up Special in The Hague, Netherlands
6 June: East-South Africa Agri Forum in Wageningen, Netherlands
7 June: Speaking Day of East-South Africa Agri Forum in Utrecht, Netherlands
14 September: Back to Business (B2B) Reception in The Hague, Netherlands
25 September: Round Table Discussion on Private Markets Investing in Africa for Climate and Gender Equity in Amsterdam, Netherlands
16 November: Ambassadors' Dinner 2023 in Wassenaar, Netherlands

NABC Activities in 2023



Rosmarijn Fens and Kabir Ademoh at Mile 12 International Market in Lagos.



From left to right: Fauziyya Sadiq, Dutch Consul-General to Nigeria Michel Deelen, Rosmarijn Fens, Kabir Ademoh.



Nigeria-Netherlands Business Hub

In the ever-evolving African business landscape, the Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) stands as a facilitator for business partnerships between Dutch companies and the African private sector. With the launch of the Netherlands-Nigeria Business (NNB) Hub in Lagos and Abuja in September 2023 – one year after the opening of the NABC Nigeria office in Abuja – the NABC solidifies its commitment to fostering equitable Dutch-Nigerian partnerships. Mirroring NABC's services in the Netherlands, the NNB Hub offers Nigerian and Dutch companies support in building future-proof businesses in partnership with both Nigeria's and Netherlands' private sector.

The NNB Hub is more than just a business network; it is a dynamic force for economic collaboration. Its central mission? To facilitate sustainable trade and investment that benefits both countries. The NNB Hub seeks to nurture partnerships spanning diverse sectors, including climate smart agriculture, food security, the green economy, digital transformation, construction, infrastructure, and education. Through sector-specific events and activities in Nigeria, the Hub creates an ecosystem where member companies engage with key stakeholders, sparking innovation, fostering collaboration, and propelling sustainable economic growth. As we chart the course of sustainable trade and investment facilitation for Dutch and Nigerian businesses, we navigate toward a future defined by growth, sustainability, and shared success. *More information about the NNB Hub: www.nabc.nl/nigeria*

About NABC

NABC is the leading organisation for sustainable trade and investment facilitation for Africa based in the Netherlands. We strongly believe that the Dutch private sector has a crucial role to play towards a future-proof Africa that is economically thriving and globally competitive in trade and investment. Therefore, NABC's purpose is to inspire and connect businesses with Africa's opportunities and to enable them in making confident decisions about when, where, and how to do business in Africa.

The NABC sees the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an opportunity for more responsible business in Africa. All our work relates directly to the achievement of the 17 SDGs, with a specific focus on SDG 2, 8, 13, and 17 in which we can maximise our impact. We strive to build partnerships of equals between the Netherlands and Africa's 54 diverse countries.

NABC in numbers



Africa Insights Desk

We inspire companies to do business in and with Africa by sharing valuable business news, highlighting the potential of the continent and by providing high-level business intelligence studies through NABC's Africa Insights Desk. Clients ranging from SMEs to multinationals have been enabled to further develop their strategies for doing business in and with Africa by market insights and business intelligence studies. Over the years, the Africa Insights Desk has built a strong track record in developing fruitful tailor-made trade missions, finding valuable business leads, and producing in-depth market analyses. Whether you are looking for the perfect business partner, need valuable market information or require a tailor-made trade mission, the Africa Insights Desk has the right solution.

Inspire, Connect, and Enable for a Future-Proof Africa

Inspired by the resilience, innovation, and entrepreneurship of the continent and the demands of the Dutch private sector, the NABC is working towards a future-proof Africa. The NABC inspires private sector companies to do business in and with Africa through market insights and business intelligence studies, by connecting them with the right business contacts during networking events in the Netherlands and trade missions to and from the continent. We develop activities that enable sustainable trade and investment facilitation on the continent and have positive economic and environmental impact locally.



The Ambassador of Tanzania to the Netherlands and the Head of Chancery of the Tanzanian Embassy in The Hague network with a guest during the NABC's New Year's Reception 2023 at Heineken Experience in Amsterdam.

Business Networking Events

We are changing the narrative of Africa and inspiring entrepreneurs to do business on the continent through country-specific investment promotion events and networking events with tailor-made matchmaking meetings. Hereby, we connect stakeholders from both the public and private sector in the

Netherlands, Africa, and beyond. In 2023 the NABC brought back the Back to Business (B2B) Reception in addition to our annual New Year's Reception held in collaboration with our strategic partner Heineken. In June, we welcomed more than 120 entrepreneurs and public sector representatives from Europe and Africa to discuss latest developments and plans within the

sustainable agriculture sphere. We concluded the year with the annual Ambassadors' Dinner in November, connecting embassy representatives from more than 20 countries in Africa with the Dutch private sector, and acknowledging economically inclusive and sustainable business models during the Doing Business in Africa Award ceremony.



Knowledge Exchange on CWSA at El-Wadi Exhibition in Egypt.

