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## African Drone Business Challenge (ADBC), Kigali, Rwanda

### THE CHALLENGE

The African Drone Business Challenge was an open innovation challenge inviting drone enterprises from the African continent to develop and present their business ideas to a panel and audience of UAS (unmanned aviation systems) thought leaders at the African Drone Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, in February 2020. The challenge aimed at encouraging African UAS entrepreneurs to develop and present business plans for utilising drone technology, as well as develop their business through pitch coaching, business plan implementation, and the opportunity to win a £40,000 cash prize for the most innovative and sustainable enterprise. With 148 entries representing 31 countries, Blue Globe helped challenge leaders to manage entries and choose the 10 finalists. Our team managed the documentation and collecting of business plans, focusing on the ethos of 'African solutions to African problems' to inform selection and assemble expert panels to assist business development. Panels and pitch presentations were given at the African Drone Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, in February 2020.

Because of the unique nature of the project and its high-impact potential, FASTA was conceived as a project with wide-ranging impact in Africa, improving forecasting capabilities throughout the continent. Finding a path towards self-sustainability was key, in order to end dependency on external funding and instead generate income to cover the costs of deployment and expansion.

By involving external partners with strong networks in a specific market, such as Blue Globe, a better chance of success can be achieved. As a result of Blue Globe's involvement in The Climate Information Prize ran in Kenya between 2015 and 2018, Blue Globe had substantial connections in the climate tech sector in Africa, being the perfect partner to explore commercial viability in the weather space. The University of Leeds came in partnership with Blue Globe Innovation.

### BLUE GLOBE'S APPROACH & STRATEGY

With limited innovation in the UAS space on the African continent, Blue Globe sought to use the challenge to encourage innovation and recognise the work taking place across the continent to improve access to drone technology. As a developing tech hub in East Africa, the Rwandan government was an important partner in this challenge and believed in the mission of encouraging UAS innovation within Africa.

Collaborating with key partners in NGO and government sectors, Blue Globe managed the logistics of the ADBC and helped to bring competitors to Rwanda. Business development activities including pitch training helped competitors advance their work and network with thought leaders, resulting in a successful event for all competitors, even those who did not win.

During the third stage, Blue Globe created a communication strategy through the production of a pitch video communicating the benefits of the project. Commercial projections and scenarios were created using collected data from the outreach process, evaluating potential competitors and available funding sources.

### OVERALL RESULTS

With ten finalists representing seven countries across Africa, the ADBC was an important feature of the inaugural African Drone Forum that will continue to leave a legacy in the region. Supporting the overall development of the ADBC, Blue Globe developed partnerships with The World Bank, DFID, and government agencies to create an important legacy of UAS innovation in Rwanda. With extensive experience in open innovation and the challenges these events can pose, Blue Globe is eager to help organisations of all sizes achieve their goals through open innovation.