Africa hyperscalers

WOMEN POWERING AFRICA'S DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE 2026

A research-backed recognition and inclusion report on the women shaping Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem



PREPARED BY THE AFRICA HYPERSCALERS COMPANY
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LITTLESTEPS GROUP

FOREWORD

Africa's digital future is increasingly shaped by the infrastructure we build, the institutions we strengthen, and the people we recognise as central to that work.

Behind every reliable network, data centre, cloud platform, policy framework, payment system and public digital service are professionals making difficult decisions that influence access, resilience, competitiveness and inclusion. Yet many of the people doing this work - particularly women in technical, operational and delivery roles - remain insufficiently documented and recognised.

This is why the **Women Powering Africa's Digital Infrastructure 2026** report is both timely and necessary. For Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem to mature, visibility must become part of market development. Investors, policymakers, operators, development institutions and industry bodies need to understand who is doing the work, where leadership pipelines are emerging, and which markets or functions require deeper attention.

Connectivity, compute, data hosting, interconnection, cybersecurity, digital policy and infrastructure finance are no longer specialist concerns at the edge of economic planning. They are central to how African economies trade, govern, educate, deliver healthcare, attract capital, create jobs and participate in the global digital economy.

Across the continent, women are leading telecommunications operations, building cloud and data centre capacity, advancing regulation, financing infrastructure, strengthening enterprise platforms and expanding connectivity. Their work is practical, strategic and consequential. It deserves to be documented with the same seriousness as the projects, investments and policy reforms they help make possible.

Recognition matters, but this report goes further. By combining nominations, publicsource research, sector validation and visibility analysis, it provides a structured view of where women are represented, where their work is visible and where important contributions remain under-documented. A lower public footprint does not mean lower impact. It may instead reveal that the sector has not done enough to identify and document the women keeping critical systems running.

Visibility has practical value. When women's contributions are visible, younger professionals can see clearer pathways into the sector. Companies can broaden their leadership pipelines. Investors and institutions can identify experienced talent. Industry bodies can design more effective capacity-building programmes, whilepolicymakers can better understand where representation and technical capability require attention.

The report therefore points towards a practical path forward – one in which women are better supported, mentored, promoted and positioned within the digital infrastructure ecosystem. It challenges companies, institutions and industry leaders to create stronger pathways for participation and leadership. It also encourages women to document their work, tell their stories and take their rightful place in the conversations shaping Africa's digital future.

This work is particularly important as Africa's connectivity corridors become more strategically significant. Submarine cables, terrestrial fibre routes, metro networks, internet exchange points, mobile infrastructure, satellite systems and data centres must function together if the continent is to achieve digital scale. These corridors are not purely technical routes; they are economic arteries that connect markets, reduce latency, strengthen resilience, support cross-border trade and bring computing capacity closer to African users.
Women are already contributing to the leadership, financing, regulation and delivery of these systems. Making their participation visible is essential to building an infrastructure future that is both competitive and inclusive. Visibility helps the market recognise existing capability, exposes gaps and directs attention towards the people, countries and functions requiring greater investment.

I commend the Africa Hyperscalers team for undertaking this work and positioning the report as a living contribution rather than a final word. Its value will grow as more institutions submit evidence, more countries are represented, more technical roles are surfaced and more women are encouraged to document their contributions. To the women featured in this edition, congratulations. Your work is helping to build the foundations on which Africa's digital economy will stand.

To the companies, regulators, investors, development institutions and industry bodies reading this report, the call is clear: document better, nominate more widely, open more platforms and make visible the women already building Africa's digital future. Visibility is not simply a matter of recognition; it is an essential component of talent development, institutional capacity and market growth.

Thank you for your leadership, your contribution and your commitment to building the systems that will power Africa's digital future.



Dr. Nadu Denloye
Co-founder and former Group Managing Director
Telnet Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Across Africa, the systems that keep people, businesses, governments and digital services connected are expanding quickly. New data centres are being built, fibre routes are extending into more markets, cloud platforms are moving closer to users, mobile networks are carrying more digital demand, and policy institutions are paying closer attention to data, connectivity, compute, resilience and digital sovereignty.

Behind this work are people making practical decisions every day: where infrastructure should be deployed, how it should be financed, how markets should be regulated, how platforms should interconnect, and how businesses and public institutions can use these systems more effectively. Women are already helping to shape these decisions across telecoms, data centres, cloud, interconnection, public policy, infrastructure finance, enterprise platforms and ecosystem development. Yet their contributions are still not documented with the same consistency as the projects, companies and capital flows they help enable.

HEADLINE NUMBERS

The 2026 list includes 100 women across five regional classifications and five sector pillars. The list covers telecom operators and backbone infrastructure; data centres, cloud and interconnection; policy, regulation and funding; enterprise platforms and technology providers; and ecosystem builders and emerging platforms. It combines nomination, public-source research and ecosystem validation with a public-footprint assessment of discoverability and sector visibility.

WHY THE LIST MATTERS

Africa's digital infrastructure story is often told through capital raised, fibre kilometres deployed, data centres launched, cloud regions announced and policy frameworks adopted. Those things matter. But they do not happen without people: operators, engineers, policymakers, investors, lawyers, commercial leaders, product leaders, public-sector executives and ecosystem builders making hard decisions over many years.

This report is a modest contribution to making that leadership more visible. It does not claim to be the definitive or error-free record of women in Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem. It is a carefully researched submission built from nominations, public sources and validation support from partners across the continent. All commendation belongs to the inspiring women listed here and to the

many people who committed time to helping validate the list. Any errors or omissions are regretted.

We hope this report helps amplify the contributions of women already shaping Africa's digital infrastructure, while encouraging more women doing important infrastructure work to document their achievements, tell their stories, build public visibility and take their rightful place in the continent's digital infrastructure narrative.

"The report therefore points towards a practical path forward - one in which women are better supported, mentored, promoted and positioned within the digital infrastructure ecosystem. It challenges companies, institutions and industry leaders to create stronger pathways for participation and leadership. It also encourages women to document their work, tell their stories and take their rightful place in the conversations shaping Africa's digital future."

Dr. Nadu Denloye
Co-founder, Telnet Group



MARKET CONTEXT

Africa's digital infrastructure landscape is expanding across several connected layers: fibre, mobile networks, data centres, cloud platforms, internet exchange points, satellite connectivity, power systems, capital and regulation. Mobile remains the continent's dominant access layer: GSMA reports that mobile technologies contributed $240 billion to Africa's economy in 2025, equivalent to 7.8% of GDP, while operators are expected to invest more than $76 billion in network infrastructure between 2024 and 2030. Yet the opportunity remains large: about 63% of Africans live within mobile broadband coverage but are not using mobile internet, showing that infrastructure availability must be matched with affordability, devices, skills and relevant services.

The infrastructure question is also shifting from basic connectivity to deeper capacity. Africa needs more local compute, storage, cloud access, cybersecurity, interconnection and data-hosting capability as governments and enterprises focus on digital sovereignty, AI readiness, latency, resilience and data protection. The data centre market is growing from a relatively small base: estimates place Africa's data centre capacity at roughly 0.78 GW in 2025, with projections of about 1.43 GW by 2030. This growth is encouraging, but still constrained by power reliability, cooling, land, financing, foreign exchange, skilled labour and the concentration of capacity in a few major markets.

Fibre, IXPs and satellite each play different but connected roles. Submarine cables, national backbones, metro fibre and cross-border routes determine the cost and resilience of connectivity, while internet exchange points help keep local traffic local, improving latency and reducing dependence on distant routing hubs. Satellite connectivity, especially with new low-earth-orbit systems, is becoming more relevant for remote communities, resilience, schools, health facilities and backup connectivity. None of these layers can scale properly without reliable power: data centres, towers, fibre routes, landing stations and enterprise systems all depend on energy availability, backup power and increasingly cleaner power solutions.

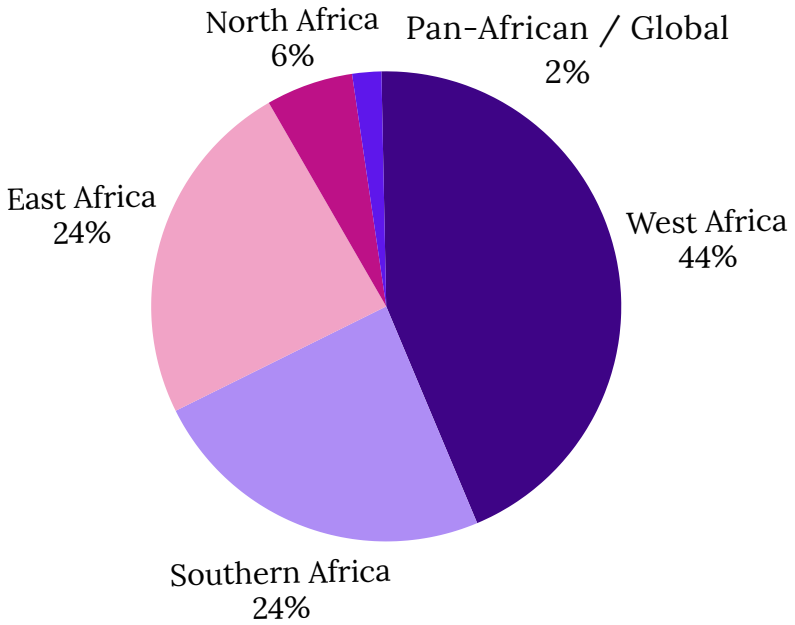
Capital and regulation will determine how quickly this buildout becomes inclusive and sustainable. Digital infrastructure requires long-term financing, credible demand, clear rules and patient investors. Spectrum allocation, licensing, rights of way, infrastructure sharing, taxation, data protection, cybersecurity, cloud policy and local-hosting rules all affect whether capital flows into networks, data centres, cloud platforms and digital public systems. The women recognised in this report are contributing across these layers: building and operating networks, leading data

centre and cloud platforms, shaping policy, financing infrastructure, strengthening interconnection and developing the ecosystems that make Africa's digital growth possible.

KEY FINDINGS

The 2026 list shows that women are active across the full digital infrastructure stack, including telecom operations, wholesale fibre, data centres, cloud platforms, interconnection, cybersecurity, enterprise technology, infrastructure finance, regulation, public policy and ecosystem development. MTN has the strongest institutional representation, with women visible across CEO-level country leadership, CIO and IT infrastructure roles, cloud engineering, broadband, digital services, marketing and regional operations. Bayobab's representation is also significant because it places women in the wholesale fibre and backbone infrastructure layer that carries Africa's data traffic.

The list also shows that digital infrastructure leadership is not limited to asset owners. Public-sector leaders shape spectrum, licensing, rights of way, broadband policy, data governance, cybersecurity and investment conditions, while organisations such as Microsoft, Meta, GSMA and Smart Africa influence cloud adoption, public policy, standards, digital skills and ecosystem coordination. At the same time, visibility remains uneven: some organisations have highly visible women leaders, while others may have women doing important technical, operational, legal, finance and project-delivery work who are not well documented publicly.




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For operators and infrastructure providers, the mindset should move from "who owns the asset?" to "how do we create the strongest network for the customer?" Collaboration does not remove competition; it allows companies to compete more effectively on services, innovation and customer experience while sharing infrastructure where it makes economic and operational sense.

Josephine Awatefe Sarouk

Managing Director, Bayobab Nigeria



METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

METHODOLOGY

Women Powering Africa's Digital Infrastructure recognises women playing meaningful roles in building, financing, governing, operating and enabling the infrastructure that powers Africa's digital economy. The list focuses specifically on digital infrastructure rather than the broad technology sector.

Candidates were identified through a multi-source process combining industry nominations, research-based identification, public-source review and ecosystem consultations. The shortlist was reviewed for direct relevance to digital infrastructure, seniority or strategic responsibility, demonstrable ecosystem contribution, regional balance and sector balance.

Each candidate was reviewed using a validation tracker that captured identity, current title, organisation, sector pillar, region, role source, source type, public-footprint score and supporting notes. Where possible, roles were checked against credible public sources such as company websites, institutional biographies, conference speaker pages, media interviews, awards, regulatory references, professional profiles, public appointments and press releases.

Public Footprint Framework

Score	Rank Band	Interpretation
5	Band 1	Very high public footprint: strong, multi-source public evidence of role, leadership and sector relevance, often including company profiles, media, awards, conferences, interviews, policy references or thought leadership.
4	Band 2	High public footprint: clear public visibility and credible sector evidence, but with less breadth, frequency or independence of sources than a score of 5.
3	Band 3	Moderate public footprint: role and relevance can be verified, but the public record is narrower, usually through one or two credible sources, listings or institutional references.

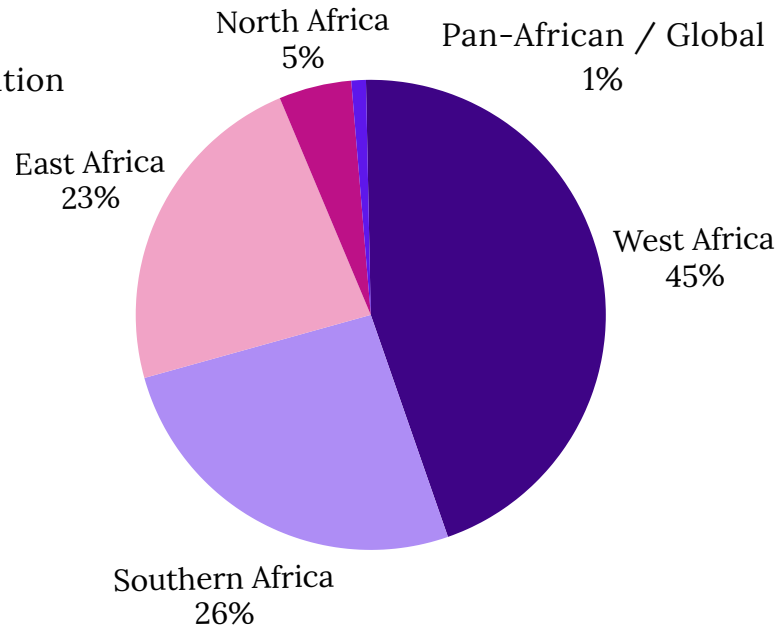
Score	Rank Band	Interpretation
2	Band 4	Limited public footprint: public evidence exists but is thin, fragmented or difficult to corroborate; the role is visible, but the contribution is not strongly documented.
1	Band 5	Emerging or minimal public footprint: very limited public evidence, often dependent on nomination, sector knowledge or a single weak source. This reflects under-documentation, not weak impact.

The public-footprint score measures discoverability and sector visibility. It is not a judgement of competence, seniority, personal worth or total impact.

A leader may have deep operational influence but receive a lower public-footprint score if her work is not strongly represented in public records, media coverage, awards, conference platforms, institutional profiles or thought-leadership channels.

This study does not claim to be definitive or error-free. Public information is uneven across markets, institutions and sectors; roles may change; and some women in technical or operational roles may remain under-documented. Future editions should include a formal correction window, wider regional validation, more direct institutional submissions and stronger mechanisms for surfacing under-documented technical roles.

DATA ANALYSIS
Regional Distribution



WOMEN POWERING AFRICA'S DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE 2026

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"Structural reform is critical: companies and governments must set measurable targets for female leadership in infrastructure projects, backed by accountability mechanisms."

Juanita Clark

Founder/Chief Executive Officer, Digital Council Africa



West Africa's dominance is likely influenced by the scale of its infrastructure markets, population and public visibility.

Nigeria, in particular, has one of Africa's largest telecoms markets, a growing data centre and cloud-adjacent ecosystem, multiple fibre and enterprise connectivity providers, an active policy environment and a visible technology media landscape. Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire further strengthen the region's representation through telecoms, regulation, enterprise technology and policy leadership. At the same time, lower visibility in some Francophone markets may reflect language barriers and weaker documentation in English-language sources, rather than a lack of women contributing to digital infrastructure in those countries.

Southern Africa's strong showing reflects the maturity of South Africa's data centre, fibre, cloud, cybersecurity and enterprise technology ecosystem. The region has long-standing infrastructure operators, wholesale connectivity providers, public-sector digital institutions, development-finance platforms and a more established corporate communications culture. This makes women in leadership roles more discoverable through company profiles, media, industry awards and conference participation.

East Africa's representation is shaped by Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia's roles in telecoms, cloud adoption, digital public systems, internet governance and infrastructure innovation. East Africa's ecosystem includes strong operator markets, active internet-community institutions, development-policy platforms and public-sector digital transformation initiatives. However, some women in technical and operational roles remain under-documented, especially outside the most visible companies and policy institutions.