Trade Missions

We know Africa and Africa knows us. This makes NABC an expert organiser of trade missions to and from African countries. Hereby, the NABC works with a wide range of partners, including the Dutch Government and Dutch embassies in Africa, African embassies in the Benelux, local chambers of commerce, sector organisations, and local consultants to connect internationally oriented businesses with the right contacts on the ground to establish relevant networks in their focus country. In 2023, we organised a diverse array of trade missions in different sectors to and from Africa. Notable missions to African countries include a multi-sectoral trade mission to Ghana, a Poultry Fact-Finding Mission to Senegal, a Waste Processing and Circular Economy Mission to Egypt, a Knowledge Exchange Mission on Climate and Water Smart Agriculture to Egypt, and a Regional Trade Mission on Poultry and Horticulture to Côte d'Ivoire. We also organised trade missions to the Netherlands on agribusiness, horticulture, water, and renewable energy for delegations from Morocco, Uganda, and Tanzania. *Find a complete overview of NABC activities organised in 2023 on page 6 and 7.*

NABC's Sector-Specific Approach

Sector-Specific Approach

At the NABC, we believe that private sector development is the key to sustainable economic growth. Therefore, the NABC has established numerous programmes in multiple sectors. Currently, the NABC implements two sector-specific programmes: The AgriBoost programme focused on business development support for entrepreneurs in the Sahel, and our flagship platform – The Dutch Africa Poultry Platform.



Poultry delegation, including several DAPP members, visits Sedima Group in Dakar during Poultry Fact-Finding Mission to Senegal in March 2023.

Dutch Africa Poultry Platform

The Dutch Africa Poultry Platform (DAPP) explores business and market entry opportunities for the Dutch poultry sector in Africa. The objective of DAPP is to contribute to the growth and development of Africa's poultry sector in partnership with both public and private sector entities across Africa. Hereby, an integrated approach increases the chances of success whilst reducing each individual company's risk exposure. The DAPP currently consists of 25 members who represent the entire value chain, from farm to fork, and meet on a quarterly basis to exchange knowledge and latest trends in the poultry industry.

More information: www.dutchafricapoultry.com

AgriBoost: Accelerate Poultry and Horticulture Business Champions in the Sahel region

The AgriBoost programme seeks to strengthen the horticulture and poultry sectors in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger by working with 60 successful, profitable, and innovative Business Champions. These Business Champions are entrepreneurs who have already demonstrated their competence in running successful businesses. Through regional knowledge sharing, technical assistance, and enhanced trade relations, the programme aims to promote economic growth and development

in the poultry and horticulture sector in the Sahel, and fosters collaboration between the Sahel, coastal countries and the Netherlands. By showcasing these outstanding entrepreneurs, AgriBoost highlights the potential of the agribusiness sector in the Sahel region, thereby using the experience of successful entrepreneurs as an example and inspiration for young entrepreneurs to work in or start a business in the agricultural sector. Our services are designed to be demand-based, allowing us to tailor our support to meet the specific

needs of our Business Champions. To achieve this, the consortium of NABC, PUM and local coordinator, Yiriwa Intercontinental Consulting, collaborates with a range of public and private partners, including local investment agencies, chambers of commerce, and incubators. Moreover, by linking the Business Champions with the Dutch private sector, the consortium can help these entrepreneurs access new markets, technologies, and sustainable best practices aimed at increasing their production.

Regional business delegation of 50 horticulture and poultry entrepreneurs, including 30 AgriBoost Business Champions, at SARA 2023 in Abidjan.



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The purpose of the Dutch Desk, operated by Invest International together with Access Bank Plc in Lagos, is to support Dutch businesses by providing local banking solutions to enter, trade with or expand their business in Nigeria.



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Dutch solutions for global challenges



Unloading fresh pineapples in Togo.

FROM FARM TO FACTORY: Agro-Processing Insights from Togo and Ethiopia

African countries increasingly push for agricultural value addition in domestic markets. NABC's member Tradin Organic and Ethiopian agribusiness company Holland Dairy work with local producers to transform Togolese pineapples and Ethiopian milk into value-added goods.



The flowering of a pineapple.

With over 500,000 tons grown annually by smallholder farmers in Togo, the domestic pineapple market struggled with excess supply, causing pineapple prices to plummet and fruits to perish. In 2017, a Togolese and French entrepreneur established a pineapple processing factory with the support of a French investment fund to address market limitations and reduce food loss. Today, sourcing from over 500 Togolese smallholder farmers, the factory produces organic pineapple juice, puree, and concentrate, expanding globally while strengthening the domestic value chain. The Togolese entrepreneur supplies the majority of raw material and guides farmers through organic certification, provides technical support, and promotes agroforestry practices. From the very start, NABC's member Tradin Organic has maintained a close partnership with the factory and farmers. Piet Croockewit, Sourcing Development Manager for Tradin Organic in West Africa, acts as a vital link between local operations and global collaboration. Based in Lomé, he ensures relevant information reaches both the local team and his colleagues from Tradin Organic timely. Whether it is adapting to changes in organic food safety regulations, or tackling technical issues with machinery, Mr. Croockewit and his colleagues are ready to facilitate support. He values the transparent relationship and joint problem-solving on

We organise knowledge sharing visits to establish collaborations and further enhance the fruit processing infrastructure in the region.
Piet Croockewit, Sourcing Development Manager West Africa at Tradin Organic

site. "It is a very good factory, and a very competent and capable team with a lot of autonomy among employees. Everyone is trusted to do their job effectively," reports the Sourcing Manager.

