

***AFRICA, THE FINAL FRONTIER FOR THE WORLD SPORTS
INDUSTRY***

2026 GAME TIME

AFRICA SUMMIT

***MARKET INSIGHTS &
KEY TAKEAWAYS***

Authored by **Elias Ranc**

Edited by **Will Mbiakop & Richard Wanjohi**

www.gametime.africa | www.africansci.com



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Will Mbiakop

Game Time Africa Summit Founder & President

www.gametime.africa | www.africansci.com

This report analyzes the development dynamics of sport in Africa based on the key insights from the Game Time Africa Summit panel discussions. We study the **challenges, trends, and opportunities** of the market in light of the contributions of the panelists and participants in the summit.

- **Twelve panels** of international experts addressed ten key themes of sports business in Africa.
- The **Road to 5 workshop**, in partnership with the OECD, brought together key public sector actors, giving us a fascinating perspective of policymakers.
- Finally, the "**Under the Baobab**" **Deal Room**, bringing together investors and entrepreneurs, helped identify the bridges to be built between capital and investment opportunities.

The objective of this report is to identify the **key factors** to transform the potential of African sport into a structured, prosperous, and inclusive industry.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The analysis highlights three major findings.

- **First**, the continent has solid fundamentals, driven by its demographics and digital transformation, enabling it to compete globally.
- **Secondly**, the main obstacle remains institutional and structural, particularly in governance and infrastructure financing.
- **Finally**, new business models are emerging, based on digital, fan engagement and entrepreneurial innovation.

This report argues that the development of sport in Africa depends above all on its ability to innovate and transform local realities into major assets.



CONTENTS

Introduction:

- [Why Africa, why now? A structural opportunity](#)
- [Institutional vision and structuring of the sports ecosystem](#)
- [Financing and development of sports infrastructure](#)
- [Investment, franchises and club governance](#)
- [Human capital and talent development](#)
- [Monetization: Media rights, sponsorship and fan engagement](#)
- [The new frontiers of growth: eSports and emerging sports](#)
- [Entrepreneurial initiatives: a living African model, under construction](#)
- [Overall conclusion](#)

Sources & References



INTRODUCTION **AFRICAN** **SPORT**

A MARKET UNDER CONSTRUCTION
WITH GROWING OPPORTUNITIES
A structural opportunity



AFRICAN SPORT AT A TURNING POINT

Long considered a secondary sector, sport in Africa is now undergoing a profound transformation. At the crossroads of economic, social and cultural issues, it is gradually establishing itself as an effective lever for development.

Globally, sport is now a structured economic industry based on monetization mechanisms such as media rights, sponsorship, branding and the operation of sports facilities. In mature markets, these elements make it possible to generate considerable sums.

Conversely, in Africa, despite a widely recognized potential, the ability to convert this dynamic into economic value remains limited. The continent is still in the structuring phase even though growth opportunities are multiplying.

African sport is gradually moving towards a value-creation model.

EXCEPTIONAL POTENTIAL STILL UNDER-MAXIMISED

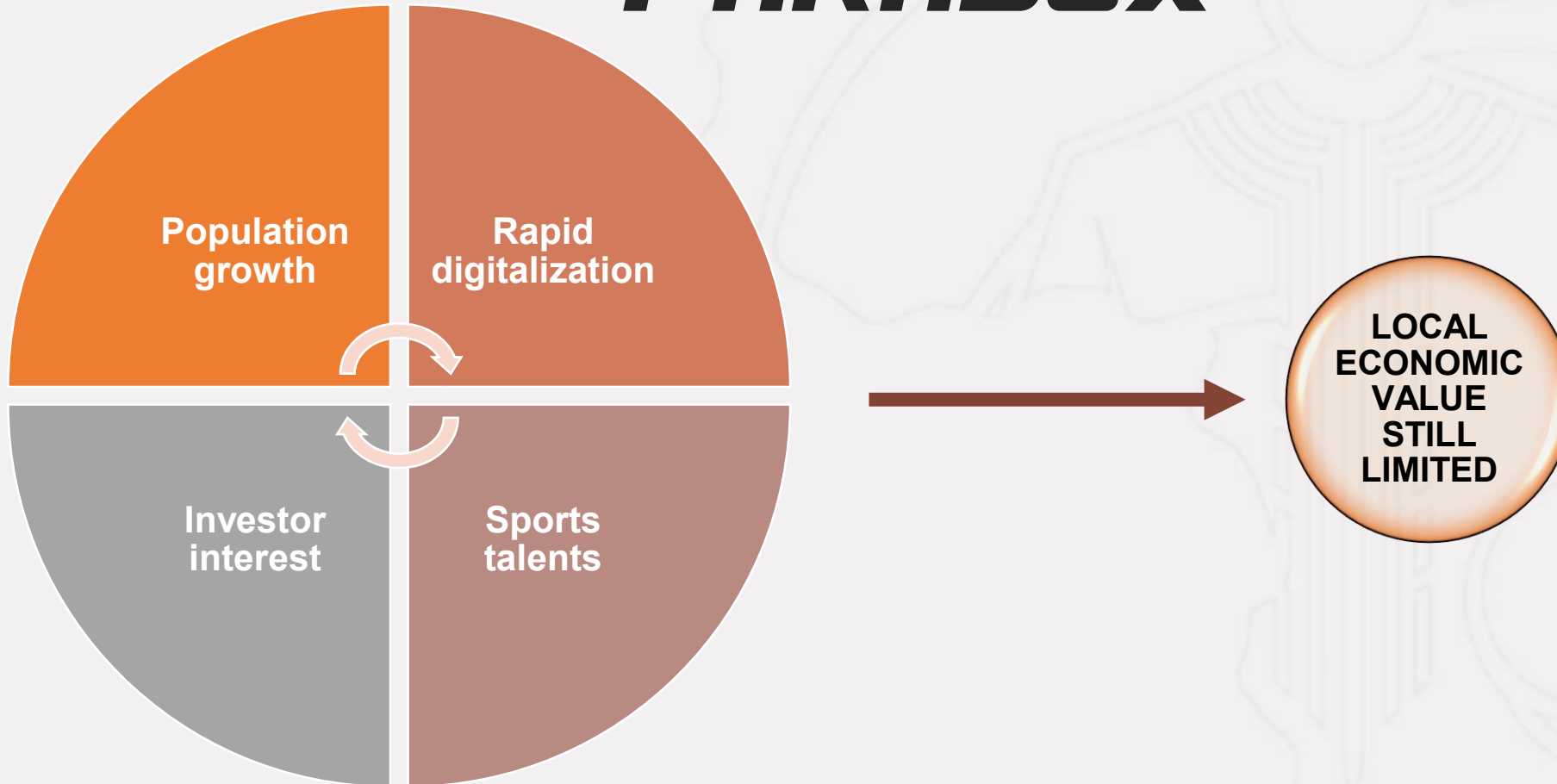
Driven by unique population growth, rapid digitalization and growing interest from international investors, the continent has major structural strengths.

