

# Technology Hubs in Africa: Tech Hubs As Drivers of Innovation and Development in Africa

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**PAUWES**

**RESEARCH 2 PRACTICE  
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**ENERGY, WATER SECURITY  
AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA**

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# About AfriLabs

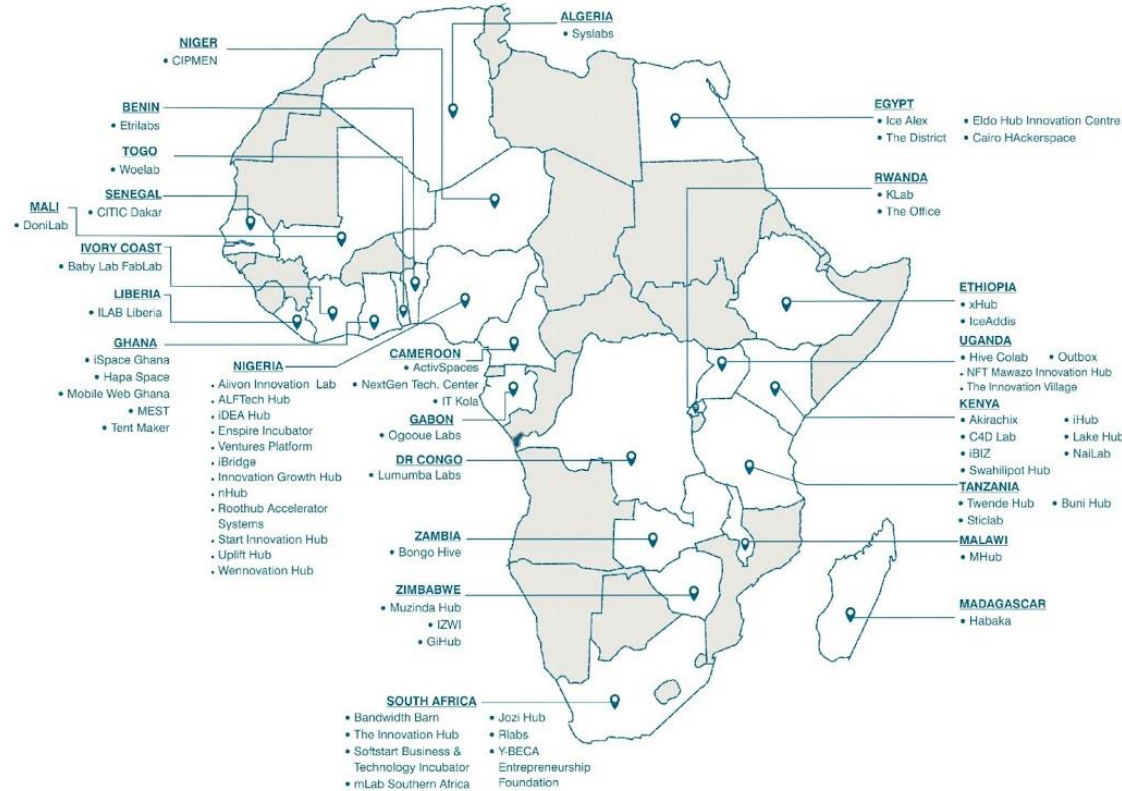


In, 2011, AfriLabs was founded to build a community around tech hubs in Africa. AfriLabs started with 5 hub members across 4 African countries.

Today, AfriLabs has grown to become the largest network organisation that supports over 81 innovation centers across 27 African countries.

# AfriLabs Community Members Across 27 African Countries

## AFRILABS NETWORK MEMBERS ACROSS 5 REGIONS IN AFRICA



### Nature of Community Members:

- 90% Incubators
- 8% Accelerators
- 2% Venture Builders

- 90% Software Focused
- 7% Hardware Focused (FabLabs)
- 3% Combination

## Our Mission

Our mission is to support the growth of technology hubs and their communities to raise high potential entrepreneurs that will stimulate economic growth and social development in Africa.