North Africa and Central Africa appear less represented in the list, but this may reflect nomination and visibility gaps as much as actual leadership gaps. Language, weaker public-source availability, fewer Africa-wide conference platforms, limited English-language media coverage and less integrated nomination networks may all affect discoverability. Future editions should therefore invest in deeper Francophone, Lusophone, Arabic-speaking and Central African validation.



Sector Pillar Distribution

Sector Pillar	Count
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure	38
Policy, Regulation & Funding	27
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection	22
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms	10
Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers	3

Telecom operators and backbone infrastructure form the largest group because mobile networks, fibre, wholesale connectivity and national operators remain the most mature and visible parts of Africa's digital infrastructure market. Policy, regulation and funding also feature strongly, showing that digital infrastructure is shaped not only by companies that build assets, but also by institutions that license, regulate, finance and govern them.

Data centres, cloud and interconnection are growing in importance but remain more concentrated in a few markets. As local compute, data sovereignty, AI infrastructure and enterprise cloud demand expand, this category is likely to grow in future editions. The current representation suggests an emerging leadership pipeline, but also points to the need for more visibility around women in facilities operations, power, cooling, engineering, peering, cloud architecture and infrastructure investment.

Public Footprint Distribution

Public-Footprint Category	Count
High public footprint	53
Moderate public footprint	24
High public footprint	13
Limited public footprint	4
Emerging or minimal public footprint	5

"Africa's talent challenge will not be solved by training alone. We need stronger pathways from education into real industry experience, certification, mentorship and employment - with women fully represented not just in the pipeline, but in the technical, operational and leadership roles shaping Africa's digital future."

Faith Waithaka

Chairperson, Africa Data Centres Association



VISIBILITY ANALYSIS

The public-footprint distribution shows that visibility is not evenly distributed across the ecosystem.

Women in public-facing executive, ministerial, policy, corporate affairs and ecosystem roles are generally easier to identify than women in technical, operational, delivery and engineering roles. This does not mean technical women are absent. It means their work is less likely to be captured by media, company websites, conference platforms or public awards.

Emerging and under-documented visibility should therefore be treated as a development area for the sector. Women in network engineering, outside plant, data centre operations, roaming, project implementation, fibre deployment, energy management, peering, procurement and infrastructure finance may be central to delivery while remaining less publicly discoverable.

EMERGING VISIBILITY

Future editions should prioritise deeper validation and profile-building support for women whose infrastructure relevance is credible but whose public evidence remains thin or highly specialist.

COMPANY / INSTITUTION INSIGHTS

Institutional Split

Institutional Category	Count
Private sector / operators / vendors	69
Public sector / regulators / DFIs / multilaterals	21
Industry bodies / ecosystem institutions	8
Private capital / investment firms	2
Total	100

The public sector representation confirms that digital infrastructure is not only a private-sector buildout. Ministers, regulators and development-finance leaders shape the licensing, spectrum, data governance, broadband policy, public digital systems and investment conditions that determine whether infrastructure can scale. At the same time, organisations such as Microsoft, Meta, GSMA and Smart Africa show that influence is not limited to asset ownership; standards, cloud adoption, policy, skills, cybersecurity, interoperability and ecosystem coordination also matter.

INSTITUTIONAL CONCENTRATION

Public-Footprint Category	Count
Government ministries / public-sector offices	11
MTN Group / MTN operating companies	11
Government regulators	5
Microsoft	3
Raxio Group	3
Teraco / NAPAfrica	3
Meta	3
Equinix / MainOne	3
GSMA	2
Openserve	2
SEACOM	2
QCell / QGroup	2

The underrepresentation of women in senior technical, operational, and executive roles in digital infrastructure is not accidental. In my view, it is the cumulative product of barriers that begin long before a hiring decision is made – and not only in Africa. Girls are less likely to be encouraged into STEM subjects; young women face fewer mentors and role models in technical fields; and the professional culture of telecommunications and infrastructure has historically been shaped without women's participation in mind. The result is a pipeline problem at every level

Jana Kunicova

Practice Manager, Digital Transformation
West and Central Manager, The World Bank

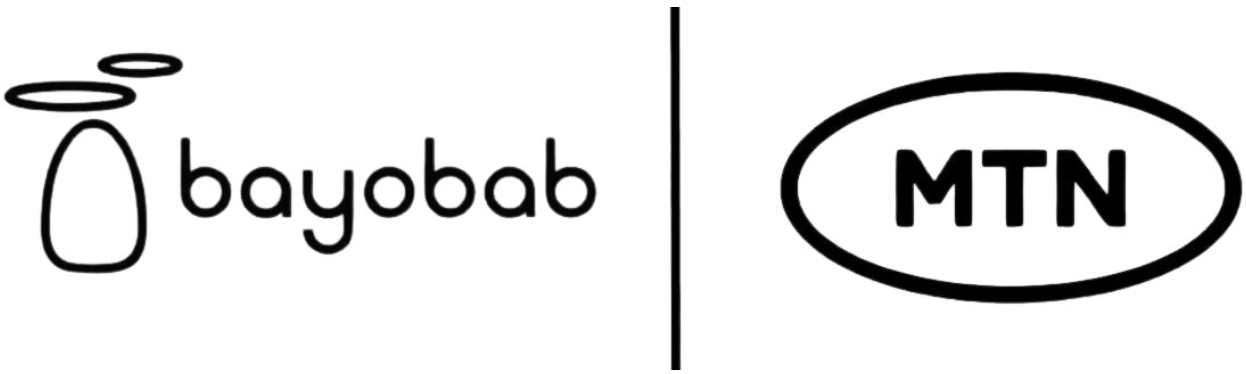


COMPANY SPOTLIGHT: MTN GROUP/BAYOBAB

MTN Group has the strongest institutional representation in the 2026 list, and this is one of the clearest signals in the data.
When MTN and Bayobab are read together, the group's presence cuts across mobile networks, IT infrastructure, cloud engineering, broadband, digital services, country leadership, regional operations, marketing, commercial strategy and wholesale fibre.

Bayobab's representation is especially important because it sits close to the wholesale and backbone layer. Women leading Bayobab operations in Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia show that women are present in the fibre, cross-border connectivity and wholesale infrastructure businesses that underpin Africa's data traffic. This is one of the most strategic parts of the digital economy, yet it is often less understood by the general public than mobile apps, fintech or consumer technology.

The lesson for the wider industry is that large digital infrastructure institutions can make women's leadership more visible when they publish executive profiles, announce appointments, place women on industry platforms and recognise contributions beyond the CEO office. Other operators, data centre companies, tower companies, cloud platforms and infrastructure investors can learn from this by documenting women's roles more deliberately across technical, commercial and operational functions.



EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY

BEYOND DIVERSITY: CELEBRATE WOMEN FOR TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE



ESTHER KING

NETWORK ENGINEER AND CHAIRPERSON
GAMCHIX | QCELL



Q1. From where you sit, what is the most important shift happening in Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem?

Wearing my Engineering hat, one of the most important shifts is the move from simply expanding connectivity to building more resilient, accessible and interconnected digital infrastructure. Africa's digital future will depend not only on increasing mobile and broadband coverage but also on strengthening international connectivity, data centres, cloud infrastructure, interconnection and the systems that support them. We are also seeing greater collaboration between telecom operators, technology providers, regulators and other ecosystem players. The conversation is increasingly moving towards how infrastructure can support digital services, businesses and economic growth. For me, the key shift is recognising digital infrastructure and the importance of stable grids as foundational national and economic infrastructure rather than simply a telecommunications function.

Q2. What role should women play in shaping the next decade of Africa's digital infrastructure?

I strongly believe that deserving women should be active participants in designing, building, operating and governing Africa's digital infrastructure - not simply beneficiaries of it. This means creating opportunities for women across the entire ecosystem; from network engineering and infrastructure operations to cybersecurity, cloud, datacenters, policy, investment and executive leadership. Women also bring innate perspectives that are essential when designing infrastructure and digital services intended to serve diverse communities. We still need more women in the rooms where technical and strategic decisions are made. Representation at leadership level is particularly important because it creates visibility for younger women and demonstrates that technical expertise and leadership in infrastructure are careers in which they can genuinely see themselves – and to be honest, some challenges within the digital infrastructure can only be fully addressed if both perspectives are considered.

Q3. What does the public often misunderstand about the technical work behind connectivity?

I would say, connectivity is often perceived as something that simply exists once a

network signal is available. What the public does not always see is the extensive technical infrastructure and coordination required to make that connectivity reliable. Working for a Telco you will realise that behind a successful call, SMS or data session are networks, transmission systems, signalling, roaming agreements, routing, interoperability, monitoring, testing, billing and many other processes working together. A service can appear seamless to the customer while teams are continuously managing complex systems in the background. There is also significant coordination between operators, vendors, regulators and international partners. Connectivity is therefore not just about towers or coverage; it is a complex ecosystem that requires specialised technical skills and constant optimisation.

Q4. How can more women be supported into network engineering and infrastructure operations?

We need to start earlier and make technical careers more visible and accessible to girls and young women. Schools, universities and industry should create stronger pathways through mentorship, internships, scholarships, technical training and practical exposure to real infrastructure environments. Companies also need to look critically at internships, recruitment and workplace practices to ensure women have genuine opportunities to progress once they enter the industry. Mentorship is particularly important because having women who are already working in technical roles serve as visible role models can make a significant difference. Though appreciated, we should celebrate women more for their technical expertise, rather than primarily highlighting them through diversity initiatives. Women need opportunities to build, operate and lead—not just participate.

5. What would you like to see change before the next edition of this report?

By the next edition, it would be encouraging to see measurable growth in the number of women occupying technical, operational and decision-making roles across Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem. I would also like to see greater investment in structured pathways that support women from education into technical careers, build their confidence and ultimately prepare them for leadership. Beyond representation, the industry should emulate the Africa Hyperscalers (I commend you) by recognising and documenting the contributions women are already making. Finally, I hope to see more African-led conversations around digital infrastructure that reflect our realities, challenges and homegrown solutions. The goal should not simply be to have more women in the industry, but but to ensure that more women have a meaningful role in shaping its direction and future.

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JUANITA CLARK

CO-FOUNDER & CEO | DIGITAL COUNCIL AFRICA / FTTH COUNCIL AFRICA



Q1. From where you sit, what is the most important shift happening in Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem?

The recognition that digital infrastructure is no longer a peripheral enabler but a core driver of economic competitiveness.

Fibre, data centres, and cloud platforms are now accepted strategic assets underpinning AI adoption, fintech growth, and industrial transformation.

What's exciting is the scale of capital mobilisation and the regional integration imperative — cross-border fibre and harmonised policy frameworks are gaining recognition as continental priorities. This shift reframes infrastructure from a utility to a catalyst for Africa's digital sovereignty and long-term growth.

Q2. What still slows down fibre deployment and infrastructure investment across African markets?

The bottlenecks are less about technology and more about enabling environments. Fibre deployment is slowed by fragmented regulation, inconsistent permitting processes, and high right-of-way costs. Investors hesitate when policy frameworks lack clarity or when infrastructure sharing is discouraged. Additionally, capital flows remain concentrated in urban hubs, leaving secondary cities and rural corridors underserved. Addressing these barriers requires harmonized regulation, streamlined approvals, and blended finance models that de-risk early projects. Without these enablers, Africa risks uneven connectivity that undermines its digital economy ambitions.

Q3. What kind of industry collaboration is needed to accelerate Africa's digital buildout?

Collaboration must move beyond bilateral deals to ecosystem-wide partnerships. Fibre operators, tower companies, data centre providers, and cloud platforms should align on shared infrastructure models that reduce duplication and extend reach. Governments and financiers must be part of the equation, creating blended finance vehicles and harmonised policies that incentivize cross-border projects. Crucially, collaboration should also include academia and civil society to ensure infrastructure serves broader development goals. The next decade demands a coalition approach — where industry, policy, and community jointly shape Africa's digital backbone.

Q4. What role should women play in shaping the next decade of Africa's digital infrastructure?

Women participating in the shaping of the digital infrastructure is not just necessary — it is strategic. Excluding women from Africa's digital infrastructure sector would mean sidelining half of the continent's talent, perspectives, and market insight. The next decade of fibre, data centres, and cloud expansion is not only about engineering and investment; it is about shaping systems that serve diverse societies. Women bring inclusive design thinking and their presence in decision-making ensures strategies resonate with real demand. Women leaders frequently champion equitable access, digital literacy, and community impact — priorities that make infrastructure not just profitable but transformative.

Q5. How do we get more women into digital infrastructure leadership?

We need intentional pathways that combine mentorship, visibility, and structural reform. First, mentorship programs must connect emerging female professionals with senior leaders across telecoms, finance, and policy. Second, visibility matters — women should be placed on high-profile panels, boards, and investment committees where decisions are made. Finally, structural reform is critical: companies and governments must set measurable targets for female leadership in infrastructure projects, backed by accountability mechanisms. This is not about tokenism; it's about unlocking half of Africa's talent pool to drive innovation and competitiveness.

BEYOND FINANCING: HOW DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS CAN UNLOCK AFRICA'S DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE



JANA KUNICOVÁ

PRACTICE MANAGER
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA, THE WORLD BANK



Q1. Through initiatives such as Project BRIDGE, what changes are needed to expand resilient broadband infrastructure and deliver affordable, meaningful connectivity across Nigeria?
Nigeria's digital connectivity gap is both a constraint on economic growth in the country and a challenge for equity among all Nigerians. Closing it requires action across several fronts simultaneously.

First, the wholesale infrastructure layer must be built out. Through the Building Resilient Digital Infrastructure for Growth (BRIDGE) project, the World Bank is supporting the deployment of 90,000 km of fiber backbone across unserved and underserved areas of Nigeria through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) designed to provide open-access, wholesale services. This kind of shared infrastructure is essential: it reduces costs for operators and creates the conditions for competitive, affordable retail connectivity.

Second, secondary infrastructure such as towers must reach the areas that fiber alone cannot serve. Partnerships with rural tower operators who can extend coverage in the most remote communities are critical to the last mile connectivity that brings the households in the most remote areas online.
This is also where the electricity challenge becomes central. Nigeria's chronic power instability is one of the most significant (and most under-appreciated) barriers to digital connectivity. Towers without reliable power do not function, and across rural Nigeria, operators are forced to rely on diesel generators, driving up operating costs and undermining the business case for rural coverage. Addressing this challenge requires integrating energy access into digital infrastructure planning from the outset: solar-powered towers, battery storage solutions, and hybrid energy systems are not optional add-ons but prerequisites for sustainable connectivity in off-grid and unreliable-grid areas. BRIDGE explicitly embeds climate resilience into its design, recognizing that infrastructure built today must function under a changing climate and an unreliable grid — and that the energy layer and the connectivity layer must be planned together rather than in isolation.

Third, affordability must be actively addressed, not assumed: innovative data package pricing models and device access programs are all necessary to ensure that infrastructure translates into actual usage.
Finally, climate resilience should be embedded by design. Nigeria's infrastructure

must withstand flooding, heat stress, and power instability. BRIDGE explicitly integrates this dimension, reflecting the reality that infrastructure built today must last for decades under a changing climate.

Q2. What role can development institutions play in mobilising private capital and strengthening partnerships between governments, investors and infrastructure operators?

Public financing alone will never be sufficient to close Africa's digital infrastructure gap — the scale of investment required makes private capital mobilization a necessity. Development institutions like the World Bank Group are uniquely positioned to act as catalysts rather than sole funders.
In Nigeria, the BRIDGE project exemplifies this approach: a $500 million IDA commitment is designed to unlock at least $1.1 billion in private investment through a commercially structured SPV that will attract institutional investors. Instruments such as blended finance facilities and WBG guarantees can reduce perceived risk in markets where commercial investors would otherwise not venture, particularly for long-tenor, local-currency financing that emerging infrastructure businesses require.

This is true in our digital and AI portfolio across West and Central Africa – well beyond Nigeria's BRIDGE project. For example, through the Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program (WARDIP), the World Bank supports the development of a single digital market across West Africa. WARDIP demonstrates that anchoring connectivity investments in competitive, open-access models attracts private operators who would not otherwise serve these markets.
Beyond financing, development institutions play a critical convening role — bringing governments, regulators, private investors, and infrastructure operators into dialogue around shared standards, open access frameworks, and policy reforms that create the enabling environment for private capital to flow and stay. The most effective interventions combine hard financing with this upstream policy and advisory work. For instance, WARDIP provides support to ECOWAS on regulatory harmonization across the West African digital market.

Q3. What do you consider the greatest infrastructure challenge currently limiting West and Central Africa's digital growth, and what practical action is required to address it?