However, this potential is still largely under-exploited due to **institutional constraints**, sometimes **fragile economic models** and a **lack of structuring** of the sports ecosystem.

This situation explains the gap observed between the potential of the African market and its real economic weight in the global sports industry.

Africa is not lacking in talent or demand, but it is still struggling to capture and monetize the value generated by its own sports ecosystem.

THE AFRICAN PARADOX



PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT



**Interventions by
international experts**



Economic analysis



Under the Baobab

The Game Time Africa Summit offered a relevant analytical framework to understand the current dynamics of African sport. Through its various panels and the initiatives presented during the "Under the Baobab" event, the summit highlighted the transformations underway as well as the opportunities to be captured.

This report proposes to analyze the conditions for the development of African sport by highlighting the main levers of value creation, the structural obstacles that limit its expansion as well as the emerging economic models. The analysis is based on an approach combining the lessons learned from the summit, the available sectoral data and

the study of entrepreneurial initiatives presented at the event.

KEY QUESTION:

How can Africa's sporting potential be transformed into a structured, sustainable and investable industry?

Answering this question requires examining simultaneously: the factors driving the growth of the market, the constraints that hinder its development and the solutions currently implemented by the various economic actors in the African sports ecosystem.

CHAPTER 1

WHY AFRICA, WHY NOW?

A Structural Opportunity

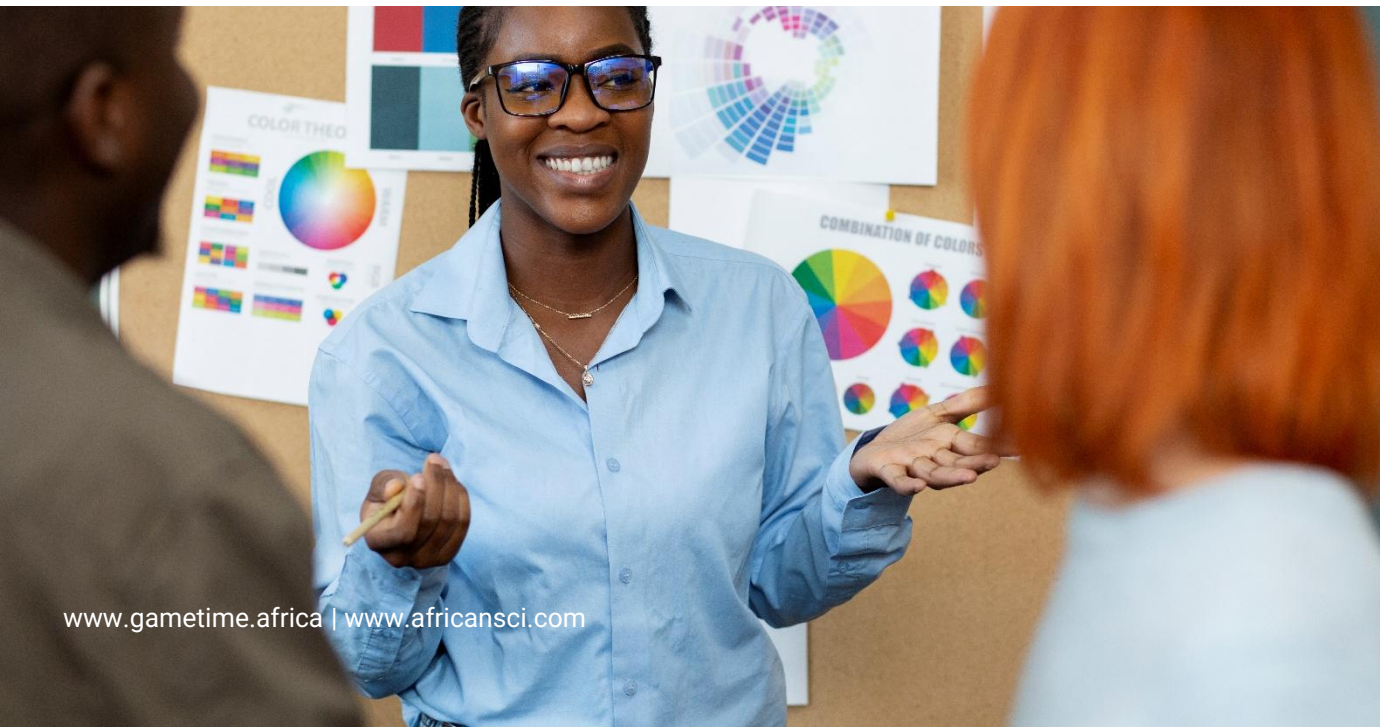
FROM A SUBSIDIZED SECTOR TO AN INVESTABLE INDUSTRY

African sport has long been considered a public good whose economic model was mainly based on limited state funding and the organization of one-off events.

This model had several limitations. It remained **difficult to sustain in the long term**, **unattractive to private investors**, and relatively costly for public finances.

Yet, this historical approach no longer reflects the reality of the opportunities offered by the sector. African sport is gradually evolving from a public-funding model to a value-creation model more focused on investment and profitability.

This transition is one of the main challenges for the development of sport on the continent.



African sport is gradually evolving from a **logic of public financing** to a logic of private investment and profitability

A MARKET THAT IS STILL LARGELY UNDER- EXPLOITED

Despite the limitations of the historical model, the potential of the African sports market remains considerable.