We do this by providing capacity building resources, financing, mentoring and networking opportunities to our network.

## Our Vision

Our vision is an African continent characterized by open collaboration, African made solutions and jobs for all driven by technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

We believe that we can achieve this by strengthening innovation communities and working with various stakeholders to build a strong African innovation ecosystem

# WHY INNOVATION HUBS?

## DRIVERS OF OF INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

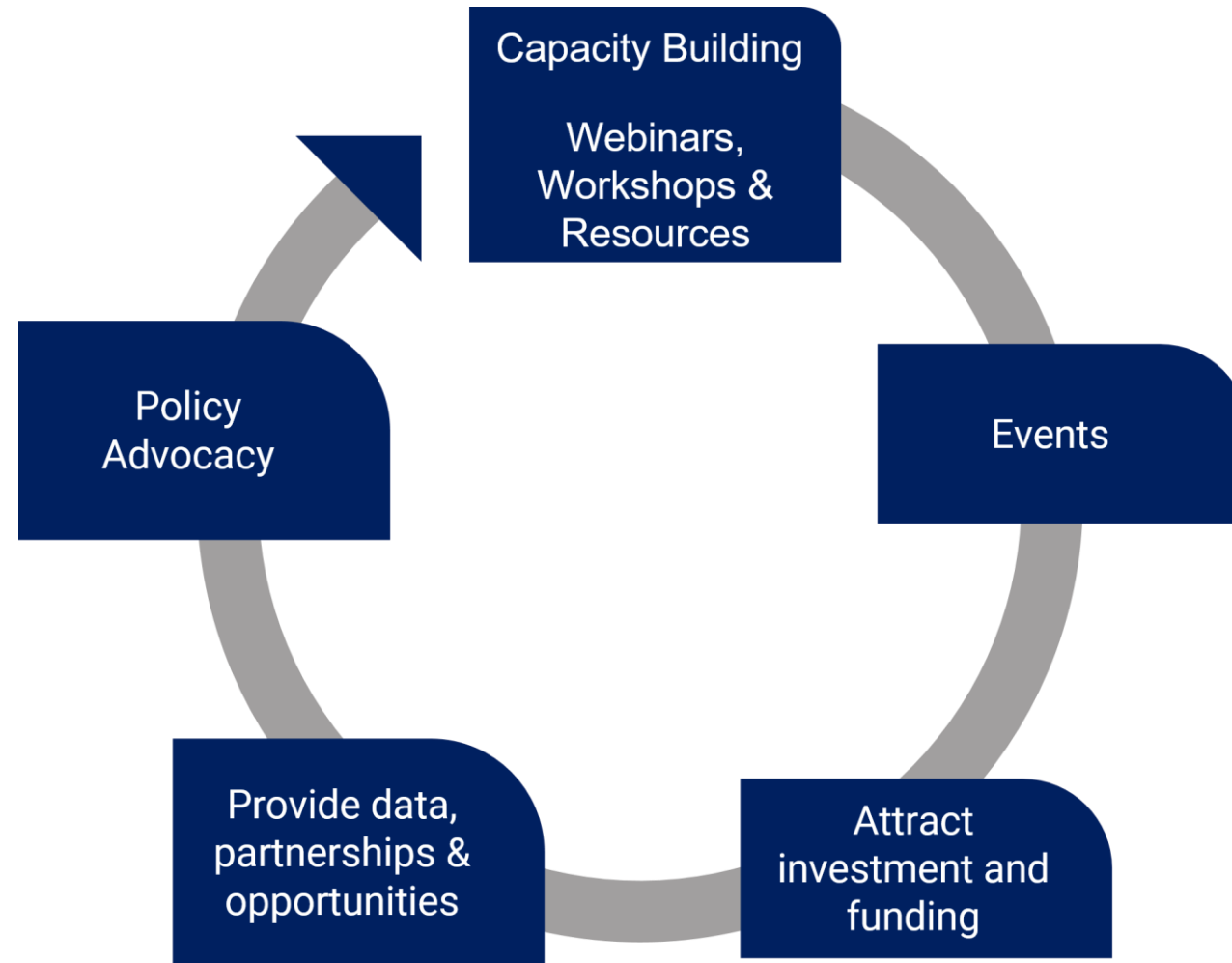
- Physical spaces that foster innovation, knowledge and resource sharing.
- Actively supporting entrepreneurs with ideas turn them into viable businesses or existing businesses to scale
- Providers of basic ICT infrastructure for entrepreneurs; internet and other technology tools and equipment to use.
- Creators of innovation clusters that drive economic and social development through collaboration by engaging various players of the ecosystem such as entrepreneurs, developers, academia, government, investors, corporates and development agencies.
- Advocates for bottom – up enabling policies for entrepreneurship, innovation and development.
- Skills development and creators of jobs for African youth.
- Enablers of Open Innovation for Corporates and Development Agencies for the achievement the SDG 2030 and AU – Africa 2063 Goals.