The most significant constraint is not the absence of ambition but the absence of a commercially viable wholesale infrastructure layer that private operators can build on. Across West and Central Africa, backbone connectivity is sparse, expensive, and concentrated in a small number of urban corridors. Without affordable, open-access backbone infrastructure, operators face prohibitive costs to serve rural and peri-urban populations, and the business case for last-mile investment collapses.

The result is a persistent usage gap: even where some signal exists, the cost of data keeps the majority offline. Addressing this requires governments and development institutions to commit to building backbone infrastructure as a public good — or near-public good — structured for open access rather than monopoly control.
Regulatory reform is equally essential: spectrum management, rights-of-way, infrastructure sharing mandates, and transparent licensing regimes all determine whether private investment is attracted or repelled.
Infrastructure availability does not equal adoption. Our analysis clearly shows that the usage gap is also a gender and inclusion gap. WARDIP surveys across roughly 900 SMEs in West Africa found that the binding constraints for digital uptake are low connectivity speed, inadequate equipment, limited digital skills, and an unfavorable financing environment.

Q4. What barriers continue to prevent more women from entering and advancing into senior technical, operational and executive positions within the digital infrastructure sector and what actions are needed to create more opportunities for women to lead telecommunications, engineering, infrastructure operations and technology institutions across Africa?
The underrepresentation of women in senior technical, operational, and executive roles in digital infrastructure is not accidental. In my view, it is the cumulative product of barriers that begin long before a hiring decision is made – and not only in Africa. Girls are less likely to be encouraged into STEM subjects; young women face fewer mentors and role models in technical fields; and the professional culture of telecommunications and infrastructure has historically been shaped without women's participation in mind. The result is a pipeline problem at every level. Addressing it requires deliberate action at each stage.

Education systems and digital skills programs must actively recruit and retain girls and young women, including in technical disciplines such as engineering, network operations, and cybersecurity. Employers in the sector — whether MNOs, tower operators, or infrastructure developers — must adopt transparent promotion criteria, pay equity audits, and structured mentoring programs.

To aid in this effort, development institutions can use their influence as financiers and conveners to require gender action plans as a condition of investment, as is already being done in parts of the WBG portfolio. And governments must use their regulatory and procurement powers to set expectations: licensing conditions, board composition requirements for state-linked entities, and public sector procurement that favors gender-equitable companies all send clear signals. Representation at the top matters because it shapes institutional culture, and institutional culture determines who stays.

Across West and Central Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, many accomplished and influential women are already leading digital ministries and agencies, telecommunications companies, and infrastructure operations. The 100 Women Powering Africa initiative could build on this momentum by providing a valuable platform for peer-to-peer learning, professional exchange, and mentoring, while inspiring and supporting the next generation of women leaders. I am honored to be part of it.



BEYOND REPRESENTATION: BUILDING A PAN-AFRICAN PIPELINE FOR WOMEN IN DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

JOSEPHINE AWATEFE SAROUK
MANAGING DIRECTOR
BAYOBAB NIGERIA





Q1. As Managing Director of Bayobab Nigeria, what are your principal priorities for strengthening Nigeria's wholesale and cross-border connectivity infrastructure?
As Managing Director of Bayobab Nigeria, my principal priority is to strengthen Bayobab Nigeria's infrastructure and market position, enabling Nigeria to play an increasingly important role as a digital gateway to West Africa by building high-quality, scalable wholesale infrastructure.
By seamlessly linking international subsea assets with our national long-distance, metro fibre, and data center networks, we are creating the resilient backbone needed to support surging demand from mobile operators, ISPs, hyperscalers, and enterprise service providers.

Using our National Long-Distance (NLD) license, we are actively expanding our open-access fibre footprint beyond major commercial hubs and into underserved regions while ensuring that high-capacity connectivity is accessible nationwide, not just in primary business districts. Concurrently, we are strengthening cross-border interconnections with neighbouring markets to turn Nigeria's strategic location into a catalyst for seamless data flow, regional trade, and accelerated digital transformation across West Africa. This directly supports Bayobab's broader ambition to build the digital infrastructure that connects African nations, connects us to the world,and advances MTN's Ambition 2030 vision of leading digital solutions for Africa's progress.

Ultimately, our goal at Bayobab Nigeria is to deliver an adaptable, high-performance connectivity platform that gives our partners maximum reliability and the flexibility to scale dynamically, while anchoring Nigeria's leadership in Africa's evolving digital economy.

Q2. Bayobab supported the Nigerian landing of the 2Africa submarine cable. How can Nigeria convert this additional international capacity into faster, more reliable and more affordable connectivity for businesses and communities?
Landing the 2Africa subsea cable is a major milestone, but huge international capacity at our coastline is only the first step. To convert this subsea infrastructure into faster, more reliable, and affordable connectivity for businesses and communities across Nigeria, we must successfully bridge the gap between the landing station and the end user.

At Bayobab Nigeria, we are addressing this by expanding open-access terrestrial backbones. Subsea capacity only benefits the public if it moves inland, so we are building direct high-capacity fibre links from 2Africa's landing points to metro loops, data centres, and underserved regions across the country.

Crucially, faster capacity must be paired with maximum uptime and affordability. By integrating 2Africa into our broader network, we create redundant paths that protect businesses from outages, while offering wholesale bandwidth on an open-access basis to lower middle-mile costs for local ISPs and mobile operators. Ultimately, 2Africa acts as the engine, but our terrestrial fibre network is the delivery system that will democratise digital access, lower costs, and power Nigeria's digital economy.

Q3. Why is the fibre connection of data centres important to Nigeria's cloud, artificial-intelligence and digital-services ambitions?

We view data centres and fibre networks as two sides of the same coin: data centres store and process the power for cloud services and AI, while fibre connectivity delivers that data to users seamlessly.

As AI and cloud adoption accelerate, moving massive data volumes with low latency requires high-capacity fibre linking subsea cables, data centres, and end users. Strengthening this infrastructure keeps traffic local while improving user experience, reducing costs, and nurturing local innovation.

This is also why the recently announced strategic data centre partnership involving MTN Digital Infrastructure is so significant. It reflects the growing importance of building an integrated digital infrastructure ecosystem across Africa, combining world-class data centre capacity with the open-access connectivity required to connect markets, businesses and users. Bayobab Nigeria's expanding terrestrial and cross-border fibre infrastructure positions us to play a critical role in connecting this capacity to the wider digital economy. It also demonstrates that we are building the capabilities required to support Nigeria's next phase of digital growth.

If Nigeria is to become Africa's leading digital economy, investments in data centres and terrestrial fibre must move in a synchronized manner. By bringing together scalable computing capacity and high-performance connectivity, we can create the infrastructure foundation needed to support Nigeria's cloud, AI and broader digital services ambitions.

4. What role should infrastructure sharing and collaboration among operators, regulators and government play in building a more resilient and efficient national network?

Collaboration should be central to how we build Nigeria's next generation of digital infrastructure. The economics of telecom infrastructure make duplication expensive, particularly when operators are trying to extend coverage into areas where demand is still developing.

Infrastructure sharing can help the industry use existing assets more efficiently, reduce unnecessary duplication and accelerate expansion. But successful sharing requires clear commercial principles, technical standards, transparent access arrangements, and regulatory frameworks that protect competition while encouraging collaborative investment.

Government also has an important enabling role. Faster and more predictable access to rights-of-way, coordinated infrastructure planning, consistent policies and support for digital infrastructure investment can materially improve deployment economics.

For operators and infrastructure providers, the mindset should move from "who owns the asset?" to "how do we create the strongest network for the customer?" Collaboration does not remove competition; it allows companies to compete more effectively on services, innovation and customer experience while sharing infrastructure where it makes economic and operational sense.

The goal should be a network that is strong and scalable enough to support Nigeria's digital ambitions for the long term.

5. As a recognised woman leader in telecommunications, what has shaped your leadership approach, and how can the industry develop more women for senior commercial, operational and technical roles?

My leadership approach is rooted in delivering results while creating an environment where people can learn, grow and take on greater responsibility. In a sector as dynamic as telecommunications, I believe effective leadership requires continuous learning, curiosity and openness to different perspectives. It also means recognising the strengths of the people around you and creating opportunities for them to succeed.

As a woman in the industry, I have seen the importance of visibility and access to meaningful opportunities. For me, it is important that women are not only encouraged to enter the sector but are also given the opportunity to take on roles that build their commercial, operational and technical experience.

Women must be part of building that future not simply as users of technology, but as the engineers designing networks, the technical specialists operating critical infrastructure, the commercial leaders shaping investment decisions and the executives defining the strategic direction of the industry. The technologies and infrastructure we build will serve diverse societies, and the team's leading them should reflect that diversity.

I have been fortunate to have people who believed in my capabilities and trusted me with responsibility, and that has shaped my approach to developing others. I believe leadership is also about creating that same sense of possibility for the people coming after you.
When you invest in people and give them room to grow, you create stronger individuals, stronger teams and, ultimately, a stronger industry.

6. What actions are needed to create more opportunities for women to lead telecommunications, engineering, infrastructure operations and technology institutions across Africa?
If we want more women leading telecommunications, engineering, infrastructure operations and technology institutions across Africa, we need to approach the issue as a pan-African development priority rather than as an individual company initiative.

At an institutional level, governments, regulators, universities, professional bodies, development institutions and private-sector organisations all have a role to play in creating a stronger pipeline for women leaders. This starts with STEM education and technical training, but it also requires deliberate pathways from education into infrastructure, engineering, technology and leadership roles.

Across Africa, institutions can make a significant difference by creating scholarships, internships, graduate programmes, professional certifications and industry placements that expose women to the full technology value chain. We should also encourage cross-border programmes that allow women to gain experience across different African markets, because the infrastructure opportunity itself is increasingly pan-African.

The private sector then has to convert that pipeline into leadership opportunities. Women should have access to assignments involving network deployment, infrastructure planning, commercial strategy, project management, regulatory engagement and business operations. These are the experiences that build the capability required for senior institutional and industry leadership.

There is also an opportunity for African institutions to work together on common standards, leadership programmes and talent-development frameworks. Pan-African platforms can help share best practices, create networks of female professionals and make it easier for talent to move across markets.

Finally, we need workplaces that allow women to build sustainable careers. That includes fair evaluation, inclusive leadership cultures, flexibility where appropriate, and clear accountability for developing diverse leadership pipelines.
Africa needs institutions that are deliberately building the next generation of women leaders. If we create those pathways collectively, we are not only improving representation; we are strengthening the human capital required to build and operate Africa's digital infrastructure. We are creating an African where its citizens have a better opportunity digital inclusion and the benedits of a modern, connected life.



BEYOND TRAINING: BUILDING CLEAR PATHWAYS INTO AFRICA'S DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKFORCE

FAITH WAITHAKA
CHAIRPERSON
AFRICA DATA CENTRES ASSOCIATION





Q2. As Chairperson of the Africa Data Centres Association, what are your principal priorities for supporting the growth of Africa's data centre industry?

My priority is to help create the ecosystem needed to accelerate and scale Africa's digital economy. Data centres now underpin cloud computing, financial services, telecommunications, government platforms, digital commerce and artificial intelligence.

At ADCA, our focus is on accelerating investment, strengthening collaboration, developing African capability and ensuring growth is sustainable. The goal is a sector that is resilient, investable, inclusive and ready to support the continent's long-term digital ambitions.

Q2. Despite growing demand for cloud services and computing capacity, a significant proportion of African data is still hosted outside the continent. What must change to accelerate local data hosting?

Africa must make local hosting competitive, reliable and secure. That requires sufficient data centre capacity, dependable and affordable power, strong connectivity, credible standards and predictable regulation.

We must also think regionally. Africa needs connected digital hubs and cross-border networks that allow data to move efficiently while respecting national data protection requirements. Digital sovereignty ultimately depends on infrastructure sovereignty and on our ability to store, process and create value from African data within the continent.

Q3. Power availability, financing, connectivity and regulation continue to affect data centre development across Africa. Which challenge requires the most urgent intervention, and why?

Reliable, affordable and scalable power remains the most immediate constraint. A data centre cannot operate without continuous, high-quality energy, and AI is increasing both the scale and density of demand.

However, power cannot be addressed in isolation. Data centres sit at the intersection of energy, connectivity, land, finance and regulation. Governments should therefore recognise them as strategic infrastructure and integrate their requirements into national energy, connectivity and economic-development planning.

Q4. As artificial intelligence increases demand for computing capacity, how should Africa prepare its power, cooling, connectivity and data centre infrastructure?

Africa must prepare before demand arrives. AI requires higher power densities, more sophisticated cooling, stronger networks and substantially greater computing capacity. Facilities designed today must therefore be scalable and ready for tomorrow's workloads.

This means expanding and diversifying power supply, adopting cooling solutions suited to local climate and water conditions, and investing in terrestrial fibre, resilient subsea connectivity and low-latency regional networks. With the right ecosystem for growth and scale, Africa can become a location for AI compute, data processing and innovation, not only a consumer of technology developed elsewhere.

Q5. Drawing on your experience as an engineer and industry leader, what actions are needed to build African capability and help more women advance in the sector?

We need practical pathways from education into employment, supported by industry. One example is the collaboration involving ADCA, IBTC, Schneider Electric and data-centre operator Rack Centre. The Rack Centre Academy model brings together training, certification, exposure to an operating data-centre environment and employment pathways, showing how operators can help develop the talent they need.

We also need deeper partnerships between ADCA, universities and industry. A practical example is ADCA's collaboration with Cape Peninsula University in Cape Town, where visiting lecturers and industry engagement expose students to current expertise in data centres, cloud, AI, power and sustainability. Combined with internships and mentorship, this approach helps universities align learning with industry needs and creates clearer pathways into employment.

Women must be central to this agenda. Through Women in Tech engagement, we want more young women to see digital infrastructure as a career and leadership opportunity. The ambition is not simply to increase participation, but to see women designing infrastructure, running operations, leading businesses, shaping strategy and influencing Africa's digital future.

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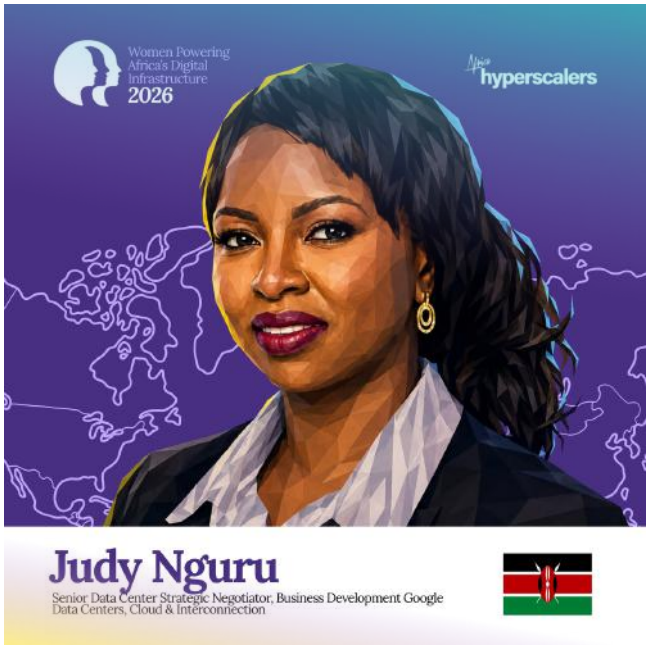
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The following profiles provide a brief overview of each nominee and explain why each woman was selected, using her current title, institution, region, sector pillar and updated public profile. They are written as recognition rationales rather than exhaustive biographies.