The African sports market was worth about **\$12 billion** in 2023 and could reach nearly **\$20 billion** by 2035¹.

Sport now accounts for about 0.5% of the continent's GDP. These figures show that the sector is already a significant economic activity while remaining largely under-exploited in terms of its potential.

The problem, therefore, lies not in a lack of interest in sport but rather in the continent's ability to capture the value it generates.

1. Figures captured in the references and sources at the end of the report

**The challenge is not to
create a market, but to
better capture the value it
generates: the
commercialization of
sport**

\$12 billion

Estimated value
of the African
sports market
(2023)

\$20 billion

Potential market
value by 2035

+67%

Projected growth
between 2023
and 2035

0.5%

Proportion of
sport in African
continental GDP



SPORT AS A LEVER FOR DEVELOPMENT

Sport is not only an economic market.
It also acts as a vehicle for **job creation**, **economic development** and **social transformation**.

Its impact goes far beyond the framework of sports competition and economic indicators.

The main positive externalities associated with sport concern several strategic dimensions of the development of African states.

Sport is a multidimensional development tool that is particularly relevant for African states.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Reduction of sedentary lifestyle, reduction of health costs in the long term.

EDUCATION

Strengthening the discipline and academic commitment of young people.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Promotion of social cohesion, integration of populations.

**INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE
OF STATES**

Improvement of the country's image, increased attractiveness for investors.

**TERRITORIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Creating infrastructure, boosting local economies and boosting sports tourism

RISK OR OPPORTUNITY?

Despite its potential, African sport is still often perceived as a risky sector by investors. This perception is mainly based on two factors:

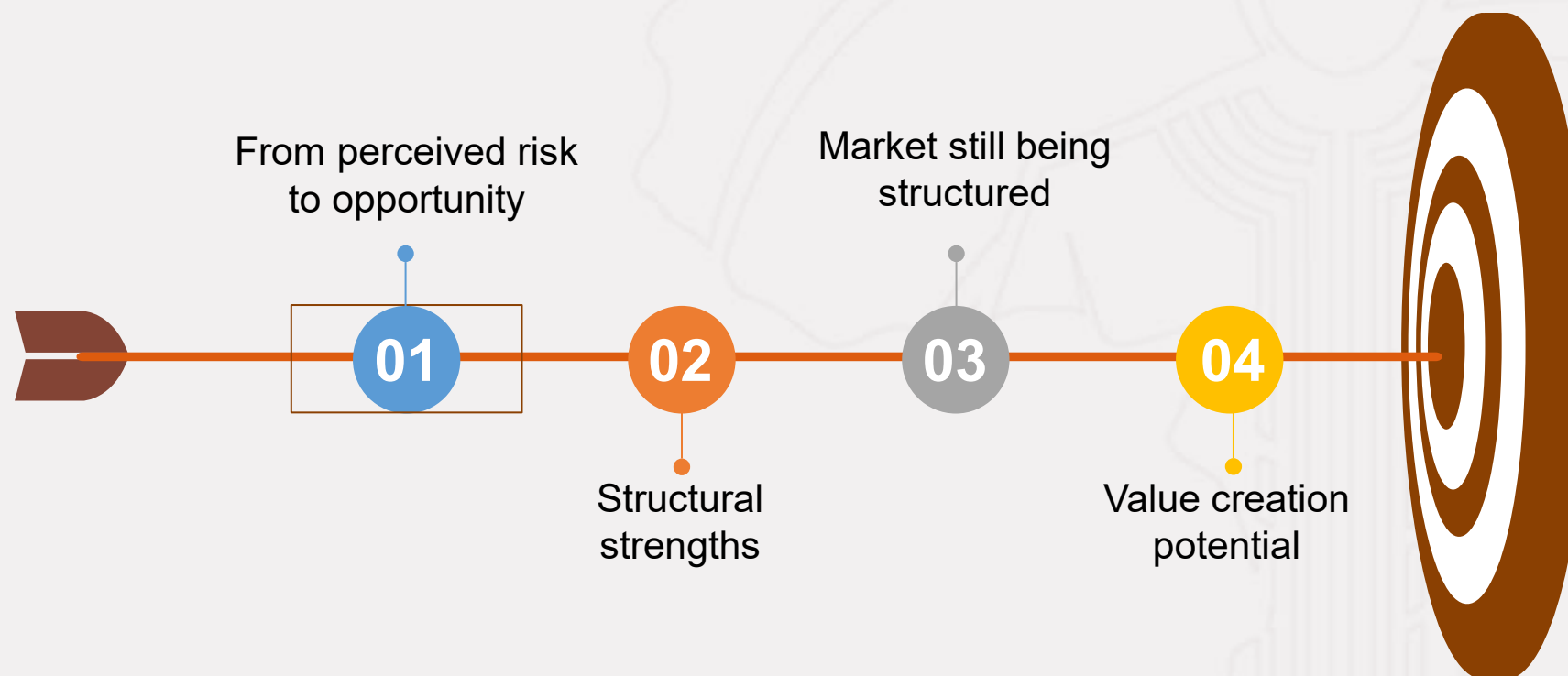
- the **infrastructure deficit**,
- **governance concerns**.

However, these weaknesses can also be interpreted differently.

Unlike markets that are already mature and sometimes saturated, Africa appears to be a market still **under construction**, offering more **opportunities for growth** and **value creation**.

For many economic actors, the interest lies precisely in this structuring phase.

Investing today means participating in the structuring of tomorrow's market, and benefiting from a "first mover advantage"





AN INDUSTRY IN TRANSITION

The transformation of African sport today is based on a fundamental evolution.

The sector is gradually moving from a model dominated by public subsidies to an industry that is more open to private investment and market mechanisms.

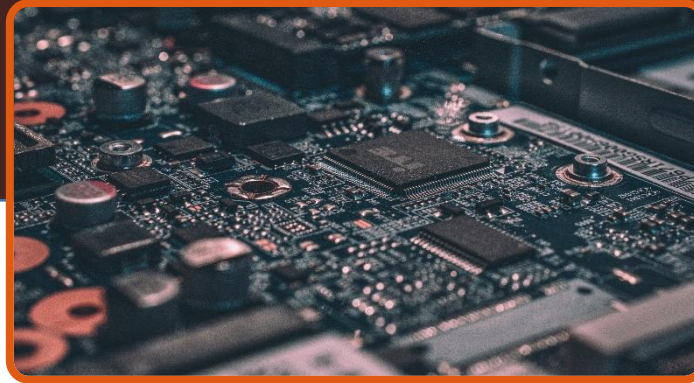
This transition is an essential condition for the continent to better integrate into the global sports economy and to develop more sustainable business models.