## CHALLENGES THAT INNOVATION HUBS & AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS FACE

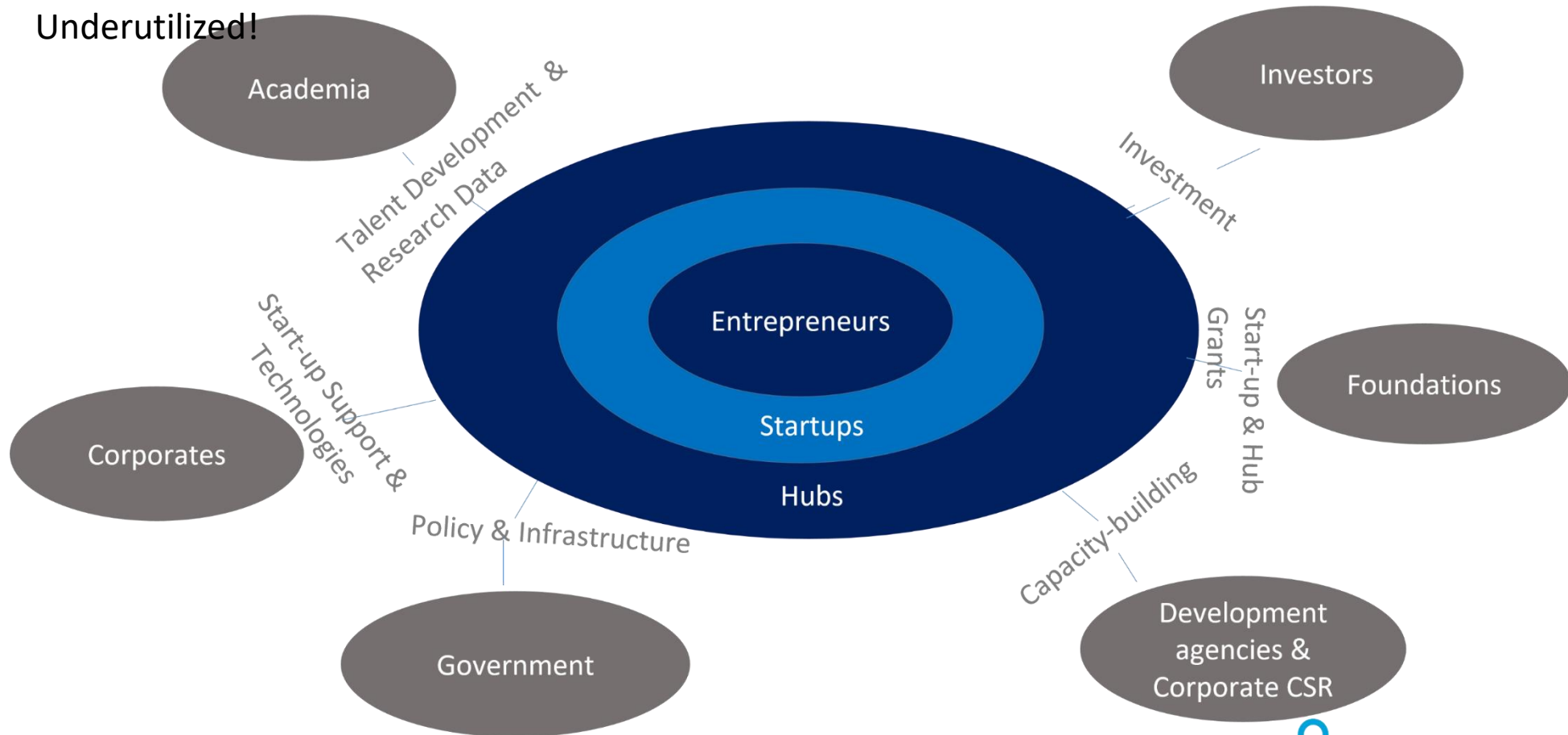
- Funding and Sustainability Challenges
- Regulatory frameworks - Lack of enabling policies for businesses and investments
- Inadequate and expensive ICT infrastructure
- Lack of Investment funding for their starts-ups
- Inadequate skills and knowledge capital
- Inter-regional and continental barriers to movement and access to markets
- Lack of access to global partnerships and markets
- Lack of African Research Data
- Lack of access to the most skilled and educated technical and scientific co-founders