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Judy Nguru
Senior Data Center Strategic Negotiator, Business Development Google
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection



Caroline Kamaitha
Vice President, Enterprise & Cloud | Raxio Data Centres Uganda
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection



Wanja Muriithi
Country General Manager | iColo Kenya
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection



Nurani Nimpuno
Chief Strategy and Global Engagement Officer
London Internet Exchange (LINX)
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection

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Frehiwot Tamiru
Chief Executive Officer | ethio telecom
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Juliet Nsubuga
Managing Director | Bayobab Uganda
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Fawzia Ali-Kimanthi
Chief Consumer Business Officer | Safaricom
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

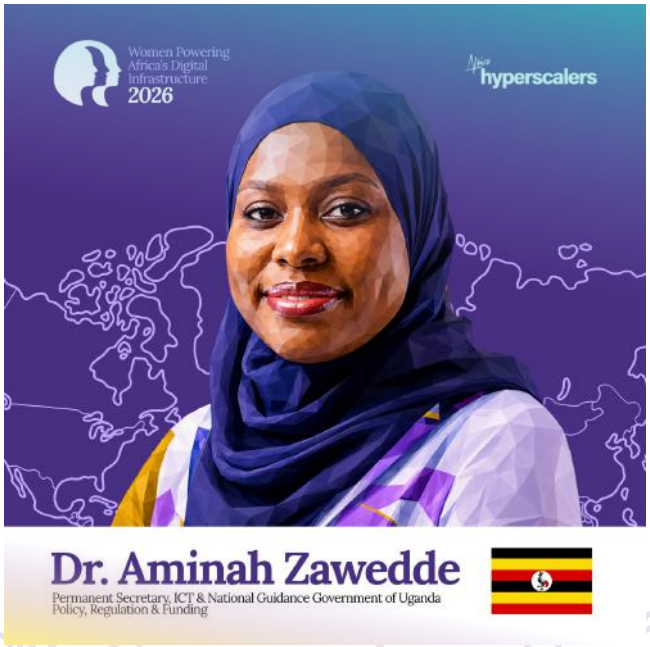


Catherine Muraga
Managing Director, Microsoft Africa Development Centre | Microsoft
Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers

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Dr. Fiona Asonga
Chief Executive Officer | Technology Service Providers Association of Kenya
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Faith Waithaka
Chairperson | Africa Data Centre Association
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Madhvi Gokool
Senior IP Resources Specialist | AFRINIC
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Sylvia Mulinge
Chief Executive Officer & Head of Co-Investments | MTN Uganda
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

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Vuyiseka Februarie
Executive, Technical Operations & Development | Africa Data Centres | Data Centres, Cloud & Interconnection | South Africa



Angela Wamola
Head of Sub-Saharan Africa | GSMA
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Sylvia Anampiu
Director, Fixed Business | Safaricom PLC
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Dr. Jane Munga
Fellow Africa Program | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
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Nomso Kana
Founder & Chief Executive Officer | SimSciex Technologies
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Mandisa Ntloko-Petersen
Marketing Executive, Digital Infrastructure | SEACOM
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Emilia Nghikembua
Chief Executive Officer | Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Nene Maiga
Chief Executive Officer | Orange Botswana
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

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Beauty Apleni
Chief Executive Officer | Openserve
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Yolandi Cloete
Interconnection Community & Academy Manager | DE-CIX
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection



Carla Sanderson
Head of Marketing | Teraco / NAPAfrica | Data Centers,
Cloud & Interconnection



Michele McCann
Head of Platforms & Interconnection | Teraco / NAPAfrica
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection

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Maria Miguel Pinto
General Manager, Angola | Raxio Group
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection



Hon Tatenda Mavetera
Minister of ICT, Postal and Courier Services | Republic of Zimbabwe
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Yolanda Cuba
Deputy CEO, MTN South Africa
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Mamela Luthuli
Founder & CEO | Take Note Information Technology
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms

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Juanita Clark
Co-Founder & CEO | Digital Council Africa / FTTH Council Africa
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Paula Mokwena
CEO & Head of Co-Investments | Fireball Capital
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Hildabertha Kundu
Principal Deal Originator, East, Central & West Africa Region
Development Bank of Southern Africa
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Emma Inamutila Theofelus
Minister of Information and Communication Technology
Government of Namibia
Policy, Regulation & Funding

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Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani
Director-General
Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, South Africa
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Kerissa Varma
Chief Security Advisor / Customer Security Officer for Africa | Microsoft
Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers



Makgosi Mabaso
Chief Commercial Officer | Openserve
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Helen Kruger
Head of Operations | Teraco
Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection

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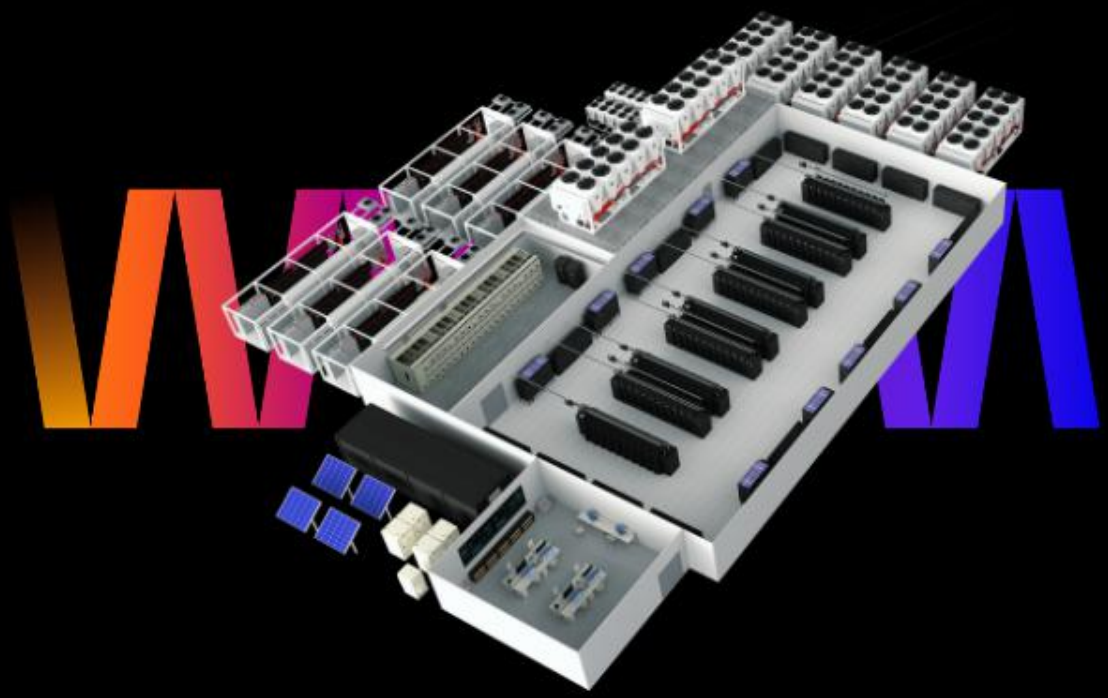
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Kano Yahanatou
Managing Director | Burinfort SA
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Thelma Quaye
Chief Digital Infrastructure, Skills & Empowerment Officer | Smart Africa
Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms



Jana Kunicova
Practice Manager, Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence
West and Central Africa, WorldBank
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Jumoke Akande
Project Lead, Project BRIDGE
Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Nigeria
Policy, Regulation & Funding

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Ayaan Adam
Senior Director & CEO, AFC Capital Partners
Africa Finance Corporation
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Lisa Pinsley
Fund Head, African Transition Acceleration Fund
African Infrastructure Investment Managers
Policy, Regulation & Funding



Dr. Aminata Zerbo-Sabane
Minister
Digital Transition, Posts and Electronic Communications Burkina Faso
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Aurelie Adam-Soule Zoumarou
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Cina Lawson
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Salima Bah
Minister
Communication, Technology and Innovation | Sierra Leone Policy, Regulation & Funding



Rimini Haraya Makama
Executive Commissioner, Stakeholder Management
Nigerian Communications Commission
Policy, Regulation & Funding

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Kanwulia Okafor

Director, Industry Services Africa | GSMA
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Amie Khan Jammeh

Director, External Plant | Gambia Telecommunications
Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure



Lynda Saint-Nwafor

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JUDY NGURU

Judy Nguru is recognised for her leadership as Senior Data Center Strategic Negotiator, Business Development at Google, representing East Africa within the Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection pillar. Her work sits within the data centre, cloud, peering, interconnection and compute infrastructure layer of the digital economy, where institutional execution, technical capability, market coordination, and long-term partnerships determine whether digital services can scale reliably. In her current role, she supports hyperscale data centre strategy, site-development engagement, and infrastructure partnerships across emerging markets.

She previously served as Senior Vice President, Strategic Development & Global Partnerships at Raxio Data Centres and as Group Business Development Manager at CSquared. She also held earlier roles supporting enterprise and infrastructure partnerships across regional telecom and connectivity markets. Judy holds an MBA from La Salle University, a degree in Human Resource Management from Schiller International University, and bachelor's degrees from The American University of Paris and Southern Adventist University.

CAROLINE KAMAITHA

Caroline Kamaitha is recognised for her leadership as Vice President, Enterprise & Cloud at Raxio Data Centres Uganda, representing East Africa within the Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection pillar. She has over 20 years experience in satellite telecommunications across Africa, where she has successfully built and led profitable businesses. She previously held senior roles at SES, O3b Networks, iWayAfrica Zambia, and AFSAT, focusing on strategy, sales, market expansion, and customer engagement. Now at Raxio, she is tasked with driving market growth. She also holds several professional accreditations in business, leadership, and strategy.

WANJA MURIITHI

Wanja Muriithi is recognised for her leadership as Country General Manager at iColo Kenya, representing East Africa within the Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection pillar. Before joining iColo, Wanja previously worked as Country General Manager at Tano Digital Kenya, formerly known as Altron BTG Kenya. She brings experience from previous roles at Isolutions Associates LTD (Isols), Tarsus Emerging Markets, Microsoft and Securedata Group. Wanja holds a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing from egerton University.

NURANI NIMPUNO

Nurani Nimpuno is the Chief Strategy and Global Engagement Officer at London Internet Exchange (LINX). Nurani also serves on the Euro-IX board, the association representing all IXPs in Europe and beyond. She serves on the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Address Supporting Organization (ASO) Advisory Council, is the chair of the IANA Numbering Services Review Committee and is actively involved with Internet policy and Internet governance issues globally. She previously worked as Chief Commercial Officer at Asteroid International, and Head of Outreach and Communications at Netnod.

ISABEL ODIDA

Isabel Odida, is a Peering Manager at Gcore and founder of UGNOG, and works in the technical community around peering, network operations and interconnection. She brings experience from previous roles at PeeringDB, The Global Peering Forum, Inc., UGNOG and AFNOG. She holds a Bachelor of Information Technology from Makerere University.

RAYANA CHOUDHARY

Rayana Choudhary is recognised for her leadership as Vice President, Marketing at Wingu Africa, representing East Africa within the Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection pillar. She is a B2B Marketing professional with over 20 years of experience working for start-ups, SMEs and large organisations within the tech space, such as 7Bridges and EmpiricAI. She has a degree from the University of Surrey.

Rayana is a commercially focused B2B marketing leader with over 20 years' experience across SaaS, AI, and technology-driven sectors. She has scaled marketing functions in start-ups and global firms, delivering brand growth, lead generation, and go-to-market strategy to firms such as 7Bridges and EmpiricAI. Rayana has a strong track record in building brand visibility, driving demand, and aligning marketing with commercial goals. With global experience spanning the UK, Europe, Africa, and the US, she works closely with C-level teams to deliver impactful campaigns and strategic growth. Her expertise includes digital strategy, content marketing, event execution, and media relations. She has a degree from the University of Surrey.

FEVEN DAGNACHEW MILIKIT

Feven leads Wingu Africa's operations in Ethiopia, bringing strong expertise in digital transformation, project delivery, and strategic partnerships. She is responsible for business growth, client engagement, and regulatory compliance. With a background in project management and a deep understanding of Ethiopia's digital landscape, Feven plays a crucial role in expanding the country's digital infrastructure. Her leadership fosters impactful collaborations and positions Wingu as a trusted partner in Ethiopia's tech ecosystem.

FREHIWOT TAMIRU

Frehiwot Tamiru is recognised for her leadership as Chief Executive Officer at ethio telecom, representing East Africa within the Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure pillar. She has led ethio since 2018, leading the modernization and growth of one of Africa's largest telecommunications operators. She began her career at the company as a programmer after earning a Bachelor of Science in Information Systems. Over seven years, she rose to Deputy Manager before founding and managing Doxa IT Technology Plc for another seven years. She later returned to Ethio Telecom as a board member and was subsequently appointed CEO. She holds an MBA from the Open University in the United Kingdom.

JULIET NSUBUGA

Juliet Kakayi Nsubuga is a Ugandan telecommunications executive with more than 20 years of experience in sales, marketing, wholesale connectivity and carrier services. She currently serves as General Manager of Wholesale and Carrier Services at MTN Uganda. She previously led Bayobab Uganda, formerly MTN GlobalConnect Uganda, with responsibility for expanding the country's digital backbone and strengthening its connection to MTN Group's pan-African fiber infrastructure. Juliet holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Economic Policy and Planning from Makerere University. She is also an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing in the United Kingdom and has completed the Senior Executive Program–Africa at Harvard Business School.

MICHELE OPIYO

Michelle Opiyo is Network Delivery Head at Meta and has over 10 years of experience in the Network Services Provider Industry. She previously She holds a BSc in Electronic and Computer Engineering from the Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology.She previously worked at Workonline Communications and the National Research and Education Network of Kenya (KENET).

FAWZIA ALI-KIMANTHI

Fawzia Ali-Kimanthi is a Kenyan telecommunications executive who serves as Chief Consumer Business Officer at Safaricom, a role she has held since March 2023. With more than 20 years of commercial leadership experience, she oversees the company's consumer business and has worked across finance, marketing, sales, customer experience, product development and digital services. She is a certified public accountant and professional coach and holds a Master's degree in finance.

CATHERINE MURAGA

Catherine Muraga is a Kenyan technology executive and Managing Director of Microsoft's Africa Development Center in Nairobi, where she leads software engineering and product development initiatives supporting global Microsoft platforms. Appointed in 2022, she became the first woman to lead the center and brought more than 15 years of technology leadership experience across banking, aviation and manufacturing. Before joining Microsoft, she served as Head of Engineering at Stanbic Bank Kenya and Stanbic Bank South Sudan and previously held senior roles at Sidian Bank, Kenya Airways and East African Breweries.She holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Africa Nazarene University and has completed executive programs in fintech at the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School and digital business strategy at Columbia University.

PAULA INGABIRE

Paula Ingabire is Rwanda's Minister of ICT and Innovation, where she leads national policy on digital transformation, emerging technologies, innovation and the development of the country's technology ecosystem. Before her appointment in 2018, she served as Head of ICT Business Development at the Rwanda Development Board, coordinated the Kigali Innovation City project and worked with the Smart Africa initiative to advance broadband-enabled economic development across the continent.

Paula holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Rwanda and a Master's degree in Engineering and Management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was named a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader in 2020.

LYDIA SITIENEI

Lydia Sitienei is a Kenyan legal and corporate governance executive who serves as Director of Legal Services and Corporation Secretary at the Communications Authority of Kenya. She joined the Authority in December 2023 and advises the regulator on legal, regulatory and governance matters across Kenya's telecommunications, broadcasting, postal and digital services sectors. She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, a certified company secretary and a governance auditor with more than 15 years of professional experience.

DR. AMINAH ZAWEDDE

Dr. Aminah Zawedde is a Ugandan computer scientist, academic and public administrator serving as Permanent Secretary at Uganda's Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. Before joining government, she spent more than 15 years as a lecturer and researcher at Makerere University. She holds a PhD in Software Engineering from Eindhoven University of Technology and brings together expertise in digital policy, public-sector transformation, academic research and technology leadership.

SUSAN MBATIA

Susan Mbatia is a Kenyan investment and digital infrastructure executive with more than 20 years of experience across investment management, corporate finance, portfolio management, strategy and impact investing. She serves as Senior Investment Manager in Finnfund's Digital Infrastructure and Solutions team. Before joining Finnfund, she held senior corporate development responsibilities at iColo, a Digital Realty company, contributing to the growth of data center investment across Africa.

DR. FIONA ASONGA

Dr. Fiona Asonga is a Kenyan ICT and internet infrastructure leader serving as Chief Executive Officer of the Technology Service Providers Association of Kenya. She has played a prominent role in advancing internet governance, local traffic exchange, cybersecurity and IPv6 adoption. Her leadership also supports the operation of the Kenya Internet Exchange Point and collaboration among technology service providers, policymakers and regulators.

FAITH WAITHAKA

Faith Waithaka is a Kenyan data center and technology executive serving as Chairperson of the Africa Data Centres Association. She also works at Schneider Electric as Cloud and Service Provider Segment Sales Lead, supporting infrastructure solutions for cloud providers, colocation operators and digital infrastructure companies. Her work focuses on power, cooling, sustainability, standards, skills development and data center growth across Africa.

MADHVI GOKOOL

Madhvi Gokool is a Mauritian internet infrastructure specialist serving as Senior IP Resources Specialist at AFRINIC, Africa's Regional Internet Registry. Since joining AFRINIC in 2010, she has worked extensively on IPv4, IPv6 and Autonomous System Number allocation, policy development, stakeholder engagement and capacity building. Her work helps African organizations obtain and manage the internet number resources required to operate resilient and independently managed networks.

