



Press release

The Agence Française de Développement and Paris 2024 have opened an innovative incubator designed to harness sport as a way of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The first group of 26 athlete-entrepreneurs championing social and environmental projects in France and Africa begin their training

Paris, 4 February 2021 – Global Sports Week 2021 marked the one year anniversary of the partnership between The Agence Française de développement (AFD) and Paris 2024. At this occasion, Rémy Rioux, Chief Executive Officer of the AFD, and Tony Estanguet, President of Paris 2024, unveiled the chosen 26 athlete-entrepreneurs, who will receive support through the shared incubator to champion high-impact social and environmental projects in France and 10 countries in Africa.

Encouraging athletes to drive change

Athletes are at the heart of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Their power to inspire and mobilise means they have a major role to play in boosting and promoting the social and environmental impact of sport.

The incubation programme is therefore designed to support athlete-entrepreneurs to nurture and grow their high-impact social and environmental projects in France and 10 countries in Africa.

The programme pursues a two-fold objective:

- Harness the skills, values and commitment of athletes to boost the emergence of long-term, high-impact projects.
- Facilitate athletes' reconversion, safeguarding a solid, long-term professional future.

26 athletes striving to make a positive impact on society

A panel of six members, including Laurence Fischer, French Ambassador for Sport, as well as representatives from the AFD and Paris 2024, chose 26 athletes from 91 applications to form the first group to go through the incubator. Ten of them will develop projects in France and 16 in Africa.

The group is composed of 10 women and 16 men aged between 18 and 56. Among them are 12 Olympians and two Paralympians, some of whom are retired and some who still compete, including a number of medal winners in various competitions. Having noted that fewer women applied to the programme, Paris 2024 and the AFD will conduct targeted action to encourage women, as well as more disabled athletes, to submit their projects in next year's programme.

The chosen projects respond to certain societal issues, such as inclusion and integration (in particular for disabled people and people from underprivileged backgrounds), gender equality, health, education and environmental protection.



In this first group, the 26 chosen projects cover a variety of areas, including:

- **Sarah Hanffou, Cameroonian table tennis player**, is looking to encourage girls to get into sport. Through her charity, she has launched a programme to develop table tennis as an extra-curricular activity open to all children.
- **Aby Gaye, Senegalese basketball player**, wants to organise basketball camps to boost participants' confidence and self-esteem. Her project will enable young people to take part in training sessions and work with health professionals, who will focus in particular on depigmentation of the skin.
- **Roger Amegbeto, Togolese swimmer**, wishes to build Togo's first public swimming pool, encourage people to get into swimming and teach them about the way involvement in sport improves health.

The detailed list with the 26 athlete-entrepreneurs is available at the bottom of the document.

Bespoke support

Over the next eight months, from February to October 2021, the athletes will enjoy bespoke support through one-to-one and group sessions. They will take part in a range of formats, including bootcamps, group ideation workshops, mentoring sessions and meetings with inspirational figures.

The aim is to provide them with a method and tools to build their project from start to finish – from defining the problem they are looking to solve through to prototyping a socially and financially effective solution. They will receive help in building a financial model and a marketing plan, understanding various communication techniques to best reach their targets (partners, clients, investors, etc.) and most importantly assessing the social and environmental impact of their idea.

A partnership to harness sport as a driver of sustainable development

In their presentation at the Arena on February 3, Rémy Rioux and Tony Estanguet reiterated the purpose of their partnership and reviewed their achievements. Also present via video link was the Professor Yunus, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 and pioneer of social entrepreneurship through sport. Ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Paris 2024 and the AFD have sought to pool their strengths and mobilise their networks to achieve a shared ambition to boost the role sport can play in offering solutions to many of the problems we face in today's society, including climate change, social inequality, education, well-being, gender equality, and peace.

The first tangible action of the partnership came at the Finance in Common Summit on November 11, 2020, when Rémy Rioux and Tony Estanguet urged development banks to work more closely with the international sporting movement. Other initiatives will be launched in 2021, in particular at the One Young World Summit in July, where Paris 2024 and the AFD will unveil a new initiative to support projects that harness sport to boost development in Africa.

Rémy Rioux, Chief Executive Officer of the AFD, said: *"I am very pleased that the partnership between Paris 2024 and the AFD has made it possible, just one year after announcing it on*



the same stage at Global Sports Week, to launch an incubator for sustainable development projects led by 26 athlete-entrepreneurs in France and Africa. Because sport can be a tremendous lever for development, as President Macron indicated in Ouagadougou, we must continue to bring the world of development closer to the world of sport - and in particular the Olympic and Paralympic movements. This is what Tony Estanguet and I worked on during the Finance en Commun Summit, which brought together the world's 450 public development banks for the first time, by launching a dedicated coalition to convert the try, with the athletes and teams of Professor Yunus, in the service of sustainable development goals!"