# AFRILABS : HOW WE ENGAGE INNOVATION HUBS AS A NETWORK



# AFRILABS : HOW WE ENGAGE THE BROADER ECOSYSTEM

Engagement  
Underutilized!



AfriLabs engagement is two-way:

Support FROM the ecosystem  $\longleftrightarrow$  Support TO the ecosystem



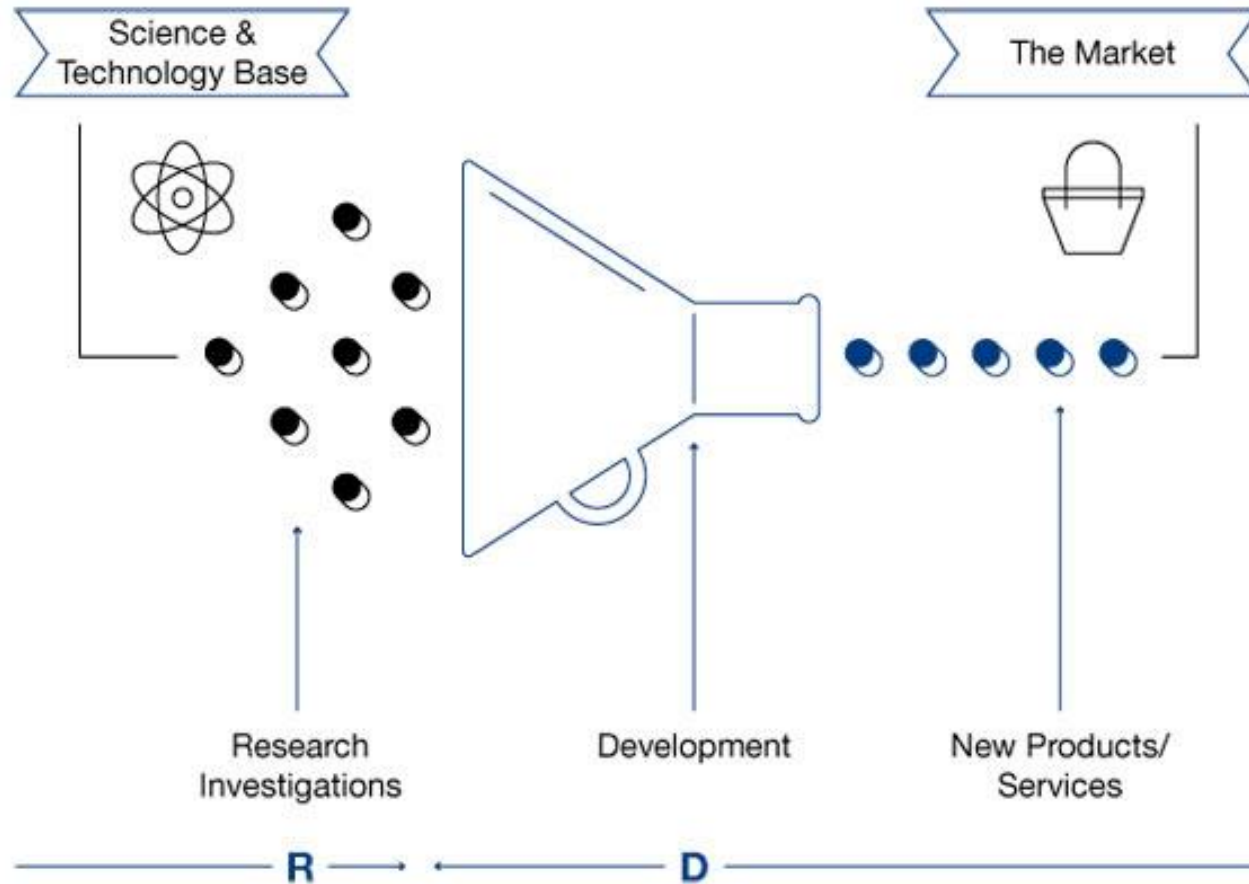