The Togolese factory processes the robust and disease-resistant Sugarloaf pineapple variety, which is not yet the top choice abroad. While the MD2 variety, popular for its deep yellow colour, dominates European and US markets, Tradin Organic advocates for Sugarloaf's taste, quality, and resilience, offering samples to reconsider specifications. Mr. Croockewit explains that many manufacturers default to MD2 without exploring the untapped potential of Sugarloaf, a status quo he is determined to change. Meanwhile, the factory establishes a reliable income source alongside organic and food safety standards that significantly enhance Togo's fruit value chain and inspire neighbouring countries. "We organise knowledge sharing visits for other fruit processing factories across West Africa to establish collaborations and further enhance the fruit processing infrastructure in the region," emphasises Mr. Croockewit, expecting rapid growth in West Africa's fruit processing sector.

Dutch Expertise in Ethiopian Dairy: A Nutrient-Rich Approach

On the East flank of the African continent, Holland Dairy, an Ethiopian company with Dutch expertise, has rapidly grown in Ethiopia's dairy market. Employing 300 Ethiopians and 4 Dutch professionals, the company processes locally sourced milk into high-quality dairy products. "We exclusively serve the Ethiopian market, and we truly believe in the economic potential of Ethiopia as the second most populous African country," affirms Jean-Paul Rieu, Commercial Director of Holland Dairy.

While Ethiopian milk consumption per capita is relatively low, the country's dairy sector is expanding, with national milk consumption expected to double by 2030, according to TRAIDE Ethiopia (2021). Holland Dairy recognises this potential and addresses current challenges, including the volatile dairy demand caused by fasting practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. "We diversify with long-shelf-life cheeses alongside our milk, yoghurt, and butter produce. This way, we are offering products that would otherwise not consistently



Top: Jean-Paul Rieu checks Holland Dairy shelves in Ethiopian supermarket. Left: Marketing campaign for Holland Dairy's Mango Yoghurt.

be available, as there is a very volatile supply in locally produced high-quality cheese," says Mr. Rieu.

High food quality and safety standards take centre stage at Holland Dairy's operations. Being HACCP certified, the company is the first and only certified dairy producer in Ethiopia. Their star product, 100% natural yogurt, has recently been expanded with a mango variant alongside the popular strawberry yogurt, both with locally sourced fruits from Ethiopia. "The strawberry yogurt is my all-time favourite," shares the FMCG expert and adds: "An extremely healthy product with real pieces of strawberry in it."

While dairy consumption patterns in Ethiopia are driven by availability and price sensitivity, Holland Dairy promotes the importance of nutritious diets by introducing new, healthy product variants, like their mango yogurt. Moreover, the company ensures constant availability of high-quality produce, guiding consumers towards a healthy choice in times of low supply. "When you are building a robust company like Holland Dairy, you are standing not only for consistency in your quality but also for consistency in the availability of your products," stresses Mr. Rieu. For 2024, Holland Dairy aims to become ISO certified to further increase milk quality, and food safety standards in Ethiopia's dairy market and contribute to healthy nutrition. 🍌

From Green Hills to Solar Shores:

Paths to Sustainable Infrastructure

From resilient tea plantations in Rwanda to illuminating rural Nigeria, NABC members **DIBcoop** and **Independent Energy** set the bar high for resilient infrastructure solutions.



Left: Cyohoha-Rukeri Watershed in Rwanda.
Middle: Photovoltaic Plants in Plateau State, Nigeria.



Top: Sorwathe Tea Factory employees in Rwanda.
Bottom: SOSAI Renewable Energies employee at power plant in Nigeria.



in smaller solar counterparts. Mr. Hoogers explains: "SOSAI is starting the project by identifying potential sites and customers for mini grids in Nigeria. We design the system and buy and assemble necessary equipment in our workshop in Haarlem. In Nigeria, SOSAI is adding local items and installs the PV plants together with the local community." By now, two mini grids stand operational to illuminate communities in Plateau State of 5,000 inhabitants each. Mr. Hoogers already notices impact in the area: "We have not started power supply yet but already see the area develop. Former residents return, build homes, all in anticipation of electricity to come soon." The imminent electricity supply will facilitate increased production, product cooling, and enhanced sales for local bar owners, welders, and millers.

Independent Energy's and SOSAI's mini grids are hybrid systems, designed for maximum cost efficiency and energy resilience, almost exclusively harnessing solar power. "Solar is the primary and only logical energy source," stresses Mr. Hoogers. The diesel component serves as a backup to the main solar source, securing a reliable energy mix.

When looking at the future of renewable energy, Frank Hoogers forecasts Nigeria's need for 50,000 power sites. "This market is so huge. And I am happy there is competition. This way, most rural areas will be electrified in 50 years," stresses the energy expert. Independent Energy will play their role in this development, aiming to install 200 power sites for Nigeria alone. Equipment production for the first three mini grids to be installed in 2024, has just started. 🌀

Nature's Shield: Protecting Rwandan Tea with Agroforestry

In the heart of Rwanda's Cyohoha-Rukeri Watershed, where nature's beauty leaves you breathless, low-lying peatland tea plantations were suffering from severe flooding. Seeking a remedy, Sorwathe Tea Factory approached ecological service provider DIBcoop for an improved drainage system for 517 ha smallholder land 158 ha own tea plantations. Ard Lengkeek, Director of DIBcoop and agroforester by profession, explained that: "Digging deeper canals for drainage would only exacerbate degradation. More effective solutions should address uphill soil erosion caused by increased pressure on the land from farmers, as erosion intensifies downstream flooding." Drawing on 30+ years of agroforestry experience, Mr. Lengkeek proposed a holistic water management system, addressing both flooding and drought.