SYLVIA MULINGE

Sylvia Mulinge is a Kenyan corporate executive serving as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of MTN Uganda. Since assuming the role in October 2022, she has led the company's telecommunications, data, digital and financial-services operations in one of MTN Group's major East African markets. Before joining MTN Uganda, Sylvia spent more than 15 years at Safaricom, rising through senior leadership positions to become Chief Consumer Business Officer. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Technology from the University of Nairobi.

ANGELA WAMOLA

Angela Wamola is a Kenyan telecommunications executive serving as Head of Sub-Saharan Africa at the GSMA. She works with mobile operators, governments and industry partners to advance regional priorities around connectivity, digital inclusion, policy, innovation and the development of Africa's mobile economy. Before joining the GSMA, Angela held senior roles at Safaricom, where she gained extensive experience across commercial strategy, enterprise services and telecommunications operations. Her work focuses on strengthening collaboration across Africa's mobile industry and expanding affordable access to digital services.

SYLVIA ANAMPIU

Sylvia Anampiu is a Kenyan telecommunications executive serving as Director of Fixed Business at Safaricom. She leads the company's fixed connectivity business as Safaricom expands fiber broadband services for homes, businesses, and enterprise customers. She previously served as Managing Director of Bayobab Kenya, formerly MTN GlobalConnect Kenya, where she supported fiber network expansion and operational growth. Her career also includes senior commercial and strategy roles at Airtel Africa, Orange Kenya and Bayer East Africa.

DR. JANE MUNGA

Dr. Jane Munga is a Kenyan digital policy expert and Fellow in the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where she leads research on technology policy. Her work examines how African countries can use digital technologies, enabling regulation and international partnerships to advance inclusive economic growth and sustainable digital transformation. Before joining Carnegie, she advised the Government of Kenya across the ministries responsible for ICT, education and interior affairs. She also leads research on the Africa Technology Policy Tracker, a continent-wide resource covering digital economy laws, policies and regulations across all 54 African countries and the African Union.

LOBNA HELAL

Lobna Helal is recognised for her leadership as Chair of the Board of Directors of Telecom Egypt, one of North Africa's biggest telecommunications infrastructure companies. Her current role places her at the governance level of a national operator whose fibre, wholesale, enterprise, and connectivity assets are central to Egypt's position in digital infrastructure.

She brings more than 30 years of financial-sector leadership experience, including service as Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Egypt for Monetary Stability Policies, where her responsibilities covered monetary policy, reserve management, markets, payment systems, IT and banking-sector reform. She has also held board and chair roles across financial, housing, development and investment institutions. Lobna holds a master's degree in Economics from the American University in Cairo.

SALEWA OYAGBOLA

Salewa is a telecommunications and digital infrastructure business leader with over a decade of experience driving commercial growth, strategic transformation, and large-scale infrastructure development across Nigeria.
As Associate Director, Business Solutions at IHS Nigeria, she leads strategic initiatives spanning commercial growth, fibre infrastructure, business development, customer strategy, and data-driven business intelligence. Her work focuses on unlocking new opportunities at the intersection of connectivity, infrastructure, technology, and enterprise growth.
Salewa holds an MBA and an MSc in Business Analytics from Hult International Business School. She is passionate about advancing Nigeria's digital infrastructure ecosystem and enabling the connectivity, capacity, and innovation required to power Africa's next phase of digital transformation.

DOHA AMMOUR

Doha Ammour is recognised for her role as Vice President, International Business Development at N+ONE Datacenters, where she supports the international growth of Morocco's data centre and cloud infrastructure market. Her work is especially relevant as N+ONE becomes part of the hosting layer for hyperscale cloud infrastructure in North Africa, including Oracle's Casablanca cloud region.

She has held continuously progressive leadership commercial roles within N+ONE Datacenters, building her career inside the company's commercial and infrastructure growth functions. She holds degrees from EU Business School, emlyon business school and Université Internationale de Casablanca as well as certifications in Business Diplomacy and International Relations from the Italian Diplomatic Academy.

TAWA BOLARIN

Tawa Bolarin is recognised for her leadership as Chief Commercial Officer of Rack Centre, where she leads the commercial strategy of one of West Africa's prominent carrier- and cloud-neutral data-centre platforms. Her responsibilities span business growth, sales, product strategy, pricing, marketing and commercial execution.
She brings more than two decades of experience across enterprise, wholesale, carrier and consumer telecommunications markets. Before joining Rack Centre, she led enterprise, wholesale and carrier business at Telecel Ghana and previously held senior positions at Vodafone Ghana, Airtel, MTN, British Telecom and Virgin Media. Her career has also included chief executive roles at Konga Travel and Konga Pay.
Tawa holds an MBA from the University of Westminster and a Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

MOUNA ESSA-EGH

Mouna Essa-Egh is recognised for her leadership in Schneider Electric's Secure Power and data centre business across the Middle East and Africa. Her work sits at the intersection of data centre growth, power infrastructure, energy resilience and sustainability, all of which are critical to Africa's ability to scale compute and cloud services. She has more than 20 years of experience in the IT industry. Before joining Schneider Electric in 2018, she held business-unit, sales and P&L leadership roles at HP and Hewlett Packard Enterprise across Africa, the Middle East, and Northern and Central Europe. She previously led Schneider Electric's IT division for Francophone Africa before taking on broader data centre and networks responsibilities. Mouna holds a degree in Electrical Engineering and an Executive MBA from ESCP Business School.


Smartcomply
Building Africa's Digital Future Requires More Than Infrastructure.
As Africa's digital infrastructure scales, cybersecurity, compliance, and trust must scale with it. Smartcomply helps businesses simplify and manage their cybersecurity posture and compliance requirements, giving organisations the visibility and structure they need to grow securely.
One ecosystem. Built for secure Growth
Adhere by Smartcomply
Oculus by Smartcomply
Seequre
Smartcomply Academy
Hyperscalers Convergence Africa 2026

ADEELA MAHMOOD

Adeela Mahmood is Head of Marketing at Raxio Group, one of Africa's leading carrier-neutral Tier III data centre platforms. Her work contributes to the market-development side of digital infrastructure: positioning, customer engagement, ecosystem visibility and the communication required to connect enterprise, cloud, connectivity and public-sector demand with new data centre capacity across African markets. Her public profile points to a marketing career spanning more than a decade, with experience in brand, communications and customer-facing growth functions. Adeela studied at Middlesex University.

VIBHUTI JAIN

Vibhuti Jain is recognised for her leadership as Managing Director and Regional Head of Africa at the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, where she leads DFC's on-the-ground presence across Africa from Johannesburg. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure because the sector depends heavily on long-term capital, project finance, political-risk mitigation and development-finance institutions able to crowd in private investment for connectivity, energy, data centres, transport and other enabling infrastructure.

Before DFC, she led the project finance team for Power Africa, the U.S. Government energy generation and access programme coordinated by USAID, based in Pretoria. Her earlier career includes corporate law in New York and London, where she represented Fortune 100 financial-services companies, as well as investment-banking work on transportation, energy and infrastructure transactions. Vibhuti holds a B.A. in Economics from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. She is also the author of Our Best Intentions, a New York Times-acclaimed novel.

KIM SACREE

Kim Sacree is recognised for her leadership as CIO at Frogfoot, a fibre provider in Southern Africa. She previously led SEACOM's digital services business, where her work supported the evolution of one of Africa's original connectivity platforms into a broader provider of cloud, cybersecurity, communications and managed services. She is a telecommunications and technology executive with more than 30 years of experience. Before SEACOM, she served as CIO for business solutions at Nashua and held senior leadership roles at iOCO/EOH, including operations director and chief customer experience officer. She holds a National Diploma in IT from the University of Johannesburg.

NOMSO KANA

Nomso Kana is recognised as the founder and CEO of SimSciex Technologies, where her work focuses on broadband access, ICT, energy and scientific solutions for underserved communities. Her contribution to digital infrastructure is rooted in inclusive connectivity: extending fibre-optic broadband and related technology solutions into rural and township environments that are often left outside mainstream infrastructure deployment.

She has been described as a nuclear scientist turned entrepreneur, with academic roots in Chemistry and Computer Science from the University of Fort Hare. Beyond SimSciex, she has served on South Africa's Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and has been associated with the Nuclear Energy Foundation Agency.

MANDISA NTLOKO-PETERSEN

Mandisa Ntloko-Petersen is recognised for her leadership in SEACOM's digital infrastructure marketing and communications function, where she helps position one of Africa's most important connectivity backbones for the next phase of cloud, enterprise and carrier demand.

She has more than 25 years of experience in marketing, communications and enterprise technology. Public profiles reference prior roles including Group Chief Marketing Officer at SEACOM, Chief Marketing Officer at BCX, General Manager of Enterprise Marketing at MTN Business, and senior positions at Accenture, Dimension Data MEA, MTN and Nokia Mobile Phones. Mandisa holds an MBA in Marketing Strategy from the University of Warwick and a BA in International Relations and Industrial Sociology from the University of the Witwatersrand.

EMILIA NGHIKEMBUA

Emilia Nghikembua is recognised for her leadership as Chief Executive Officer of the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia, the national regulator responsible for telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services. She joined CRAN in 2011 as Legal Advisor and rose through the organisation, becoming Head Legal Advisor before she was appointed CEO in December 2020. She is an admitted legal practitioner of the High Court of Namibia and holds Baccalaureus Juris, Bachelor of Law and Master of Law degrees from the University of Namibia, a Master of Arts in ICT Policy and Regulation from the University of the Witwatersrand, and an Executive MBA with majors in business and technology.

NENE MAIGA

Nene Maiga is recognised for her leadership as CEO of Orange Botswana, where she has helped drive mobile, broadband and digital financial-services growth in one of Southern Africa's important telecom markets. Her work sits across connectivity, mobile money, digital inclusion and service innovation, all of which influence how infrastructure translates into practical access for people and businesses.

Her career spans telecoms, mobile money, pay-TV, sales, finance and strategy across several African and European markets. Before becoming CEO of Orange Botswana in 2021, she served as CEO of Orange Money in Mali and later as Chief of Staff to the CEO of Orange Middle East and Africa, where she worked on group strategy, talent and gender-parity initiatives. She is a graduate of HEC Paris.

BEAUTY APLENI

Beauty Apleni is recognised for her leadership as CEO of Openserve, South Africa's major wholesale fixed-connectivity and fibre infrastructure provider. Her role places her at the centre of national network infrastructure, wholesale broadband, enterprise connectivity and the systems that support South Africa's digital economy.

Before Openserve, she served in Telkom as Chief of Staff for Strategy, Mergers and Acquisitions. Her background combines telecommunications, corporate strategy and technology leadership. Beauty holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Nelson Mandela University.

YOLANDI CLOETE

Yolandi Cloete is recognised for her work in the peering and interconnection community, now as Interconnection Community & Academy Manager at DE-CIX. Her role supports skills, community-building and knowledge transfer in one of the most technical layers of digital infrastructure: how networks interconnect, exchange traffic and improve internet performance.
She began her career at Teraco, first as a marketing intern before moving into the NAPAfrica peering and interconnection team. She has served on the PeeringDB Product Committee, joined the AfPIF Programme Committee and participated in EURO-IX projects including the Peering Toolbox.

CARLA SANDERSON

Carla Sanderson is Head of Marketing at Teraco, a Digital Realty company, and for her role in shaping the public, brand and community profile of NAPAfrica, Africa's largest internet exchange point. Her work sits at the intersection of data centres, peering, stakeholder engagement, governance and ecosystem trust.

She has more than 25 years of experience in strategic marketing, brand development and communications across technology and digital infrastructure. Before Teraco, she held senior marketing roles at TransUnion Africa, EOH and Wonderware Southern Africa. She has also served with the Open-IX Association and has been publicly associated with AFRINIC governance activity. Carla holds marketing qualifications from IMM Graduate School, with additional executive education and professional certifications.

MICHELE MCCANN

Michele McCann is recognised for her leadership in platforms, interconnection and peering at Teraco and NAPAfrica. Her work has helped develop NAPAfrica into Africa's biggest internet exchange platform, enabling networks, content providers, cloud platforms, ISPs and carriers to keep more traffic local and improve internet performance across the continent.

Before Teraco, she served as Commercial Director at ARC Telecoms, where she helped develop infrastructure and bring ISP products and services to market. Michele holds qualifications in Sales and Marketing from Damelin and Business Management from UNISA.

MARIA MIGUEL PINTO

Maria Miguel Pinto is recognised for her leadership as General Manager of Raxio Angola, where she is responsible for customer engagement, regulatory alignment, strategic growth and local execution of one of Angola's most significant carrier-neutral data centre projects. Her work supports Angola's ambition to strengthen local hosting, business continuity, disaster recovery, cloud adoption and digital infrastructure resilience.
She brings more than 24 years of experience across ICT and financial services. Before joining Raxio, she served as Country General Manager for IBM Angola and previously held senior technology leadership roles including Chief Information Officer at Banco de Fomento Angola, where she led major digital transformation initiatives. Maria holds a master's degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering.

HON TATENDA MAVETERA

Hon Tatenda Mavetera is recognised for her leadership as Zimbabwe's Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services. Her role places her at the centre of national digital policy, broadband expansion, postal services and technology-sector coordination, with direct relevance to the infrastructure and regulatory systems required for Zimbabwe's digital economy.

Before becoming minister, she served as a Member of Parliament for Chikomba West. She has remained visible in continental digital-policy platforms, including Smart Africa and ITU/AI for Good engagements. She holds an Honours Degree in Management and Marketing and a Master's in Strategic Marketing.

YOLANDA CUBA

Yolanda Cuba is recognised as one of Africa's most accomplished telecommunications and business executives. Her current and recent MTN roles place her within one of the continent's largest mobile-network groups, where infrastructure, fintech, digital services and regional market execution intersect.

She previously served as MTN Group Chief Digital and Fintech Officer and Group Regional Vice President for Southern and East Africa. Before MTN, she held senior Vodacom roles, including CEO of Vodafone Ghana and Group Chief Officer for Strategy, M&A and new business. She has also served in senior positions across SAB, Absa and investment businesses. Yolanda is a Chartered Accountant, holds commerce qualifications from the University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Pretoria.

MAMELA LUTHULI

Mamela Luthuli is recognised as founder and CEO of Take Note IT, a South African cybersecurity and innovative IT solutions company that is now one of South Africa's most visible black, female-led cybersecurity and IoT businesses. She has also contributed to cyber skills development through the Cyber Excellence Academy in collaboration with CSIR. Mamela holds an MBA from Henley Business School, cybersecurity training from Harvard VPAL, a Management Development Programme from UNISA, and a degree in Public Administration from Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

JUANITA CLARK

Juanita Clark is recognised as Co-Founder and CEO of Digital Council Africa, an independent industry association that connects government, private-sector operators and stakeholders around Africa's digital infrastructure agenda. Her work has helped shape awareness, policy advocacy and ecosystem coordination around fibre, towers, data centres and broader digital-economy infrastructure.

She founded the organisation in 2010, originally focused on fibre optic broadband networks, before expanding its scope to wider digital infrastructure and platform-economy issues. Her public profile reflects nearly two decades of telecommunications-sector advocacy, including engagement with governments, industry bodies and international audiences. She has also co-founded Fibre Optic Association Africa and has been recognised among influential women in technology.

PAULA MOKWENA

Paula Mokwena is the CEO and Head of Co-Investments at Fireball Capital, where she manages direct and co-investment activity into South African innovation and technology-led growth companies. Her relevance to digital infrastructure sits in the capital layer: helping founders and fund managers access smart capital, strategic backing and networks required to scale technology businesses.

Before Fireball Capital, her career spanned investment banking, development finance and private equity. Paula is a CFA charter holder and holds qualifications across engineering, mathematics and applied mathematics, financial economics and investment management.

HILDABERTHA KUNDU

Hildabertha Kundu is recognised for her work at the Development Bank of Southern Africa, where she supports infrastructure deal origination across East, Central and West Africa. Her role is important to digital infrastructure because development finance helps structure and unlock the long-term capital required for connectivity, energy, public infrastructure and digital-economy projects.

She has spent much of her career at DBSA, progressing from Investment Officer to Principal Deal Originator, with earlier experience as an Economics Facilitator at Milpark Business School. She holds a Master's in Development Finance from Stellenbosch University and has completed Harvard Business School Online training.

EMMA INAMUTILA THEOFELUS

Emma Inamutila Theofelus is recognised for her leadership as Namibia's Minister of Information and Communication Technology and Member of Parliament. Her role places her at the centre of Namibia's ICT policy, government communications, digital transformation and e-parliament agenda, with strong relevance to the country's infrastructure and digital-public-service ambitions.