Tony Estanguet, President of Paris 2024, said: "The partnership with the AFD helps extend the legacy of the Paris 2024 Games to an international level, in line with the Olympic and Paralympic spirit that strives to bring different people from across the globe together in peace and solidarity. Athletes have an integral role to play at the heart of this ambition. Throughout their careers, they develop a number of qualities that can be used to great effect in business, such as endurance, determination and a drive to improve. We strongly believe that they can have a huge impact as the social entrepreneurs of tomorrow!"

Professor Yunus, said: "Sport is the element that we want to take, that becomes a vehicle to transform the society. And this is what we are going to do in this particular occasion that we are looking forward to. And we want to make sure that sport continues as a lifelong thing, and we want to bring social business into the picture. That is why social business incubators have been introduced through this sport week."

Anne-Caroline Graff, an athlete taking part in the programme, said: "Once you retire after a career as an elite athlete, finding your feet isn't easy. I was really keen to start my own business and create something meaningful that had a positive impact on society. I'm thrilled that Paris 2024 and the AFD are showing their faith in us to let our skills and talent shine off the field of play."

Sarah Hanffou, an athlete taking part in the programme, said: "To make my project a long-term success, I need help with how to best go about it all. That's where the incubation programme will be so useful to me. In this group, I can see all the ingredients that helped me succeed in sport - collective competitive spirit, guidance, training and the will to achieve a goal. With my new coach, and my new team mates, I feel like I'm setting out to win another medal!"

About the Agence française de développement

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) implements France's strategy on international development and solidarity by funding, supporting, and accelerating the transitions to a fairer and more sustainable world. The AFD works with its partners to develop shared solutions for and with people living in countries of the South. Focusing on climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality, education and health, its teams carry out more than 4,000 projects in France's overseas departments and territories and another 115 countries. In this way, the AFD contributes to the efforts of France and French people to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

About Paris 2024

The Paris 2024 Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games is responsible for planning, organising, financing and delivering the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris



in 2024, in accordance with the Host City Contract signed by the IOC (International Olympic Committee), CNOSF (French National Olympic and Sports Committee) and Paris City Council.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are the largest sports event in the world and have a unique media impact, bringing together some 10,500 Olympic and 4,350 Paralympic athletes representing 206 and 182 delegations, respectively, from five continents. The Games are watched by over 13 million spectators and 4 billion viewers around the world through more than 100,000 hours of TV coverage, and their impact as a global event of great sporting, economic and cultural importance is unparalleled.

Founded in January 2018, Paris 2024 is headed by Tony Estanguet, a three-time Olympic champion and IOC member. It is run by an Executive Board, which brings together all the project's founding members, namely the CNOSF, Paris City Council, the French State, the Greater Paris regional authorities, CPSF (French Paralympic and Sports Committee), the Greater Paris Metropolitan Area, the Seine-Saint-Denis departmental council and representatives from the towns and cities involved in the Games.

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List of athletes composing the first promotion of the incubator

Athlete name and sport	Country where the project will be developed
David Smetanine (para swimming)	Cameroon
Aby Gaye (basketball)	Senegal
Isabelle Yacoubou (basketball)	Benin
Sarah Hanffou (table tennis)	Ghana
Meriam El Mahiri (archery)	Marocco
Cyril Akpomedah (basketball)	Kenya
Omar-Marie Ndao (fencing)	Senegal
Moustapha Kama (taekwondo)	Senegal
Hortance Diedhiou (judo)	Senegal
Youssef Mulumbu (football)	Democratic Republic of Congo
Roger Amegbeto (swimming)	Togo
Priscilla Gneto (judo)	Ivory Coast
Olivier Diomande (rugby)	Ivory Coast
Raissa Kone (handball)	Mali
Djénébou Dante (athletics)	Mali



Frank Elemba Owaka (athletics)	Congo
Sarah Ourahmoune (boxing)	France
Yosi Goasdoué (athletics)	France
Sébastien Bichon (para cycling)	France
Yann Delaigue (rugby)	France
Hervé Touré (basketball)	France
Anne-Caroline Graffe (taekwondo)	France (Overseas)
Enzo Lefort (fencing)	France (Overseas)
Rémi Dibo (basketball)	France
Terence Saramandif (canoe)	France
Bastien Auzeil (decathlon)	France