By planting a diverse set of tree species uphill to form natural barriers, the incoming water flow remains stable; thus reducing the risk of downhill floods and uphill soil erosion. The agroforestry interventions were realised through a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) project, cofunded by the SDG Partnership facility of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency amounting to €1.9M. To provide the desired ecosystem services – reduced soil erosion and water flow mitigation – DIBcoop partnered with 6,500 farmer families cultivating annual food crops uphill by paying them in trees. To ensure biodiversity and farmer engagement, four appealing

tree packages are offered, with a total of 15 diverse species, including fruit, fodder, timber, and vegetable trees. Farmers select packages aligned with their needs and are trained in planting, jointly initiating a circular water catchment system.

The increased and biodiverse tree cover results in more soil carbon, tree roots and mulch, allowing rain to seep away more slowly and improving water retention. This prevents downhill tea flooding and ensures moist uphill soil, safeguarding land for agricultural production. "Crop diversification not only adds tree products, but the ecological services provided by the tree species also sustainably enhance annual crop growth, yields, nutrition, and income," remarks Mr. Lengkeek, adding: "More farm production uphill and more tea downhill."

Despite a challenging start during the pandemic, the project is now thriving, planting 400,000 trees annually. While tangible benefits require time, farmers express satisfaction. The tree mix promises continuous harvests with sustainable return on investment. The enhanced water infiltration has already resulted in a more secure tea supply for Sorwathe. DIBcoop's agroforestry interventions have pioneered a circular water catchment system, marking a departure from conventional drainage methods toward a sustainable path for watershed management and agricultural production that is resilient to climate change. 🌀

Beyond the Grid: Nigeria's Rural Electrification

Nigeria faces electricity shortage, driven by population and economic growth. Despite numerous power plants, insufficient investment and maintenance of the country's energy infrastructure have led to stagnant output, barely surpassing 1970s levels.

Dutch power company Independent Energy knows of the country's electricity challenges, supplying and installing autonomous energy systems in Nigeria for seven years. In 2022, a joint-venture with long-term local partner SOSAI Renewable Energies marked a pivotal moment, changing the company's Nigeria operations from exclusive off-grid system sale to long-term investments in Nigeria's energy-infrastructure, additionally selling kilowatt hours since.

"Nigeria was smart leaving the rural areas to the commercial companies," says Frank Hoogers, Director of Operations at Independent Energy, referring to the government's decentralised approach of energy supply. An intervention that strategically directs national energy supply to urban areas, allowing commercial companies to invest in rural regions. The legislation reduces investment risk, ensuring profitability for private sector investments in rural energy infrastructure.

Independent Energy and SOSAI responded to the favourable conditions, investing in rural electrification mini grids. Their alliance combines Independent Energy's expertise in larger energy systems with SOSAI's proficiency

🌀 **Nigeria was smart leaving the rural areas to the commercial companies.** Frank Hoogers, Director of Operations, Independent Energy



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Hydrogen to Accelerate Africa's Green Industrialisation

A growing number of African countries are seeking to produce green hydrogen. Frontrunners Morocco, South Africa, and Namibia are carrying out ambitious projects. "We have identified a once-in-a-generation opportunity here," says the Namibian Ambassador in Brussels, H.E. Dr. Mekondjo Kaapanda-Girnius.

Construction works at the site of Namibia's Daures hydrogen project.

Hydrogen has been sparking a lot of enthusiasm globally in recent years, but it should be placed in the right perspective. "Hydrogen is not the new oil," remarks Peter Paul van 't Veen, Business Developer at research institute TNO. "Oil can be easily pumped up and generates high margins. Hydrogen takes a lot more effort: electricity from renewable sources like wind or solar must be transferred into the gas hydrogen (H₂) via an electrolyser, which makes green hydrogen costly," explains Mr. Van 't Veen. Nevertheless, when renewable sources are used to produce hydrogen, it has a low CO₂ content and can be used to transport and

store renewable energy efficiently. The hydrogen can be made liquid by cooling it to a temperature of -253 degrees or converted to Ammonia or Methanol and then exported via ships or pipelines.

"Morocco is in an ideal position to become a large hydrogen supplier to Europe," notes Mr. Van 't Veen. "This is because they can produce copious amounts of it at a low cost given the many sun hours. Morocco is near to the off takers in Europe so the country will be able to transport the hydrogen to Europe by pipeline at low cost compared to shipping."

First Electrolyser in Africa

Another leading player in hydrogen is Namibia. "We can leverage the sun and the wind to realise tremendous economic benefits," says Ambassador Dr. Kaapanda-Girnius during an interview. Her country plans to build massive offshore wind parks and onshore solar farms to generate enough electricity to become a world-leading

exporter of hydrogen. "We want to be pioneers," the Ambassador proclaims. "Not just in Africa, but also globally."