Historical model	Emerging model
Dominant public funding	Growing private investment
Organization of one-off events	Development of sustainable ecosystems
Administrative logic	Market logic
Dependencies on subsidies	Economic Value Creation
Low attractiveness for investors	Increased investment deployment opportunities

THREE STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF GROWTH



1) Population growth



2) Technology acceleration



**3) The interest of African
and global capital**

**Three converging trends that are sustainably transforming
the sports economy in Africa**

THE DEMOGRAPHIC ASSET: TALENT AND CONSUMERS

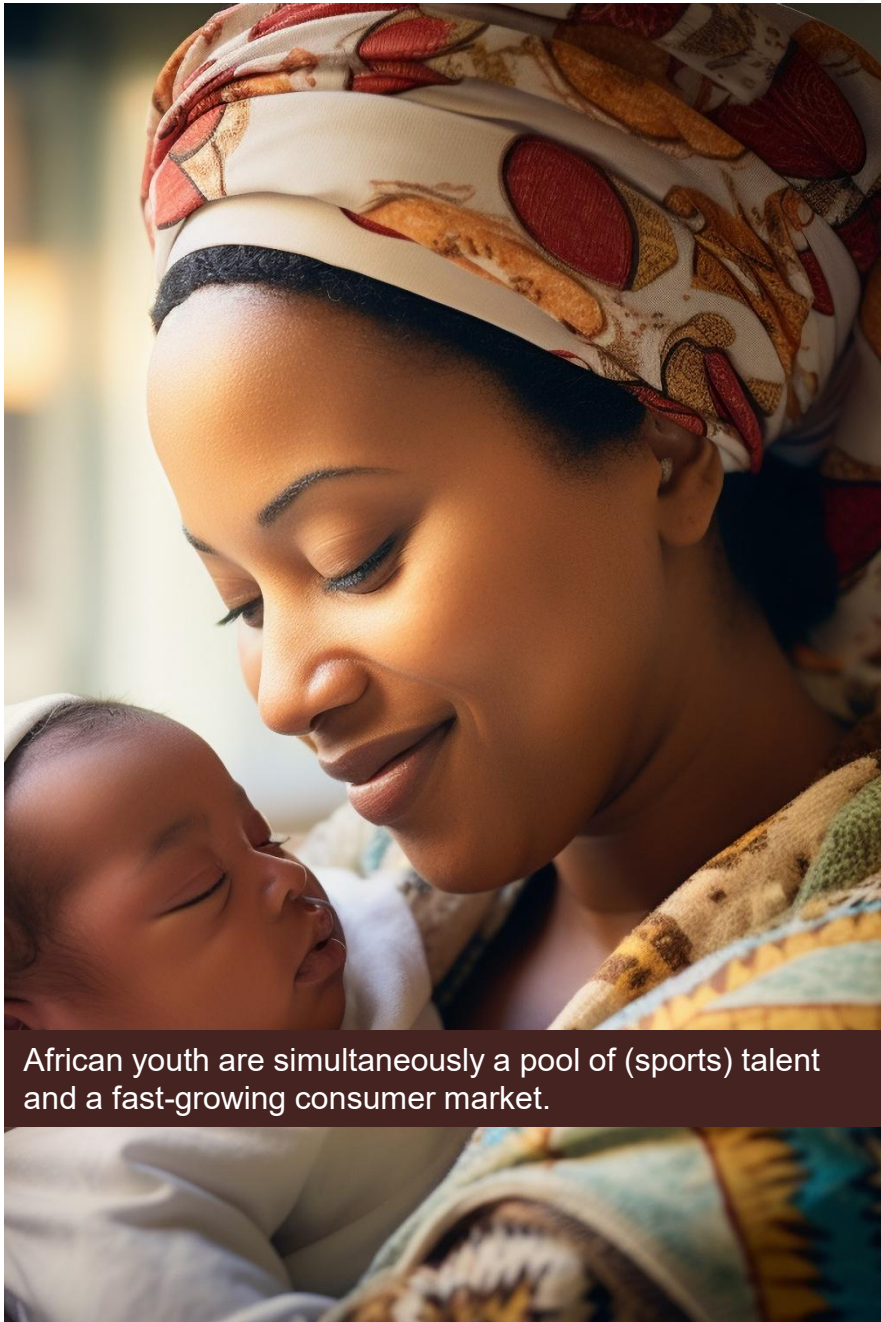
Africa today has unique characteristics on a global scale.
The continent simultaneously combines:

- rapid population growth
- a young population (median age: 19)
- A growing middle class

Nearly 70% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is under the age of 30.

This reality makes Africa both the largest pool of sports talent in the world and one of the largest reservoirs of potential consumers of sports content in the long term.





African youth are simultaneously a pool of (sports) talent and a fast-growing consumer market.

This demographic dynamic creates two major opportunities.

- ❑ On the one hand, Africa continues to be the demographic engine of the planet. In 2050, 25% of the population will be African. With an average age of 19, the world's youngest population is in Africa. It produces talent and a workforce that is necessary for global growth.
- ❑ On the other hand, it promotes the gradual development of an internal market characterized by a growing demand for entertainment and sports content.