## ENGAGING THE ACADEMIA: RESEARCH TO PRACTICE THROUGH OPEN INNOVATION

According to Henry Chesbrough, Haas School of Business,  
University of California at Berkeley who coined the term in 2003;

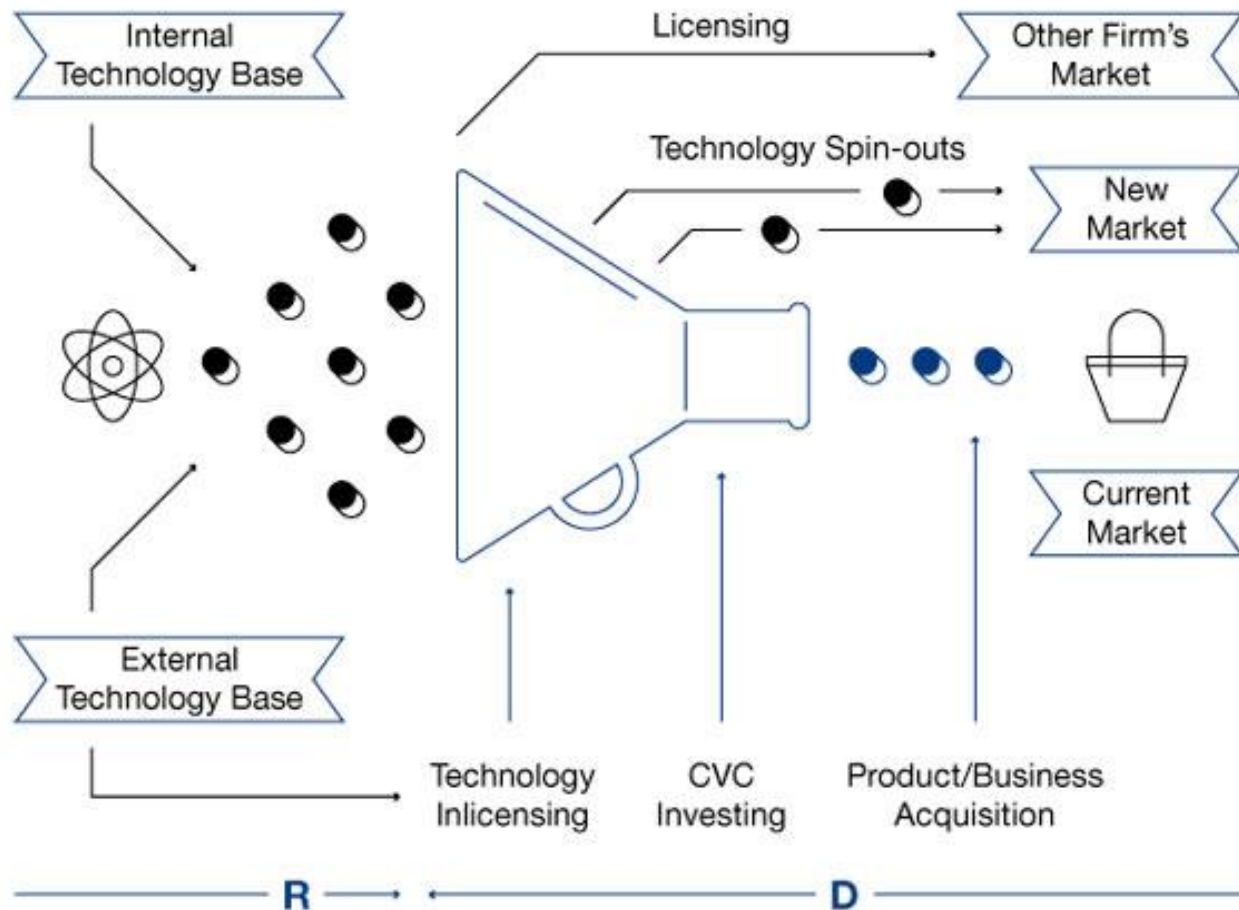
*“Open innovation is “the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and expand the markets for external use of innovation.”*