Namibia's first hydrogen producing facility has been commissioned in September 2023. "It should become operational by mid-2024," explains Ambassador Dr. Kaapanda-Girnius. Solutions Namibia, a joint venture between a Namibian and a Belgian company, will soon complete a 5-Megawatt electrolyser, the first in Africa. The facility will include a green hydrogen academy and a fuelling station, so that trucks can run on dual fuel and refill green hydrogen there.



Namibia's ambassador Dr. Kaapanda-Girnius with Dutch King Willem-Alexander.

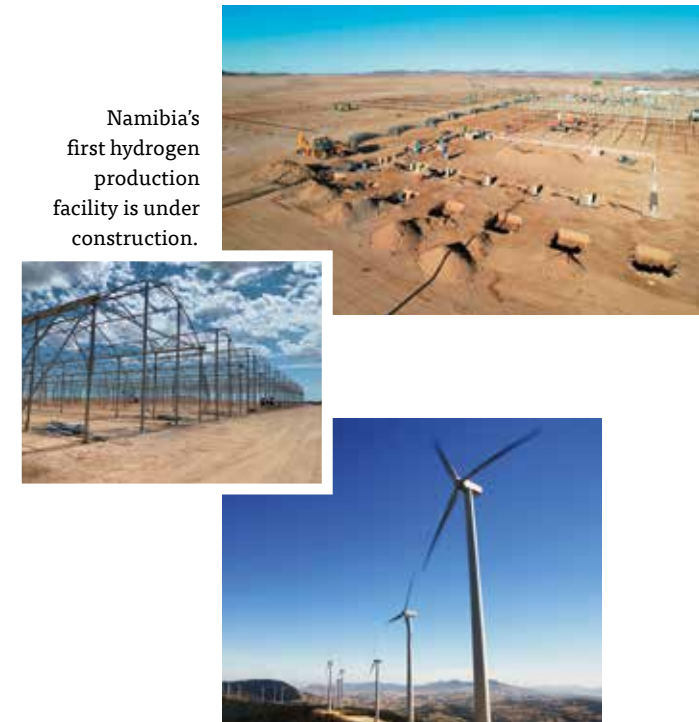
“We are going to establish tens of thousands of jobs around hydrogen in our country.” H.E. Dr. Mekondjo Kaapanda-Girnius, Namibian Ambassador in Brussels

Heavy Industry May Shift to Africa

It is not only mobility that hydrogen could be beneficial for. "A lot of heavy industry that is now in Europe is moving towards reduction of emissions," explains Monica Swanson of the Port of Rotterdam. "The Netherlands would need to import a lot of hydrogen to make that transition. It is, therefore, likely that parts of the energy-intensive industry will move to areas where there is an energy-surplus. Africa, with all its resources, space, and a young population, could be such a region." This is exactly what the Namibian government has in mind, according to Ambassador Dr. Kaapanda-Girnius. "We are going to establish tens of thousands of jobs around hydrogen in our country," she says. "We are not only creating this new commodity for export, but we want to maximise local benefits via local use."

A lot of international cooperation is needed to bring these prospects to reality. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte made a whirlwind visit to three African countries in June 2023 – all around the topic of hydrogen. He went to Morocco, South Africa, and Namibia. "This visit shows that there is a lot of momentum," remarks the Namibian Ambassador. "The Netherlands, through Invest International, has provided a grant of 40 million euros towards the development of a green hydrogen sector and economy in Namibia. There is also cooperation between the Port of Rotterdam and the Namibian Ports Authority (Namport) which focuses on how to position Namibia's ports to become green hydrogen production and export hubs, and create a green hydrogen supply chain between Namibia and the Netherlands." More and larger grants towards Namibia, South Africa, and Morocco are being discussed. Opinions on how much longer it will take before the hydrogen economy is up and running vary. "If you look at the plans to make the largest Dutch steel factory run on hydrogen, 2030 is often mentioned," says Mr. Van 't Veen, who stresses the importance of the industry

Namibia's first hydrogen production facility is under construction.



Africa's largest wind farm in Tangier, Morocco. Photo: Markel Redondo/Panos Pictures.

continuing to make investments. "A lot of projects have 2027 or 2028 as targets," adds Ms. Swanson of the Port of Rotterdam. "But we see some front runners who are aiming for delivery already in 2025." None of that is fast enough for Namibia. "Our first projects are coming onstream in 2024," announces Ambassador Dr. Kaapanda-Girnius. "Things are expected to keep moving fast after that." ☞



Enabling Africa's Youth The Key to Sustainable Growth

From addressing youth unemployment in Southern Africa to building entrepreneurial excellence in Ethiopia, NABC members **Young Africa International** and **R&D Entrepreneurship and Outsourcing Center** redefine employment possibilities.

Skills Make the Difference: A Holistic Approach to Youth Employment in Southern Africa

Youth unemployment burdens Africa. Over two-thirds of its under-35 population remain without jobs. However, Africa's demographic advantage is a global game-changer. With half its population under 25, the continent possesses immense potential. Boasting abundant natural resources, and ideal conditions for renewable energy and food production, Africa is indispensable for global sustainable development. Unlocking this potential, hinges on investing in education, skills, and economic opportunities for Africa's dynamic, eager youth. For 25 years, Young Africa International has been translating this belief into action. With vocational training centres in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and Namibia, their teams bridge the gap between youth skills and Southern Africa's rapidly evolving job markets. Dorien Beurskens, Co-Founder and CEO of Young Africa, underscores that employability depends on more than technical skills. Young Africa's holistic approach combines technical training with life skills and entrepreneurship,

nurturing young talent and instilling a sense of purpose and belonging.