Unlike mature markets whose growth is mainly based on the monetization of existing audiences, Africa also benefits from natural growth in its future audiences.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION THAT REDEFINES BUSINESS MODELS

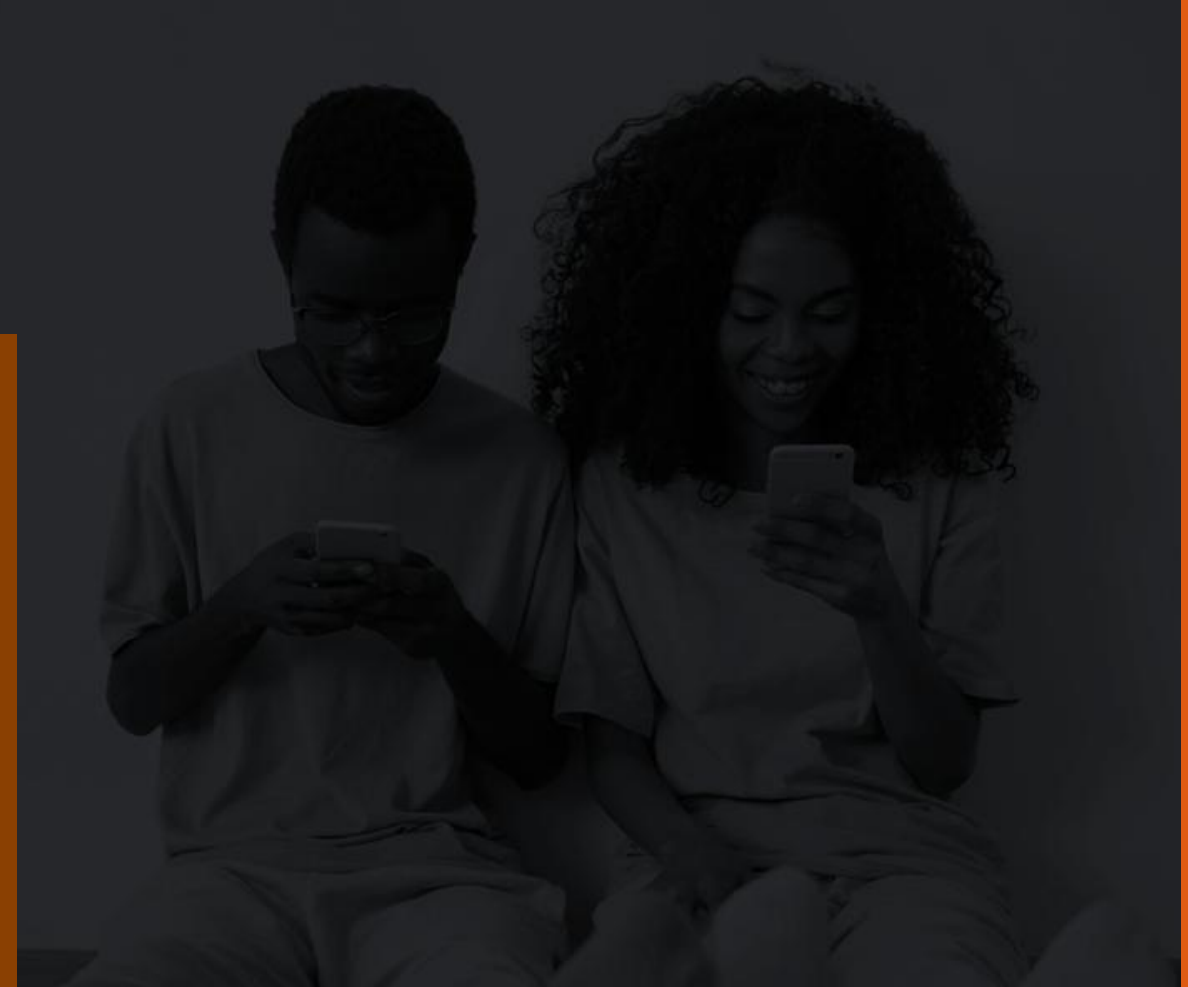
The electrification of the continent and increasing digitalization are strongly contributing to the acceleration of interest in sports content in Africa.

This technological transition is profoundly changing the way sports are consumed and paving the way for new economic models.



Africa's large and connected younger generations are driving rapid adoption of these technologies. Their interest in digital content provides a solid basis for the future development of the sports industry.

The growth of African sport therefore no longer depends solely on physical infrastructure but also on its ability to take advantage of new technologies.



Digitalization reduces barriers of entry and accelerates value creation in African sport.