She previously served as Deputy Minister of Information and Communication and began her career as a Legal Officer in Namibia's Ministry of Justice. Her public background also includes youth leadership as Deputy Speaker of the Children's Parliament and Junior Mayor of Windhoek. Emma holds an LLB Honours Degree from the University of Namibia, a Diploma in Business Management and a Diploma in African Feminism and Gender Studies.

NONKQUBELA JORDAN-DYANI

Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani is recognised for her leadership as Director-General of South Africa's Department of Communications and Digital Technologies. Her role sits directly within national digital policy, telecommunications governance, digital transformation and the institutions responsible for South Africa's connected future.

She previously served as Deputy Director-General for International Relations and Trade and acted as Director-General for two years before her permanent appointment in August 2023. She has more than 20 years of public-sector experience, including over a decade in senior management. Nonkqubela holds a BA and BA Honours in International Relations from the University of Fort Hare, with additional certificates in telecommunications policy, regulation and management from Wits University and digital transformation strategy from the University of Cambridge. She has held leadership roles in UPU, ATU, NEPAD ICT and South African Women in ICT, and was appointed to the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience.

KERISSA VARMA

Kerissa Varma is recognised for her leadership in cybersecurity and resilience across Africa. As Microsoft's Chief Security Advisor for Africa, she works with customers and ecosystems on cybersecurity strategy, secure digital transformation, and AI-era risk and resilience.

She has more than 20 years of cybersecurity experience across telecommunications, financial services and government-linked environments. Before Microsoft, she served as Group CISO at Vodacom and held senior information-security roles at Old Mutual, SITA, Electronic Toll Collection, Barclays and Telkom. Kerissa is also President and founder of Women in CyberSecurity Southern Africa, where she works to bridge the gender gap in cybersecurity leadership. She holds a Bachelor of Information Technology Honours degree from Multimedia University.

HELEN KRUGER

Helen Kruger is recognised for her leadership as Head of Operations at Teraco, a Digital Realty company and one of Africa's most important carrier-neutral data centre platforms. Her work is operationally significant because data centre resilience depends on disciplined facilities management, service delivery, process control, operational excellence and the ability to support critical customer environments at scale.

She joined Teraco in 2017 after a career spanning healthcare operations, healthcare IT consulting and executive management. She served as COO of MediKredit and as a consultant supporting change management, business analysis, strategy, project management and general management for organisations across the medical-scheme and healthcare-technology sectors. Helen holds a BSc in Physiology and Chemistry, an Honours degree in Pharmacology and an MBA from the University of the Witwatersrand. She also holds leadership-coaching, ITIL Foundation and Certified Data Center Professional credentials.

MAKGOSI MABASO

Makgosi Mabaso is recognised for her leadership as Chief Commercial Officer at Openserve, where she leads business development, product and marketing strategy for South Africa's wholesale connectivity infrastructure business. She has more than 15 years of telecoms and ICT experience. Public profiles show prior roles as Managing Executive at Telkom, Group Executive Chief of Staff at Telkom Business, Managing Executive for Client Services at Openserve, Sales Managing Account Executive at BCX, and senior IT leadership roles across Telkom, Telkom Business, Lion of Africa Insurance and Faritec. Makgosi holds a Master's in Business Leadership from UNISA, with additional executive and technical qualifications from GIBS, Wits and Tshwane University of Technology.

ASHA MARY THOMAS

Asha Mary Thomas is recognised for her role in commercial roaming at e&, one of the Middle East and Africa's major telecommunications groups. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure because roaming, wholesale mobility, inter-operator agreements and international connectivity partnerships are part of the commercial layer that allows mobile networks to function across borders.

She has over 21 years of international roaming experience, with leadership responsibility in commercial roaming strategy and partner engagement. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala; an MBA in Marketing from Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies and executive education at Columbia Business School and has an edX verified certificate in AI fundamentals.

PAULA COGAN

Paula Cogan is recognised for her leadership as Managing Director and Head of EMEA at Digital Realty, one of the world's largest providers of cloud- and carrier-neutral data centre, colocation and interconnection infrastructure. Her role places her at the centre of regional data centre growth, hyperscale demand, enterprise cloud adoption and the interconnection platforms that support digital economies across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Before joining Digital Realty in 2025, she served as Chief Executive Officer of euNetworks, as well as senior executive roles at Colt Technology Services and Verizon, after beginning her career at BT.

JUDITH GARDINER

Judith Gardiner is recognised for her leadership at Equinix, where she serves as Vice President, Corporate Development & Strategy EMEA. Her work is directly relevant to Africa's digital infrastructure because Equinix's EMEA strategy includes market expansion, acquisitions, integration and growth programmes that influence data centre, interconnection and cloud-adjacent infrastructure across the region.

She joined Equinix in 2013 as Director of Sales Strategy and Operations for EMEA. She later served as Chief of Staff for EMEA, leading high-impact regional projects including acquisition and integration programmes, and also served as Vice President for Growth and Emerging Markets. Before Equinix, she spent more than 10 years at Polycom in finance and sales-operations leadership roles, worked at PeopleSoft, now Oracle, in the Netherlands, and began her career in audit at Deloitte Ireland. She is a Chartered Accountant, qualified through the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland, and has also completed executive education in mergers and acquisitions strategy.

ELENI KWINANA

Eleni Kwinana is recognised for her work at the intersection of telecommunications, enterprise development and inclusive digital transformation. She is Chief Executive at Vulatel and Non-Executive Chairwoman at SmartXchange, where her work supports digital solutions, ICT incubation, MSME development and connectivity-led community transformation.

Her career spans leadership roles at Vodacom, Dimension Data MEA, SPAR South Africa and Clicks Group/Musica. She was previously Executive Head of Vodacom Business in KwaZulu-Natal, where she worked on enterprise connectivity, digital transformation and technology-enabled service delivery initiatives.

ABIMBOLA IKUMARIEGBE

Abimbola Ikumariegbe is the Deputy Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of VDT Communications, one of Nigeria's long-standing enterprise connectivity and broadband infrastructure providers. She is a pioneer staff member of VDT Communications, having joined in 2001 as a Sales Executive before rising through the organisation. She previously served as General Manager, Sales and Marketing, where she helped build the department and grow the company's brand, turnover and market visibility. Abimbola holds a BA and MBA from Obafemi Awolowo University, completed the Senior Management Programme at Lagos Business School, and has ITIL certification and ISO-related knowledge.

AISHA ABDULAZIZ

Aisha Abdulaziz is the Chief Executive Officer of Legend Internet Plc, a Nigerian broadband and digital-services company.

Her public profile shows active leadership around Legend Internet's listing, AGM process, governance, credit rating, proposed acquisitions and product expansion. She has also been visible in fintech and embedded-finance conversations through LegendMail and MailPay, linking connectivity with digital services.

JANE EGERTON-IDEHEN

Jane Egerton-Idehen is recognised for her leadership as MD/CEO of Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd, the national satellite communications company. Her role places her within the satellite and connectivity layer that supports broadband access, public-sector communications, resilience and digital inclusion across Nigeria and wider African markets.

Before NIGCOMSAT, she was Head of Sales, Middle East and Africa at Meta, and previously Country Manager Nigeria and Regional Sales Director, West Africa at Avanti Communications. She also worked across technical, sales and management roles at Ericsson and Nokia Siemens Networks. Jane holds a degree in Electronics Engineering from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, a Master's degree from Warwick Business School, and executive education from Harvard Business School and Yale School of Management. She is also an author and angel investor.

TENI STUFFMAN

Teni Stuffman is the Chief Executive Officer of Lebara's operations in Nigeria, where she is helping launch and position a mobile and digital-services platform for the Nigerian market. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure because mobile access, MVNO-style service models, regulatory partnerships and customer-facing connectivity propositions are key to expanding digital inclusion.

She previously served as co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer at VAS2Nets Technologies, the Nigerian operator behind the Lebara brand deployment. Teni's visible professional development includes MIT study and certifications in ethics, corporate governance, ESG and sustainability-related areas.

MEA THOMPSON

Mea Thompson is recognised for her leadership as Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer of unconnected.org, an organisation focused on connecting unconnected communities to the internet. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure because meaningful connectivity requires partnerships, fundraising, commercial models and field execution that bring networks, devices, platforms and underserved communities together.

Previous roles include Principal Consultant - eSIM, MVNO Strategy, WorkBench Consulting Ltd; Director of eSIM Carrier Relations & Partnerships, AIralo; eSIM Connectivity Partnership Manager, United Networks and Education Leader, Telenor Group.

UCHE OFODILE

Uche Ofodile is recognised for her leadership as CEO of MTN Benin and Chairperson of MTN Mobile Money. Her work sits at the heart of mobile infrastructure, digital financial services, 5G expansion, rural connectivity and market transformation in Benin.

She has more than 20 years of experience across African telecommunications and digital markets. Before MTN Benin, she served as CEO of Lonestar Cell MTN in Liberia, CEO of Millicom/Tigo DRC, Regional Head for Africa for Facebook Express Wi-Fi, Chief Marketing Officer at Vodafone Ghana, and Chief Commercial Officer at MTS First Wireless. Uche holds a BA in Political Science from Ramapo College of New Jersey and has completed executive education at Columbia Business School and Wharton Executive Education.

NIKKI POPOOLA

Nikki Popoola is recognised for her leadership as Director, Sales West Africa at WIOCC Group, where she supports wholesale connectivity, hyperscale infrastructure partnerships and network expansion across West Africa. Her work is central to the commercialisation of subsea, terrestrial and data-centre-adjacent infrastructure for cloud operators, content providers, telcos and ISPs.
She has more than 20 years of telecommunications experience and joined WIOCC in 2016. Public profiles credit her with helping sell SAT-3 connectivity into Nigeria in the early 2000s and playing a role in major connectivity milestones including WIOCC's participation around the Google Equiano cable landing in Nigeria.

PATRICIA OBO-NAI

Patricia Obo-Nai is recognised for her leadership as CEO of Telecel Ghana, following her earlier tenure as CEO of Vodafone Ghana. Her work spans mobile networks, fixed connectivity, customer operations, digital transformation and the leadership of one of Ghana's major telecom operators.

She began her career as an intern at Millicom Ghana and rose through network planning and engineering roles to become Chief Technical Officer. She joined Vodafone Ghana in 2011, later serving as Technology Director, Director for Fixed Business and Customer Operations, and CEO. Patricia holds a BSc in Electrical Engineering from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and an Executive MBA from the University of Ghana Business School. She has also completed executive programmes at London Business School, INSEAD and Kellogg.

MITWA N'GAMBI

Mitwa N'Gambi is recognised for her leadership as CEO of MTN Cote d'Ivoire, where she became the first woman to lead the company. Her role places her within mobile network strategy, digital services, customer growth and national connectivity in one of Francophone West Africa's key telecom markets.

She brings more than 17 years of telecommunications experience, including about eight years as a CEO across MTN operations. Before taking up the Cote d'Ivoire role in 2025, she led MTN Rwanda and MTN Cameroon, where she was associated with business transformation and market leadership.

ESTELLE AKOFIO-SOWAH

Estelle Akofio-Sowah is recognised for her leadership as West Africa Regional Executive at CSquared, where she supports open-access fibre and broadband infrastructure across the region. Her work is relevant because wholesale fibre platforms help lower the cost of connectivity and expand the reach of cloud, enterprise, mobile and public digital services.

She has more than 18 years of experience in the internet and business-development sector in Ghana and West Africa. She previously served as Managing Director of BusyInternet, one of Africa's prominent early internet startups, and as Google's Country Lead in Ghana. Estelle studied Economics and Development Studies at the University of Sussex and was selected as a 2008 African Leadership Initiative Fellow.

DR. JUDITH YAH SUNDAY

Judith Yah Sunday is recognised for her leadership as General Manager of CAMTEL, Cameroon's incumbent national telecommunications operator. Her role sits directly within national fibre, broadband, mobile, satellite and digital transformation infrastructure, including CAMTEL's network expansion and public-enterprise transformation agenda.

She was appointed General Manager of CAMTEL in 2018 after a long career in governance, enterprise development and telecommunications management. She previously served as CAMTEL Director of Marketing and as Regional Director across several regions, including South West, North West, Littoral and Centre. She holds a degree in Economics from the University of Quebec in Montreal, a master's degree in International Banking and Finance from IRIC, and a doctorate from the University of Yaounde II.

JOSEPHINE AWATEFE SAROUK

Josephine Awatefe Sarouk is recognised for her leadership as Managing Director of Bayobab Nigeria, formerly MTN GlobalConnect Nigeria. Her work is central to wholesale connectivity, cross-border infrastructure, enterprise services and the digital foundations that enable operators, hyperscalers and businesses to connect across Nigeria and the wider region.
She has more than 20 years of experience across business development, sales, strategy and technology leadership. Before Bayobab Nigeria, she held senior business development and sales roles at Maxymiser, KODIME and SPG Media, as well as leadership experience within MTN Nigeria regional operations. Josephine has a BA in Journalism and Law from the University of West London, and is a Harvard General Management Programme alumna.

OLUSOLA ADENUGA

Olusola Adenuga is recognised for her leadership as Managing Director and CEO of Olla Systems, a Nigerian information technology company focused on cloud, cybersecurity, database, networking and enterprise systems, and driving the initiation of Oracle Cloud integration in both Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.
Before founding Olla Systems, she built more than 30 years of experience across banking and information technology, including software development, implementation, database administration and systems support. Olusola holds a combined honours degree in Computer Science and Economics from the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, and a master's degree in Finance from the University of Lagos.

ISATOU SECKA-JAH

Isatou Secka-Jah is recognised for her leadership within QCell, one of The Gambia's most important telecoms and ICT service providers. As CIO, her work supports the technology systems behind mobile, broadband and digital services in a market where QCell has played a major role in 3G, 4G, 5G and ACE submarine cable participation. She holds Bachelor of Science (BSc), Electrical and Electronics Engineering and a Master of Science (MSc), Systems Engineering from the University of Maryland College Park.

FUNKE OPEKE

Funke Opeke is recognised as one of Africa's foremost digital infrastructure pioneers. She founded MainOne and led the development of West Africa's first privately owned open-access submarine cable system, later expanding the company into terrestrial fibre, data centres and enterprise connectivity before its acquisition by Equinix. Earlier in her career, she held senior roles at Verizon, MTN Nigeria and NITEL. She holds a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Obafemi Awolowo University and a master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Columbia University, and has received major recognitions including national and global women-in-technology honours.

ADAORA IKENZE

Adaora Ikenze is recognised for her leadership in public policy at Meta, where her work engages the regulatory, governance and digital-economy issues shaping platform and infrastructure adoption across Anglophone West Africa. She has worked across Africa, Europe and the United States as a lawyer, development expert, political adviser and funder. Before Meta, she held senior positions at the Global Fund for Women, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa. She studied at the University of Sheffield and Columbia University.

SADE DADA

Sade Dada is recognised for her public-policy leadership at Meta, with a focus on ICT, connectivity, innovation and the regulatory questions that shape digital-economy growth across West Africa. Before Meta, she worked on broadband deployment, spectrum and communications policy through roles connected to the Wireless Infrastructure Association, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission and Microsoft. She holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Georgia Southern University, a master's degree in Telecommunications from Indiana University and a Juris Doctor from Indiana University Maurer School of Law.

AYOMIDE JONES

Ayomide Jones is recognised for her work in business development and interconnection at Equinix, where she contributes to the commercial and partnership layer of Africa's data centre and connectivity ecosystem. Before Equinix, she built experience across MainOne and related infrastructure environments, including project, vendor and business-development responsibilities. She holds a First Class BEng in Telecommunications Engineering from King's College London and professional project-management credentials.

YVETTE ADOUNVO ATEKPE

Yvette Adounvo Atekpe is recognised as a long-standing leader in Ghana's ICT and enterprise technology sector. She is CEO of dds55, formed after the management buyout and transition of Dimension Data Ghana, and leads a Ghanaian technology company providing enterprise connectivity, cybersecurity, cloud and digital solutions. Her career spans more than three decades, including roles at Celltel, Africa Online, Internet Solutions Ghana and Dimension Data Ghana. She holds undergraduate degrees from the University of Ghana, and a Master of Arts - Information Technology Law from Maastricht School of Management, in addition to executive education at Wharton.

ETHEL COFIE

Ethel Cofie is recognised as founder and CEO of EDEL Technology Consulting and as one of Africa's visible women-in-technology advocates. Her work contributes to enterprise technology, digital products, IT consulting and ecosystem development across West Africa and beyond. She is also founder of Women in Tech Africa.. She holds a computer science degree from Valley View University, a master's degree from the University of Brighton and executive education from Yale School of Management.