"Young Africa Mozambique has built my self-esteem, having equipped me with the skills and confidence to build a career in solar technology," reports Isabella, a recent graduate. The growing demand for green technologies in Africa's economic landscape reveals "a lack of trained technicians who can install and maintain even small domestic solar energy systems, let alone big industrial systems," explains Mahara Goteka, Head of Programmes at Young Africa. Responding decisively, each of Young Africa's centres offers training in PV power plant installation and maintenance. "Going into the future, we need to continue stimulating demand and up-skilling young people to facilitate the uptake of green technologies. That way, we can create opportunities for youth in the green sector," says Mr. Goteka while thinking of Isabella.

Young Africa's Franchise Model

To exponentialise success stories like hers, Young Africa's Franchise Model places entrepreneurship at its core, integrating industry expertise into training. Local entrepreneurs rent Young Africa's training spaces to operate their business and provide practical expertise while employing scholars. This participatory approach offers real-world experience that trainees apply further

Left: Young Africa solar technology trainees in Namibia. Below: Young Africa Zimbabwe trainees during mechanics training. Bottom: Young Africa International team.



during compulsory internships. Notably, 30-40% of interns secure employment with their internship providers. Just recently, Nando's restaurant franchise in Lusaka, Zambia, hired 23 of Young Africa's food production students, illustrating the successful transition from training to employment. "While challenges persist, the shift in perception of Africa's youth as assets, not burdens, signals progress," says Dorien Beurskens. She emphasises private sector responsibility in nurturing skilled labour. Engaging in youth training, not just seeking already-skilled labour, is vital. "Together we can help young people reach the next level of employability and contribute towards the productivity of Africa's economy," concludes Ms. Beurskens.

Want to know how your organisation can empower youth in Africa? Get in touch with Christian Schaefer, Innovation and Partnerships Manager at Young Africa: christian.schaefer@youngafrica.org.

From Ideation to International Job Markets: Shaping Ethiopian Leaders at Home

R&D Entrepreneurship and Outsourcing Center follows this call. Co-founded by Dutch-Ethiopian entrepreneur Rahel Boon-Dejene in 2010, the social enterprise empowers Ethiopian youth through intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship programs. Driven by the capacity of youth, R&D's vision is to strengthen students' and professionals' inner capabilities, soft skills, and practical experience. "Coming from a small town in Ethiopia, I have witnessed that most Ethiopian students are not exposed to practical skills during their education," explains Ms. Boon-Dejene.

Training, Coaching, and Mentorship Programs

Thus, she is dedicated to transforming top-performing students into well-rounded professionals by addressing the gap in practical skills. R&D's academy offers more than 90 soft skills development training courses for intrapreneurs with a specific focus on 21st century skills, such as time management, business ethics, communication, and self-care. The training, coaching and mentorship programs cater to different levels - entry, management, and leadership - with a focus on personal development, function-specific skills, and advanced leadership. As part of this practical training, R&D virtually connects Ethiopian talent with global employers afterwards,

enabling them to enter the international job market without physical relocation. Skills development and domestic employment are equally fostered in the entrepreneurship program. Startups and SMEs receive personalised support and training that guides them to install viable business models to expand business growth. "(Young) Ethiopians increasingly try to solve societal issues through social entrepreneurship. Their entrepreneurial ideas revolve around ecology and people," reports Ms. Boon-Dejene and thinks of two former R&D trainees - the Co-Founders of Maryod - a women-led enterprise that produces reusable sanitary pads and washable diapers to give access to sustainable, comfortable, and affordable hygiene solutions to underprivileged and cash-constrained Ethiopian women and girls.

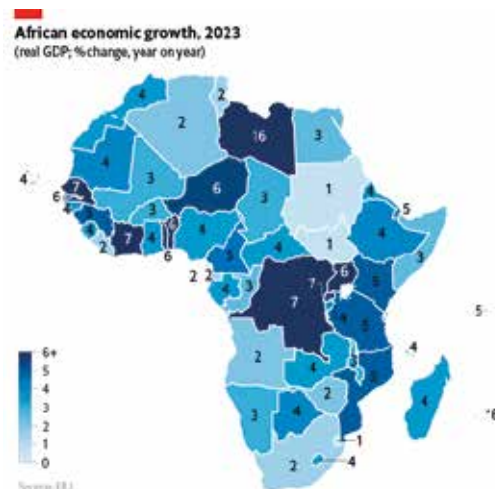
R&D's entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship programs are only two components of a unique approach that prioritises skill development for global competitiveness. They enable Ethiopians to seize international opportunities while retaining their roots in the homeland, thereby preserving cultural ties, upholding family structures, and fostering substantial contributions to the economic growth and social development of their home country. 7



R&D soft skills development training in Ethiopia.