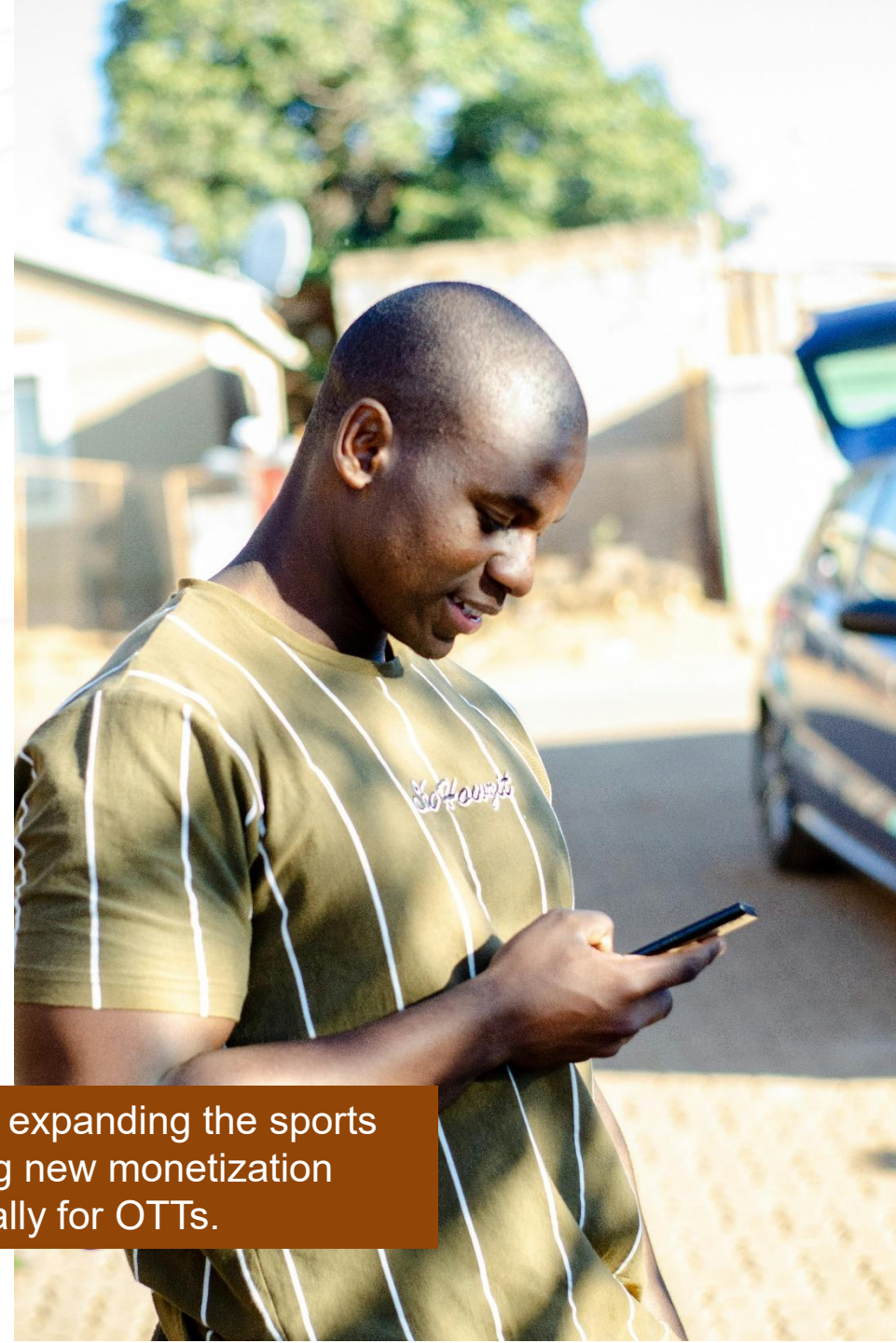
A FAST-GROWING CONNECTIVITY

Mobile connectivity is advancing rapidly on the continent.

- Africa now has more than **400 million mobile internet users** while data costs are among the lowest in the world.
- This development promotes **access to sports content** and gradually **reduces certain historical constraints** related to broadcasting.

The development of smartphones, mobile networks and digital platforms is thus creating new opportunities for value creation for sports players.

Mobile connectivity is expanding the sports audience and creating new monetization opportunities, especially for OTTs.





NEW MONETIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

The digital transition is not only transforming consumption patterns. It also makes it possible to rethink the economic strategies of the sector.

Three major developments appear to be particularly important:

- the development of direct-to-consumer (DTC) models that allow a direct relationship between rights holders and fans;
- leveraging data to better understand, segment, and monetize audiences;
- the emergence of new revenue streams related to digital content, advertising, and user engagement



These transformations offer significant growth prospects for African sport.

Three (3) major changes:

1. Direct-to-consumer models



2. Data use



3. New revenue streams



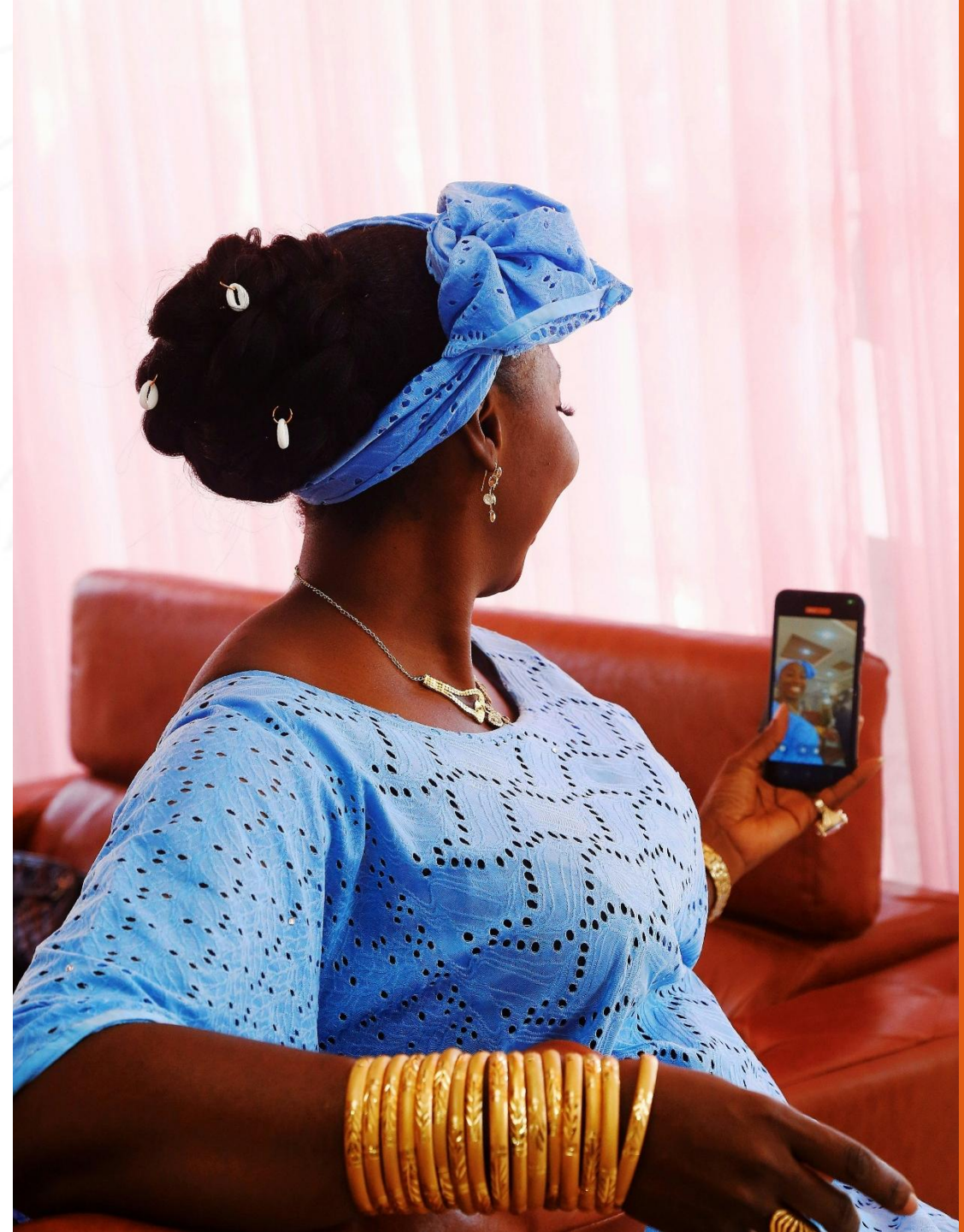
Increased value creation

FROM PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

Digitalization allows the continent to partially compensate for some limitations related to physical infrastructure. The opportunity no longer lies only in the construction of sports facilities but also in the ability to **attract, retain and monetize the attention** of consumers.