THELMA QUAYE

Thelma Quaye is recognised for her continental leadership at Smart Africa, where she leads work across digital infrastructure, skills and women's empowerment. Her role supports African governments as they build the foundations for the Single Digital Market, including broadband, cybersecurity, digital skills and inclusion. Before Smart Africa, she served as Chief Technical Officer at Airtel Ghana and worked with organisations including ITU, UN Women and the African Union. She holds a BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from KNUST and an MBA-related qualification from Paris Graduate School of Management.

JANA KUNICOVA

Jana Kunicová is Practice Manager for Digital Transformation in West and Central Africa at the World Bank. Since joining the Bank in 2006, Jana has worked on various aspects of digital transformation and public sector reform, including automating service delivery and government systems, strategic planning at the center of government, and change management. She has led teams to deliver lending operations, helped develop country strategies, and authored major analytical reports, including a global flagship on public sector innovations in the developing world. Her work took her to over 70 countries across Africa, Eastern Europe, and Central and East Asia; outside HQ, she has held field postings in Malaysia, South Africa, Kenya, and Senegal. Jana holds a PhD in political economy from Yale University. When not working to drive digital transformation, she is most likely outside with her family enjoying the outdoors, or training for her next triathlon.

KANO YAHANATOU

Kano Yahanatou is recognised for her leadership as Managing Director of Burinfort SA, a Burkina Faso-based technology and digital services company. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure through enterprise technology delivery, local ICT capability and the development of technology services that help institutions participate in the digital economy.

JUMOKE AKANDE

Jumoke Akande is recognised for her role connected to Project BRIDGE, Nigeria's flagship broadband infrastructure initiative focused on expanding national fibre capacity. Her work is relevant because large-scale broadband programmes depend on coordination across government, finance, transaction advisers, operators and infrastructure delivery partners. Before her public sector role, she had extensive experience in the private sector as Chief Marketing Officer at Avanti Communications; Associate Director, Business Solutions, IHS Towers; Consultant Program Manager, Dell Technologies; Head of Marketing, MainOne, ain addition to earlier roles at MTN and Morgan Stanley. She holds an MBA from Cranfield University, and a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Computer Science from the University of Reading.

AYAAN ADAM

Ayaan Adam is recognised for her leadership in infrastructure finance, private equity and climate-related investment across emerging markets. At AFC Capital Partners, she sits within the capital layer that enables large-scale infrastructure deployment, including energy and digital-economy-enabling systems. She previously led the Green Climate Fund's private-sector arm, served as CDC Group's Managing Director of Africa Funds, and spent 17 years at IFC, including as Chief Investment Officer. She holds an MBA from MIT Sloan School of Management and a summa cum laude BA in Mathematics from Clark University.

LISA PINSLEY

Lisa Pinsley is recognised for her role as Fund Head of AIIM's African Transition Acceleration Fund, a pan-African investment vehicle focused on clean energy and sustainable infrastructure. Her relevance to digital infrastructure lies in the energy and capital systems required to power data centres, connectivity networks and enterprise digital growth. She has over 25 years of emerging-markets experience, including senior energy and infrastructure roles at Actis, American Capital Energy & Infrastructure, Globeleq and AES. Her professional record spans infrastructure investment, sustainability and public-sector work.

DR. AMINATA ZERBO-SABANE

Dr. Aminata Zerbo-Sabane is recognised for her leadership of Burkina Faso's digital transition, posts and electronic communications portfolio. Her role places her at the centre of national digital policy, ICT development and public-sector digital transformation. She previously served as Director General of ANPTIC and held roles connected to strategic digital studies, e-Burkina, PADTIC and WURI. She is also a lecturer-researcher in computer science at Joseph Ki-Zerbo University. She holds engineering qualifications in computer science and a PhD in Computer Engineering from Polytechnique Montréal.

AURELIE ADAM-SOULE ZOUMAROU

Aurelie Adam-Soule Zoumarou is recognised for her leadership of Benin's digital economy and digitalisation agenda. Her work covers telecoms policy, digital public systems, connectivity and the regulatory environment needed for national digital transformation. Before becoming minister, she worked at SFR France, Accenture France, ARCEP Benin and GSMA Africa, where she contributed to mobile policy and access initiatives. She is a telecoms and ICT engineer trained at Télécom SudParis and holds public-policy and leadership training from Syracuse University's Maxwell School.

MAVIS A. AMPAH

Mavis Ampah is recognised for her leadership as Board Chair of Ghana's National Communications Authority and for more than three decades of work in ICT policy, infrastructure and international development. She has over 20 years of World Bank experience, including work on the Digital Economy for Africa agenda, broadband investments, ICT policy reform and digital identification programmes. Earlier in her career, she contributed to Ghana's telecommunications-sector reform programme. She holds a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University and a BA in Economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

CINA LAWSON

Cina Lawson is recognised as one of Africa's most visible digital-government reform leaders. As Togo's minister responsible for public-sector efficiency and digital transformation, she has led digital policy, telecom reform, broadband expansion, digital identity and inclusion initiatives, including the Novissi digital cash transfer programme. Before government, she worked at the World Bank, Alcatel-Lucent and Orange Group. She studied at Sciences Po Paris and holds a Master of Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School.

SALIMA BAH

Salima Bah is recognised as Sierra Leone's Minister of Communication, Technology and Innovation and the first person to lead the newly created ministry. Her mandate includes digital transformation, technology policy, innovation and public-service modernisation. Before her appointment, she served as State Counsel and was seconded to the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation as Policy Lead and Head of Projects. She holds an LLB from the University of Wales, was called to the Sierra Leone Bar, and earned a master's degree in Intellectual Property and Technology Law from Columbia Law School.

RIMINI HARAYA MAKAMA

Rimini Makama is recognised for her role as Executive Commissioner, Stakeholder Management at the Nigerian Communications Commission. Her work is central to stakeholder engagement, public policy, regulatory communication and the trust architecture required for telecoms-sector development. Before joining the NCC, she held senior government affairs roles at Microsoft, including Government Affairs Director for MEA Emerging Markets, where she worked on cloud adoption, public-sector digital transformation and policy frameworks. She holds an LLB from the University of Jos and an LLM in International Law and World Order from the University of Reading.

HADIZA UMAR

Hadiza Umar is recognised for her leadership in communications and stakeholder management at NITDA, Nigeria's national IT development agency. Her work supports the public trust, institutional visibility and stakeholder coordination required for digital-economy policy implementation. She joined NITDA in 2009 as Head of Corporate Affairs after earlier journalism and public-relations experience and holds fellowships at national and African Pubic Relations institutions.

NONYE UJAM

Nonye Ujam is recognised for her leadership in government affairs at Microsoft, covering West Africa. Her role engages governments and stakeholders on digital transformation, AI, cloud adoption, policy and regulatory reform. Before Microsoft, she worked in development finance at the Central Bank of Nigeria, designing and implementing programmes addressing development finance and financial inclusion gaps. She holds a Master's in Global Development Practice from Harvard University, an MSc in Computing, IT Law and Management from King's College London and a BSc in Computer Science.

UDE ENEBELI

Ude Enebeli is recognised for her leadership of IT infrastructure and cloud engineering at MTN Nigeria. Her work supports the systems, cloud platforms, service-management frameworks and operational resilience that underpin one of Africa's largest telecom operators. She has more than 20 years of technology and transformation experience, including over a decade at MTN. Her professional credentials include ITIL Expert, PRINCE2 Practitioner, DevOps Leader, Scrum@Scale, SAFe Scrum Master and Cisco CCNA certifications, alongside executive education including MIT Sloan exposure.

ONYINYE IKENNA-EMEKA

Onyinye Ikenna-Emeka is recognised for her leadership as Chief Marketing Officer of MTN Nigeria, following her earlier role as Chief Broadband Officer. Her work is relevant to digital infrastructure because she helped drive MTN's fixed broadband business, including fixed wireless access and fibre-to-the-home, growing the subscriber base to over 3 million. Her career spans more than two decades across commercial, operational and strategic leadership. She holds a BSc in Geology from the University of Calabar, an MBA from the University of Manchester, and executive education from Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Said and Lagos Business School. She is a DBA researcher at Cranfield University.

BUKOLA AJAYI

Bukola Ajayi is recognised for her leadership in enterprise technology and IT systems within MTN Nigeria, one of Africa's largest telecommunications markets. She previously served as the company's General Manager, Architecture and Engineering. She holds more than 20 years of experience within MTN, having held several leadership roles across information systems, enterprise operations, solution delivery, and product development.

She holds a Bachelor of Science, Information Systems from the University of Hertfordshire, MBAs from the University of Calabar and the University of Wales, and has attended Senior Management programmes from Lagos Business School, Harvard Business School, and IMD.

AISHA MUMUNI

Aisha Mumuni is recognised for her leadership as Chief Digital Officer of MTN Nigeria, where she leads teams using technology and data to support business objectives and digital-product growth. She has more than 20 years of telecoms, commercial, partnership and digital-services experience. Before becoming CDO in 2022, she was instrumental in building MTN Nigeria's Digital Services business from its early phase. She holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering from Obafemi Awolowo University and has attended local and international strategic and senior executive education programmes.

ESTHER KING

Esther King is recognised for her work in network engineering and her leadership role connected to GAMCHIX, a Gambian women-in-ICT community. Her contribution sits in the technical connectivity layer, where network engineers help keep telecoms infrastructure operational and reliable. She also served as a member of the steering committee for Gambia Internet Governance. She holds a degree from Quantic School of Business and Technology.

BIMPE OLALEYE

Bimpe Olaleye is recognised for her leadership at ipNX, one of Nigeria's long-standing fibre, broadband and ICT service providers. As Group Executive Director, Commercials, her work connects network capability with enterprise, SME and residential market demand. She has been with ipNX since 2005 and previously held finance leadership roles including Executive Director, Finance and CFO/GM. Before ipNX, she served as General Manager of Finance at Telnet Nigeria. She holds a degree in Accounting from Olabisi Onabanjo University and a master's degree in Finance and Management from Cranfield School of Management.

KANWULIA OKAFOR

Kanwulia Okafor is recognised for her leadership at GSMA, where she works across industry services, mobile-operator collaboration and the enabling platforms that support digital infrastructure growth. Her role connects operator ecosystems with Open Gateway, digital public infrastructure, AI, interoperability and cross-market innovation. She has built a strong track record in strategy, transformation and cross-sector partnership development, with a particular focus on how digital technologies can improve service delivery, strengthen system resilience and create sustainable market opportunities. Previous roles include Chief of Staff at Onafriq; Programme Manager at Airbus, as well as roles at Huawei and Aerospace. She holds a Bachelor degree from the University of Ibadan and an MBA from the University of the West of England.

LYNDA SAINT-NWAFOR

Lynda Saint-Nwafor is the Chief Enterprise Business Officer (CEBO) at MTN Nigeria, where she leads the enterprise and ICT strategy, driving technology solutions that enable MTN to better serve businesses and customers. She is passionate about Nigeria's SME sector and its potential to drive economic growth, innovation, and meaningful transformation.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Engineering from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), where she received the Dean's Prize for the best results in the Faculty, and has completed executive education at Columbia Business School, New York. Since joining MTN Nigeria in 2001, she has held several senior leadership positions, including Core Network Planning Manager, General Manager, Network Planning, and Chief Technical Officer. She has also served in key advisory roles, including as a member of the Presidential Committee instituted by former President Goodluck Jonathan.

Lynda is driven by the optimism, resilience, and energy of small business owners and is committed to helping them achieve their ambitions. Through her leadership, she continues to champion solutions that support business growth while contributing to innovation and economic development across Nigeria.

AMIE KHAN JAMMEH

Amie Khan Jammeh is recognised for her work in external plant infrastructure at Gambia Telecommunications, a function tied to the physical network layer of telecoms: fibre, ducts, outside plant, field operations and network extension. She holds telecommunications certifications from the Gamtel Training and Multimedia Institute and the City and Guilds Certificate, Electronics from Gambia Technical Training School.

MINETTE LIBOM LI LIKENG

Minette Libom Li Likeng is recognised for her long-running leadership of Cameroon's posts and telecommunications portfolio. Before entering government, she had a distinguished career in the customs administration, eventually serving as the Director General of Customs from 2008 to 2015. She holds a degree in economics from the University of Yaoundé I and a diploma from the National School of Administration and Magistracy.

VUYISEKA FEBRUARIE

Vuyiseka Februarie is the Executive responsible for Technical Operations and Engineering at Africa Data Centres, with a portfolio spanning South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. She has built her career in the data centre industry, progressing from operational leadership into an executive role with responsibility for critical operations, engineering and infrastructure development across multiple African markets.

Her leadership responsibilities span technical operations, infrastructure development, capacity planning and operational resilience. She helps ensure that facilities supporting cloud platforms, digital services and enterprise technology operate reliably, efficiently and at the scale required by Africa's growing digital economy.

Through her work, Vuyiseka represents the technical and operational leadership essential to building trusted digital infrastructure in Africa. Her contribution also demonstrates the importance of increasing women's representation in the engineering, development and management of mission-critical infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women in digital infrastructure should become more intentional about documenting their roles. A strong public profile begins with clarity: current title, organisation, sector focus, region, scope of responsibility and the infrastructure layer influenced by the role.

Companies should do more to profile women in technical, commercial and operational leadership roles. Many organisations only publicise CEOs or external-facing executives, while women leading network operations, cloud engineering, data centre facilities, interconnection, cybersecurity, procurement, project delivery, public policy, legal and finance remain invisible.

Industry bodies and event organisers should create more structured visibility platforms: women-in-infrastructure directories, speaker databases, technical-community profiles and annual recognition lists. Events should invite women not only to diversity panels, but to core sessions on data centres, cloud, connectivity, subsea cables, IXPs, spectrum, AI infrastructure, infrastructure finance and policy implementation.

2027 OUTLOOK

We expect that our next edition will build on the 2026 report by moving further from recognition toward deeper industry intelligence.

The research will continue tracking who women leaders are, but also examine where they sit in the infrastructure value chain, what roles remain under-visible, which countries are underrepresented, and how institutions are building leadership pipelines.

Research priorities for 2027 will include stronger country-by-country validation, deeper analysis of technical and operational roles, expanded coverage of Francophone, Lusophone, Arabic-speaking and Central African markets, and more direct engagement with companies, regulators, DFIs, industry bodies and technical communities.

Technical roles will be a major focus in 2027. Women in data centre operations, power and cooling, network engineering, fibre deployment, outside plant, satellite engineering, spectrum planning, cloud architecture, cybersecurity, peering, DevOps, infrastructure procurement, project finance, rights-of-way implementation and programme delivery may not always be public-facing, but they are central to whether infrastructure actually works.

Corrections and new evidence will be handled through a structured update process. Future editions will include a formal correction window, a public nomination form, clearer evidence requirements, direct institutional verification and a review panel with regional and sector expertise.