Unlocking Potential in

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), encompassing both Francophone and Anglophone countries, anticipates an average economic growth of 7% in 2023 according to Bloomberg News, with a population exceeding 400 million inhabitants. Projections suggest that by the end of this century, the coastal region stretching from Abidjan to Lagos will become the world's largest continuously inhabited zone; hosting approximately half a billion people. This dynamic region attracts many Dutch companies, often directing their business toward the Anglophone countries within its borders.



Economic growth in Africa in 2023, expressed as a % change in GDP per country. Graphic: EIU.

“Overlooking the strategically important Francophone countries would be a missed opportunity,” argues Mattijs Renden, Head of Business Development at the NABC. He runs a three-year AgriBoost programme that focuses on strengthening the horticulture and poultry sectors in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

The economic landscape in Francophone West Africa, notably in countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, shows impressive and consistent growth. These countries present attractive opportunities for Dutch businesses due to a rising middle class, a rapidly expanding agricultural sector, an improved investment climate, and stability by the CFA currency that is linked to the EURO. Both Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal have reasonably well-developed infrastructures, positioning them as hubs for neighbouring and landlocked countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad. While the international business community, including Morocco, Tunisia, China, India, Turkey, and the Middle East, is increasingly investing in Francophone West Africa, Dutch businesses sometimes appear to lag behind in tapping into these opportunities. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have recently gained international attention due to their involvement in a global geo-political battle between several world powers. At the same time, these countries hold the potential to emerge as key players in food production and the export of high-quality, sustainable agricultural and livestock products. This potential is driven by the need to meet the demand of a rapidly growing urban population in above mentioned coastal countries, in addition to their own domestic markets.

Dutch-African Collaborations for Agricultural Development

In October 2023, the NABC facilitated an incoming delegation of around 50 companies from Senegal, Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to the SARA in Abidjan, the largest agricultural fair in West Africa, where the Netherlands was the country of honour. The collaboration involved matchmaking of regional companies with a Dutch delegation of 30 companies, resulting in several business opportunities. Notably, seed companies East-West Seed, Rijk Zwaan, Enza Zaden and Bejo (represented by Sodisem from Senegal) shared insights into high-quality seeds, including a new onion variety suitable for cultivation during the Sahel's rainy seasons. Koppert Biological Systems, present in Abidjan, positions itself in the market, introducing products for biological crop protection in cacao, vegetables, and tropical fruits to growers in West Africa. Collaborations in the poultry sector were also established, with members of the NABC's Dutch African Poultry Platform (DAPP) such as Lionpro and

Francophone West Africa



Top: Jeroen Kelderhuis, Dutch Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, and Núria Vlonk-Cunha Soares, with fair visitors at SARA in Abidjan.
Bottom: Binta Diakite, local partner of AgriBoost and Director of Yiriwa Intercontinental Consulting, at SARA in Abidjan.



Koudijs Animal Nutrition, playing an important role in these developments.

The Netherlands, leveraging its expertise in water management, greenhouse technologies, livestock, logistics, cold chain practices, digitalisation, and fintech could play a pivotal role in transforming traditional farming methods into modern and sustainable horticulture. Dutch expertise in modern irrigation systems, precision farming techniques, biological crop protection, and new seed varieties holds the potential to significantly enhanced crop yields. This, in turn, can play an important role in improving the quality, quantity, profitability, and job creation within the agricultural sector.

Dutch Companies in Francophone West Africa

“Despite the promising opportunities, we witness occasional hesitancy among Dutch entities to establish long-term relationships in the region,” remarks Mr. Renden. Language barriers, as Dutch businesses find it more accessible to engage with Anglophone countries, and cultural differences contribute to this reluctance. He elaborates that: “The complex legal and regulatory environment, along with challenges in areas such as land ownership, can complicate matters for Dutch companies. Overcoming these challenges requires concerted efforts and innovative thinking.” Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire are integral components of the Dutch Government's Africa Strategy for trade, aid and

investments. The Netherlands embassies in Dakar and Abidjan are also placing a strong focus on fostering business opportunities in these regions.

While challenges persist, the potential for Dutch companies to venture into Francophone West Africa, including the Sahel region, is substantial. “Dutch businesses have the capacity not only to prosper in this dynamic market, but also to make meaningful contributions to the region's sustainable socio-economic development,” concludes Mr. Renden. 🌱

NABC's Africa Insights Desk stands ready

to provide information to Dutch companies seeking to expand their business to Francophone West Africa. Contact Núria Vlonk-Cunha Soares via nuria.vlonk@nabc.nl or Mattijs Renden via mattijs.renden@nabc.nl to learn how Africa Insights Desk can be of service.



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In the realm of education, where textbooks are vital for personal and professional growth, a harsh reality persists—learners worldwide face the challenge of unaffordable and inaccessible educational content. This challenge becomes even more pronounced in Africa, a continent with the youngest population, emphasising the urgent need for accessible and quality education. Recognising this disparity, BUKU, an innovative e-learning platform and the winner of the NABC's Doing Business in Africa Award 2023, embarked on a mission in 2016 to revolutionise access to educational resources. Jeff van der Laan, Co-Founder and CEO of BUKU, underscores the significance of their business model in addressing this educational divide: "Through BUKU's business model, we ensure that everyone has access to quality educational material in a fair way." BUKU's platform, developed in response to the founder's firsthand challenges with the high cost of textbooks during his studies in the Netherlands and the United States, democratises access to learning materials. The platform, that can be described as "Spotify for textbooks," enables students to access thousands of textbooks affordably, breaking down financial barriers and fostering a more inclusive educational landscape. "The platform not only addresses the financial constraints faced by students, but also tackles the issue of illegal distribution networks for textbooks," reflects Mr. van der Laan with regards to the authenticity of their mission: "BUKU's model ensures a win-win situation for both publishers and end-users by asking for smaller contributions from a larger audience."