## Closed Innovation Model; Sourcing Innovative Ideas through Internal R&D Departments



Source: *Open Innovation: Striving for Innovation Success in the 21st Century* by Henry Chesbrough

*Open Innovation Model; Sourcing Innovative Ideas through Internal and External Sources – Entrepreneurs, Startups, Academic and Independent Researchers and turning them into viable businesses through commercialization of ideas and research output*



*Source: Open Innovation: Striving for Innovation Success in the 21st Century by By Henry Chesbrough*

**Further Collaboration:  
Practical Steps Towards Open Innovation, Commercialization Of Research  
And Talent Development Through  
Innovation Hubs, Corporates, Universities & Development Agencies**

# 1: Set up of Open Innovation Hubs in Universities that serve as external R&D Centres for Corporates, Development Agencies and the Government, connecting directly to researchers and research data for business development and benefiting from the talent pool from the universities.



iBiz Africa hosted in Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya

Kenya **Climate Innovation Center** (KCIC) provides holistic, country-driven support to accelerate the development, deployment and transfer of locally relevant climate and clean energy technologies.



University research  
**student internships** in innovation hubs – working with existing entrepreneurs

2: Through events, competitions, open innovation challenges and research&collaborative grants focused on first identifying and then turning research ideas to sustainable innovative businesses that solve corporate or developmental challenges.

Events also foster cross disciplinary networking and collaboration.



Innovation Prize for Africa Annual Competition



The **Postcode** Lottery **Green Challenge** is one of the world's largest competitions in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship. **Green** start-ups from all over the world can submit their promising sustainable business plans. The winner will receive €500,000 to further develop the product or service, and to bring it to market.



# 3. Through Platforms and Networks Collaboration

AfriLabs is inviting all Scientist, University, Research, Entrepreneurship and Private Networks to collaborate with us and our network members. Tying this to the Agenda 2063 which is one of the major reasons we are here, I believe that if we come together and collaborate on various fronts, we can truly achieve our vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an African driven and managed by it's citizens and representing a dynamic force within the international arena.

**Thank You**  
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