We hope that the report can become the annual reference point for women shaping Africa's digital infrastructure; not only from a recognition standpoint, but also market intelligence, visibility benchmarking and a signal of where leadership is emerging.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC-FOOTPRINT RANKING

Band	Score	Name	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
Band 1	5	Caroline Kamaitha	Raxio Data Centres Uganda	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Judy Nguru	Google	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Nurani Nimpuno	London Internet Exchange (LINX)	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Angela Wamola	GSMA	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Funke Opeke	MainOne	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Faith Waithaka	Africa Data Centres Association	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Fiona Asonga	Technology Service Providers of Kenya	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Madhvi Gokool	AFRINIC	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Catherine Muraga	Microsoft	East Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
Band 1	5	Dr. Aminah Zawedde	Government of Uganda	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Paula Ingabire	Government of Rwanda	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Fawzia Ali-Kimanthi	Safaricom	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Frehiwot Tamiru	ethio telecom	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Juliet Nsubuga	Bayobab Uganda	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Sylvia Anampiu	Safaricom PLC	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 2	4	Salewa Oyagbola	IHS	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Carla Sanderson	Teraco / NAPAfrica	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Maria Pinto	Raxio Data Centres Angola	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Michele McCann	Teraco / NAPAfrica	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Yolandi Cloete	DE-CIX	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Juanita Clark	Digital Council Africa / FTTH Council Africa	Southern Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms

Band	Score	Name	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
Band 1	5	Kerissa Varma	Microsoft	Southern Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
Band 1	5	Emma Inamutila Theofelus	Government of Namibia	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Hildabertha Kundu	Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Mandisa Ntloko-Petersen	SEACOM	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Nene Maiga	Orange Botswana	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Ethel Cofie	EDEL Technology Consulting	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Thelma Quaye	Smart Africa	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 1	5	Adaora Ikenze	Meta	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Jana Kunicova	World Bank	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Ayaan Adam	Africa Finance Corporation	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Cina Lawson	Government of Togo	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Lisa Pinsley	African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM)	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Mavis A. Ampah	National Communications Authority Ghana	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Nonye Ujam	Microsoft	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Rimini Haraya Makama	Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Sade Dada	Meta	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Aisha Mumuni	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Bimpe Olaleye	ipNX	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Bukola Ajayi	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Estelle Akofio-Sowah	CSquared	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Jane Egerton-Idehen	NIGCOMSAT	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

Band	Score	Name	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
Band 1	5	Josephine Awatefe Sarouk	Bayobab Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Judith Yah Sunday	Cameroon Telecommunications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Mitwa N'Gambi	MTN Cote d'Ivoire	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Nikki Popoola	WIOCC Group	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Onyinye Ikenna-Emeka	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Patricia Obo-Nai	Telecel Ghana	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Uche Ofodile	MTN Benin	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Yolanda Cuba	MTN	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Aurelie Adam-Soule Zoumarou	Government of Benin	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 1	5	Lynda Saint-Nwafor	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 1	5	Salima Bah	Government of Sierra Leone	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 2	4	Wanja Muriithi	iColo Kenya	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 2	4	Sylvia Mulinge	MTN Uganda	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 2	4	Doha Ammour	N+One Data Centers	North Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 1	5	Tawa Bolarin	Rack Centre	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 2	4	Mouna Essa-Egh	Schneider Electric	North Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
Band 2	4	Lobna Helal	Telecom Egypt	North Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 2	4	Mamela Luthuli	Take Note Information Technology	Southern Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 2	4	Paula Mokwena	Fireball Capital	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 2	4	Makgosi Mabaso	Openserve	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 2	4	Nomso Kana	SimSciex Technologies	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

Band	Score	Name	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
Band 2	4	Emilia Nghikembua	Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 2	4	Olusola Adenuga	Olla Systems	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 2	4	Yvette Adounvo Atekpe	Dynamic Data Solutions (dds55)	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 3	3	Aisha Abdulaziz	Legend Internet Plc	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 5	1	Vuyiseka Februarie	Africa Data Centres	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Feven Dagnachew Milikit	Wingu Africa	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Isabel Odida	Gcore	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Michele Opiyo	Meta	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Rayana Choudhary	Wingu Africa	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Lydia Sitienei	Communications Authority of Kenya	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 3	3	Susan Mbathia	Finnfund	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 3	3	Adeela Mahmood	Raxio Group	North Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Helen Kruger	Teraco	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Judith Gardiner	Equinix	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Paula Cogan	Digital Realty	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 3	3	Hon Tatenda Mavetera	Republic of Zimbabwe	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 3	3	Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani	Government of South Africa	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 3	3	Asha Mary Thomas	e& (Etisalat Group)	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Teni Stuffman	Lebara Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Beauty Apleni	Openserve	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Kim Sacree	SEACOM	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

Band	Score	Name	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
Band 3	3	Kano Yahanatou	Burinfort SA	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
Band 3	3	Hadiza Umar	National Information Technology Development	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 3	3	Abimbola Ikumariegbe	VDT Communications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Esther King	QCELL	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Isatou Jah	QCELL	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Mea Thompson	unconnected.org	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 3	3	Ude Enebeli	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 4	2	Jane Munga	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 4	2	Eleni Kwinana	Ilitha Telecommunications	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 4	2	Ayomide Jones	Equinix	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
Band 4	2	Kanwulia Okafor	GSMA	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
Band 5	1	Vibhuti Jain	U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)	Pan-African / Global	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 5	1	Jumoke Akande	Federal Ministry of Communications Nigeria	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 5	1	Minette Libom Li Likeng	Government of Cameroon	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
Band 5	1	Amie Khan Jammeh	Gambia Telecommunications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

APPENDIX B: FULL HONOUREE LIST

No.	Name	Current Title	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
1	Judy Nguru	Senior Data Center Strategic Negotiator, Business	Google	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
2	Maria Pinto	Country Manager	Raxio Data Centres Angola	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
3	Michele McCann	Head of Platforms & Interconnection	Teraco / NAPAfrica	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
4	Caroline Kamaitha	Vice President, Enterprise & Cloud	Raxio Data Centres Uganda	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
5	Carla Sanderson	Head of Marketing	Teraco / NAPAfrica	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
6	Wanja Muriithi	Country General Manager	iColo Kenya	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
7	Nurani Nimpuno	Chief Strategy and Global Engagement Officer	London Internet Exchange (LINX)	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
8	Yolandi Cloete	Community & Academy Manager	DE-CIX	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
9	Isabel Odida	Peering Manager; Founder UGNOG	Gcore	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
10	Olusola Adenuga	Chief Executive Officer	Olla Systems	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
11	Rayana Choudhary	Vice President, Marketing	Wingu Africa	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
12	Feven Dagnachew	Country Director, Ethiopia	Wingu Africa	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
13	Doha Ammour	VP, International Business Development	N+One Data Centers	North Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
14	Michele Opiyo	Network Delivery Head	Meta	East Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
15	Beauty Apleni	Chief Executive Officer	Openserve	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
16	Frehiwot Tamiru	Chief Executive Officer	ethio telecom	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
17	Josephine Awatefe Sarouk	Managing Director	Bayobab Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
18	Judith Yah Sunday	Chief Executive Officer	Cameroon Telecommunications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
19	Juliet Nsubuga	Managing Director	Bayobab Uganda	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
20	Estelle Akofio-Sowah	Regional Executive, West Africa	CSquared	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
21	Mitwa N'Gambi	Chief Executive Officer	MTN Cote d'Ivoire	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

APPENDIX B: FULL HONOUREE LIST

No.	Name	Current Title	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
22	Patricia Obo-Nai	Chief Executive Officer	Telecel Ghana	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
23	Nikki Popoola	Director, Sales West Africa	WIOCC Group	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
24	Uche Ofodile	Chief Executive Officer	MTN Benin	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
25	Nene Maiga	Chief Executive Officer	Orange Botswana	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
26	Fawzia Ali-Kimanthi	Chief Consumer Business Officer	Safaricom	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
27	Mandisa Ntloko-	Group Chief Marketing Officer	SEACOM	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
28	Mea Thompson	Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer	unconnected.org	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
29	Nomso Kana	Founder & Chief Executive Officer	SimSciex Technologies	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
30	Teni Stuffman	Managing Director	Lebara Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
31	Kim Sacree	Managing Director for Digital Services	SEACOM	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
32	Lynda Saint-Nwafor	Chief Enterprise Business Officer	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
33	Makgosi Mabaso	Chief Commercial Officer	Openserve	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
34	Jane Egerton-Idehen	Chief Executive Officer	NIGCOMSAT	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
35	Aisha Abdulaziz	Chief Executive Officer	Legend Internet Plc	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
36	Abimbola Ikumariegbe	Deputy MD / Chief Operating Officer	VDT Communications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
37	Bimpe Olaleye	Group Executive Director, Commercial	ipNX	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
38	Esther King	Network Engineer; Chairperson GAMCHIX	QCELL	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
39	Catherine Muraga	MD, Microsoft Africa Development Centre	Microsoft	East Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
40	Aisha Mumuni	Chief Digital Officer	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
41	Salewa Oyagbola	Associate Director, Business Solutions	IHS	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
42	Bukola Ajayi	Chief Information Officer	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

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No.	Name	Current Title	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
43	Onyinye Ikenna-Emeka	Chief Marketing Officer	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
44	Ude Enebeli	General Manager, IT Infrastructure & Cloud	MTN Nigeria	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
45	Kerissa Varma	Chief Security Advisor, Africa	Microsoft	Southern Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
46	Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani	Director-General, Dept of Communications & Digital	Government of South Africa	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
47	Paula Ingabire	Minister of ICT & Innovation	Government of Rwanda	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
48	Nonye Ujam	Director, Government Affairs West Africa	Microsoft	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
49	Hadiza Umar	Director, Corporate Communications & Media	NITDA	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
50	Rimini Haraya Makama	Executive Commissioner	Nigerian Communications	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
51	Salima Bah	Minister of Communication, Technology & Innovation	Government of Sierra Leone	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
52	Cina Lawson	Minister of Public Sector Efficiency & Digital	Government of Togo	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
53	Lydia Sitienei	Corporation Secretary	Communications Authority of Kenya	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
54	Mavis A. Ampah	Board Chairman	National Communications	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
55	Emma Inamutila Theofelus	Minister of Information & Communication Technology	Government of Namibia	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
56	Aurelie Adam-Soule	Minister of Digital Economy & Communications	Government of Benin	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
57	Dr. Aminata Zerbo-Sabane	Minister of Digital Transition Posts & Electronic	Government of Burkina Faso	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
58	Dr. Aminah Zawedde	Permanent Secretary, ICT & National Guidance	Government of Uganda	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
59	Lisa Pinsley	Fund Head, African Transition Acceleration Fund	African Infrastructure	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
60	Ayaan Adam	Senior Director & CEO, AFC Capital Partners	Africa Finance Corporation	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
61	Jumoke Akande	Project Lead, Project BRIDGE	Federal Ministry of Communications	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
62	Susan Mbathia	Senior Investment Manager	Finnfund	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
63	Jana Kunicova	Practice Manager, Digital Transformation, West and Central Manager	World Bank	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding

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No.	Name	Current Title	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
64	Hildabertha Kundu	Principal Deal Originator & Structured Finance Lead	Development Bank of Southern Africa	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
65	Paula Mokwena	CEO & Head of Co-Investments	Fireball Capital	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
66	Juanita Clark	Co-Founder & CEO	Digital Council Africa / FTTH Council	Southern Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
67	Fiona Asonga	Chief Executive Officer	Technology Service Providers of Kenya	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
68	Faith Waithaka	Chairperson	Africa Data Centres Association	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
69	Thelma Quaye	Chief Digital Infrastructure Skills & Empowerment	Smart Africa	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
70	Madhvi Gokool	Senior IP Resource Specialist & Policy Liaison	AFRINIC	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
71	Mamela Luthuli	Chief Executive Officer	Take Note Information	Southern Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
72	Kano Yahanatou	Managing Director	Burinfort SA	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
73	Ethel Cofie	Founder & CEO	EDEL Technology Consulting	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
74	Yvette Adounvo Atekpe	Chief Executive Officer	Dynamic Data Solutions (dds55)	West Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
75	Sade Dada	Head of Public Policy, Anglophone West Africa	Meta	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
76	Adaora Ikenze	Director, Public Policy, Anglophone West Africa	Meta	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
77	Helen Kruger	Head of Operations	Teraco	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
78	Lobna Helal	Board Chairman	Telecom Egypt	North Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
79	Tawa Bolarin	Chief Commercial Officer	Rack Centre	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
80	Sylvia Mulinge	CEO & Head of Co-Investments	MTN Uganda	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
81	Ayomide Jones	Head, Business Development, Interconnections	Equinix	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
82	Isatou Secka-Jah	Chief Information Officer	QCELL	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
83	Mouna Essa-Egh	VP Middle East & Africa, Secure power division and datacenter business	Schneider Electric	North Africa	Enterprise Platforms & Technology Providers
84	Yolanda Cuba	Group Regional Vice President Southern and East	MTN	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure

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No.	Name	Current Title	Institution	Region	Sector Pillar
85	Hon Tatenda Mavetera	Minister of Information Communication, Technology,	Republic of Zimbabwe	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
86	Eleni Kwinana	Head of KwaZulu-Natal Region	Ilitha Telecommunications	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
87	Sylvia Anampiu	Director, Fixed Business	Safaricom PLC	East Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
88	Angela Wamola	Head of Sub-Saharan Africa	GSMA	East Africa	Ecosystem Builders & Emerging Platforms
89	Vuyiseka Februarie	Executive, Technical Operations & Development	Africa Data Centres	South Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
90	Adeela Mahmood	Head of Marketing	Raxio Group	North Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
91	Judith Gardiner	VP, Corporate Development & Strategy EMEA	Equinix	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
92	Kanwulia Okafor	Director Industry Services	GSMA	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
93	Paula Cogan	Managing Director, EMEA	Digital Realty	Southern Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
94	Asha Mary Thomas	Director, Commercial Roaming (ME, Africa & India)	e& (Etisalat Group)	Southern Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
95	Jane Munga	Fellow Africa Program	Carnegie Endowment for International	East Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
96	Funke Opeke	Founder and Former Chief Executive Officer	MainOne, an Equinix company	West Africa	Data Centers, Cloud & Interconnection
97	Vibhuti Jain	Managing Director & Regional Head of Africa	U.S. International Development Finance	Pan-African / Global	Policy, Regulation & Funding
98	Amie Khan Jammeh	Director of External Plant	Gambia Telecommunications	West Africa	Telecom Operators & Backbone Infrastructure
99	Minette Libom Li Likeng	Minister of Posts and Telecommunications	Government of Cameroon	West Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding
100	Emilia Nghikembua	Chief Executive Officer	Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia	Southern Africa	Policy, Regulation & Funding

APPENDIX C: CORRECTION AND UPDATE POLICY

This report is a research-backed recognition effort, not a closed or final record. Corrections, clarifications and additional evidence are welcome, including updated names, titles, institutions, regions, sector classifications, public-footprint scores and biographical details.

Future editions will treat corrections in three categories: factual correction, evidence update and nomination review. Where updates are supported by credible public evidence or direct institutional confirmation, they may be reflected in future editions.

The goal of this policy is to improve the quality, fairness and usefulness of the report over time, while recognising that low visibility does not mean low impact.

ABOUT

About Africa Hyperscalers

Africa Hyperscalers is a market intelligence, convening and ecosystem development platform focused on Africa's digital infrastructure sector. The platform connects data centre operators, cloud providers, telecom and connectivity companies, internet infrastructure players, policymakers, investors, enterprise technology leaders and ecosystem builders working to accelerate the continent's digital infrastructure growth.

Through research, executive convenings, industry briefings, strategic partnerships and flagship platforms such as Hyperscalers Convergence Africa, Africa Hyperscalers supports the conversations and collaborations required to expand Africa's compute capacity, improve connectivity, strengthen data sovereignty, attract infrastructure capital and deepen local participation in the digital economy.

About the Report

100 Women Powering Africa's Digital Infrastructure 2026 is an annual research and recognition report highlighting women whose work influences the infrastructure layer of Africa's digital economy. The report focuses on leaders across telecoms, fibre, data centres, cloud, interconnection, satellite, cybersecurity, digital policy, regulation, infrastructure finance, enterprise platforms and ecosystem development.

The report was developed to make women's contributions to digital infrastructure more visible, while also providing a structured view of representation by region, sector pillar, institution type and public footprint. It is intended as both a recognition platform and an industry intelligence product that can support stronger documentation, nomination, visibility and leadership pipelines across the sector.

Published By

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Research Focus

This report focuses specifically on digital infrastructure, not the broad technology sector. It recognises women whose roles directly influence the systems, platforms, policies, capital and institutions that enable digital economies to scale. This includes infrastructure deployment, network operations, cloud and compute capacity, data centre development, public policy, infrastructure finance, technical communities, enterprise infrastructure and market coordination.

Acknowledgements

Africa Hyperscalers acknowledges the women featured in this report for their leadership, resilience and contribution to Africa's digital infrastructure ecosystem. We also recognise the partners, validators, nominators, researchers, industry colleagues and institutions who supported the process by sharing names, reviewing information and helping improve the quality of the list.

This report remains a living contribution to the sector. Any omissions or errors are regretted, and future editions will continue to improve through wider nominations, stronger country validation and additional public evidence.

Disclaimer

The public-footprint ranking in this report is not a judgement of competence, seniority or impact. It measures public discoverability and sector visibility based on available sources such as company profiles, institutional biographies, conference records, interviews, awards, regulatory references, press coverage, professional profiles and public thought leadership.

A leader may have significant operational influence and still receive a lower public-footprint score if her work is not well documented publicly. The purpose of the ranking is to support visibility, improve documentation and encourage institutions to make women's contributions easier to discover and verify.

Corrections and Updates

Africa Hyperscalers welcomes corrections, updated titles, missing names, additional evidence and institutional submissions for future editions. Corrections will be reviewed based on credible public sources, institutional confirmation or verifiable sector evidence.

Future editions will include a clearer nomination process, stronger regional validation, deeper coverage of underrepresented countries and more deliberate attention to technical and operational roles that may not currently receive adequate public visibility.

Africa hyperscalers



CONTACT US

Morocco: +212 6 20 96 04 71, Nigeria: +234-810-900-3350, Kenya: +254-14-0302381

Africa hyperscalers