Rosmarijn Fens hands over the DBA Award 2023 to Jeff van der Laan and Wout Dingenouts from BUKU at the NABC's Ambassadors' Dinner 2023. Photo: Sabine van Nistelrooij.

While introducing this innovative model initially posed challenges in convincing publishers, successful projects in Suriname, Aruba, and Curaçao demonstrated its efficacy. "BUKU now boasts participation from over 250 international publishers, with local African publishers joining the platform to upload their content, enriching the diversity of perspectives which has been lacking for years," highlights Mr. van der Laan. The platform, active in African countries like Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius, and Malawi, is poised to venture into unexplored markets across Africa in the coming years. As BUKU continues its mission to empower education, it stands as a beacon of change, making quality learning materials accessible to students across the African continent. 🌱

Visit: www.buku.io

“Through BUKU's business model, we ensure that everyone has access to quality educational material in a fair way.” Jeff van der Laan, Co-Founder and CEO of BUKU



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For more than 77 years, the NABC has been promoting the African continent as a prosperous and opportunity abundant destination for the Dutch private sector to explore and invest in. As we recognise the importance of partnerships of equals to succeed on the continent, we have opened our membership to African companies wishing to expand on the continent or eager to explore opportunities in Europe. On this page, you will find our growing African membership base.



Standard Chartered Bank is a multinational bank with operations in consumer, corporate and institutional banking. As the leading international bank with roots in Africa and Asia, they strive to help people and businesses prosper across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.
Location: Active in 16 African Countries
Website: www.sc.com



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De Vries Africa Ventures is one of Kenya's leading wine import and distribution companies with wine imports from Vergelegen (SA), Robert Mondavi (US), Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte (FR), Famille Perrin (FR), Kim Crawford (NZ), Ruffino (IT) and Raventos Codorniu (SP).
Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Website: www.africaconsulting.com



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The Nigeria-Netherlands Business (NNB) Hub is shaping into a dynamic membership network. We are thrilled to introduce our very first NNB Hub members, representing a fusion of companies linked to both the Dutch and Nigerian private sector.



East West Seed is a Dutch company that has been supplying high quality seeds and innovative services to tropical vegetable farmers since 1982, improving the quality and yield of crops.
Website: www.eastwestseed.com



African Farmers Stories is a Nigerian non-governmental organisation founded in May 2020 that promotes visibility for farmers and small and medium enterprises in Africa.
Website: www.africanfarmersstories.org



Crossing Borders Through Languages (CBTL) is a Nigerian language service provider, offering language solutions and educational consultancy for individuals, businesses and international organisations.
Website: www.cbtl.com.ng



Avti Commodities is a Nigerian agro-commodities trading company providing customers with trusted grains and extracts for industrial and commercial needs.
Website: www.avti.ng



FuturaX Agri-consult Limited is a private agricultural extension and farm certification support firm, dedicated to providing cutting-edge agricultural solutions to implement sustainable certifications such as GlobalG.A.P, Organic, Union of Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), and Rainforest Alliance, amongst others.
Website: www.futuraconsult.com



Sourcent Agro is a Nigerian agricultural commodity trading company offering products such as ginger, hibiscus flowers, dried chilli peppers, sesame and much more. They are keen on quality, inclusive growth and environmental sustainability.
Website: www.sourcent.com



TACL Global is a Nigerian commodities trading company specialising in the export of high-quality agro commodities, minor metals, and base metals.
Website: www.taclglobal.com

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Rosmarijn Fens
Managing Director
Egypt, Nigeria



Nùria Vlonk-Cunha Soares
Deputy Managing Director
Angola, Mozambique, Senegal



Mattijs Renden
Head of Business Development
Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Tanzania



Myrthe van der Gaast
Africa Insights Desk Manager
Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa



Arne Doornebal
Community Manager
Algeria, Botswana, Ghana, Morocco, Tunisia, Uganda



Guna Alvika
Events and Marketing Coordinator



Jana Kock
Junior Marketing Officer



Nazly Abd El Rahman
Junior Project Officer
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Office Lead
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The NABC Vision:

In the decade 2020-2030 Africa will develop into an economically thriving continent that is globally competitive and attractive for trade and investment.

The NABC Mission:

To ensure that the Dutch and African private sector benefit from this development and play a crucial role in driving Africa's growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

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Left: NABC Netherlands Team at the 12th edition of Ambassadors' Dinner in November 2023.
Bottom: NABC Nigeria Team.

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Au cours de la décennie 2020-2030, l' Afrique deviendra un continent économiquement prospère, compétitif au niveau mondial et attrayant pour le commerce et l'investissement.

La mission de la NABC :

La NABC veille à ce que le secteur privé néerlandais et africain bénéficie de ce développement et joue un rôle crucial dans la croissance de l' Afrique de manière durable et inclusive.