In this context, digital platforms are becoming strategic tools for value creation.

The **ability to generate engagement** is now emerging as a major competitive advantage for sports organizations.



AFRICA, NEW FRONTIER OF GLOBAL SPORTS CAPITAL

Beyond demographics and digital transformation, a third driver contributes to the growth of African sport: the growing interest of international capital, particularly public development banks and private funds.

As the North American and European sports markets gradually reach a high level of maturity, Africa appears to be a **new strategic frontier** for investors.

This is due to the combination of strong growth potential, still relatively low valuations and a market that is currently being structured.

Three major developments:



High growth
potential



Attractive
valuations



Market still
poorly
structured



**High return and
impact
opportunities**

GROWING INVESTOR INTEREST

Despite its potential, the African sports business is still relatively **untapped** by international investors.

Private equity on the continent remains **modest globally**, but there has been an **increase in financial flows** over the past several years. Investments are deployed across the entire value chain: academy, clubs, leagues, infrastructure, media, merchandising, sport-tech.

Faced with the saturation of many traditional markets, more and more economic actors are now considering Africa as a space for **long-term growth**.

The continent offers both relatively **low entry costs** and significant development prospects. Finally, sport is considered as a unique asset, it is above all a question of (**socio-economic**) impact.

TRANSFORMATION IN MOTION

This growing interest is already reflected in several structuring initiatives. Among the most significant examples are:

- the launch of **Professional Fighters' League (PFL) Africa**;
- the development of the **Basketball Africa League (BAL)** by the **NBA**;
- the gradual involvement of **investment funds** such as Helios Investment Partners; and **public development banks** such as IFC, AFD, AfreximBank.
- PPPs and the strengthening of partnerships between international organisations and local actors.

These initiatives demonstrate an increased engagement of African and international investors in the African market. This validates the interest and attractiveness of the continent.



CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 1

The analyses presented in this chapter show that African sport today benefits from four particularly powerful growth drivers: **demographics**, **innovation**, **digital transformation**, and the **growing interest of international investors**. The so-called "**patient**" capital will be essential in the development of the ecosystem.

The combination of these factors offers the continent a unique opportunity for sustainable socio-economic development.

Africa must be seen beyond being a secondary market for the global sports business, but as "its future", an ecosystem under construction capable of generating significant benefits for the economic actors who will participate in its structuring.



CHAPTER 2

INSTITUTIONAL VISION AND STRUCTURING OF THE SPORTS ECOSYSTEM

From economic potential to institutional realization

FROM ECONOMIC POTENTIAL TO INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The economic potential of African sport is now widely recognized. The real challenge now lies in its structuring. The **private sector will drive the success** of this structuring, but it must, above all, **be orchestrated by the leaders of the public authorities: ministries, federations (rights holders),** and other institutions.

Their missions are multiple:

- Creating a **business environment** adapted to the development of the sports business,
- Develop a **legal and fiscal framework** conducive to growth, including **protecting intellectual property**, applying **tax exemptions**,
- Implementing **customs measures** and enhancing **regional collaboration and integration**, and
- Co-invest with the private sector, particularly on infrastructure projects (e.g. provision of land).

Today, public spending on sport remains limited – often less than **1% of national budgets**. **A real commitment from public authorities will drive lasting change.**

Institutional mechanisms would help transform potential into sustainable economic value. These include **good governance**, the **professionalization of human capital**, an attractive value proposition for entrepreneurs and investors.

Most of the sports ecosystem is **financed by public funds**. The **institutional** and **governmental environment** plays a more than decisive role in the structuring of this sports ecosystem in Africa.

It is imperative to think carefully and implement a strategic vision in line with local competitive advantages.

The vision and its implementation are key conditions for realizing the full potential.

MOROCCO: AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL STRUCTURING

While many African countries continue to face institutional challenges, some examples show that another path is possible.

Morocco is today one of the most advanced examples of the structuring of sport on the continent.

The sports sector accounts for about **2.5% of the national GDP and generates nearly 115,000 jobs**, significantly higher than the African average.

This performance is based on a coherent and long-term development strategy.

SOME KEY FIGURES OF THE SPORTS ECOSYSTEM

2.5%

Proportion of
sport in Morocco's
GDP

2%

Sport's proportion of
global GDP

0.5%

Proportion of sport
in African GDP

115 000

Jobs generated
by the sports
sector in Morocco

FIRST PILLAR: A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION

According to H.E. Karim Zidane, Minister of Investment in Morocco, sport has been integrated into national development policies for more than a decade.

This approach makes it possible to:

- ensure the **coherence of investments**;
- maintain **strategic continuity**;
- to strengthen **visibility** of the sector for investors.

The development of sport is therefore not based on isolated initiatives but on a **long-term global vision**.

SECOND PILLAR: AN INCENTIVE INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Morocco has gradually put in place several measures to improve the attractiveness of the sports sector.

These measures include:

- Support and co-investment mechanisms as well as a dedicated agency: AMDIE
- Attractive financing solutions, in particular thanks to the CDG or the national football fund
- A favorable tax framework, particularly for the sector's working population (tax exemptions on salaries)
- mechanisms facilitating access to land.

The objective is to reduce the risk perceived by investors, to encourage the development of private initiatives and the growth of a domestic market.

THIRD PILLAR: AN ECOSYSTEM LOGIC

The development of sport is not limited to the organization of competitions.

The Moroccan approach is based on a broader vision integrating the entire value chain:

- infrastructure;
- training;
- events;
- tourism;
- related industries.

This logic makes it possible to multiply the sources of value creation and increase the economic impact of the sector.

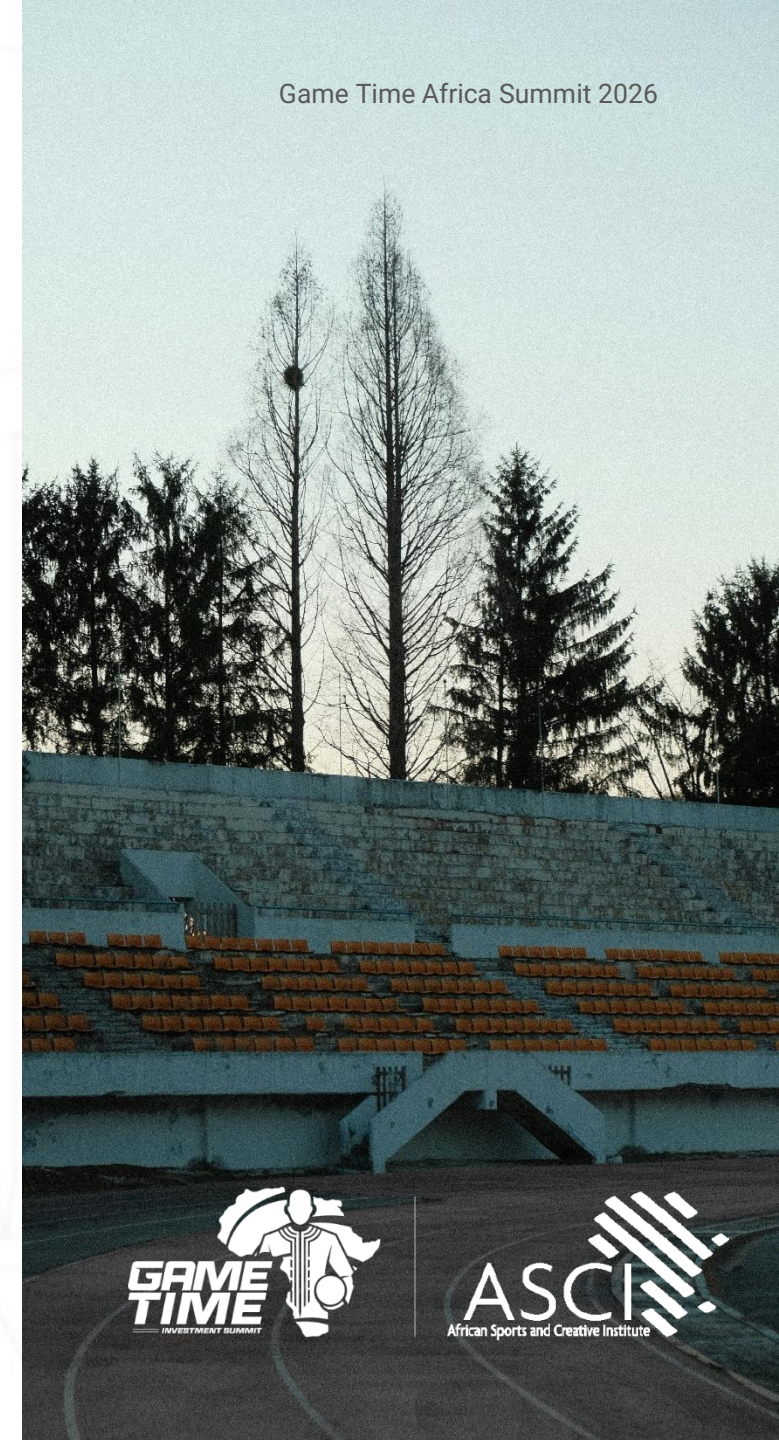


MEGA-EVENTS: CATALYSTS OR REVEALERS?

Major **international sporting events** represent opportunities for transformation but are also indicative of weaknesses in ecosystems. This type of event has often been organized on the continent around short-term strategies that often neglect long-term issues. Significant investments have been made in **underused infrastructure** known as "white elephants".

This phenomenon was particularly observed during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) in Gabon, where several stadiums built for the competition saw limited use after the event.

This case illustrates the importance of anticipating the future uses of infrastructure from the design phase in order to guarantee their long-term economic and social viability.





The real challenge lies in the aftermath and legacy of the event. Several analyses during the Game Time Africa Summit have shown that the profitability of these investments depends directly on the ability to operate the infrastructure over the long term. In the absence of a post-event strategy, there is a high risk that this equipment will become underutilized, thus limiting its economic impact.

The conditions for success are as follows:

- **Multifunctional infrastructure, particularly with the creative and cultural industries,**
- **Post-event planning,**
- **Good governance and venue management, and**
- **Integration of infrastructure into the local ecosystem.**

THE STATE AS A MARKET FACILITATOR

The traditional model, based on dominant public funding, has shown its limits in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. The development of the sector now depends on the ability of States to create an **environment conducive to investment**.

This transformation is based on several key levers.

- 1) A **stable regulatory framework** is essential to secure long-term investments.
- 2) **Economic incentives** to improve the profitability of projects and attract private capital.
- 3) **Strengthened governance** that improves transparency and professionalization of the sector.





The development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) promotes the financing of infrastructure and accelerates the development of the sector.

- **Hybrid models** combining public and private capital offer the best prospects for the development of sport in Africa.

This dynamic is evident in Ghana, where private investment supports sports academies and media, while in Uganda and Tanzania, development relies more on strengthening public frameworks and infrastructure, illustrating a complementarity that is essential to the structuring of the sector.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 2

The economic potential of African sport is now undeniable. However, its transformation into a sustainable industry depends above all on the structuring of its ecosystem.

The analyses carried out show that the main limit to the development of the sector is neither the lack of talent nor the absence of demand, but the **weakness of institutional frameworks**. When **governance, infrastructure, and financing mechanisms** are adapted, sport becomes a real engine of growth, capable of attracting investment and generating significant economic

benefits.

Conversely, the **lack of structure** slows down the professionalization of the sector and limits its attractiveness. The main challenge for the coming years, therefore, lies in the **establishment of a stable, transparent, and investment-friendly environment**, which is an essential condition for converting Africa's sporting potential into sustainable economic value.



CHAPTER 3

FINANCING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Building the foundations for growth



A STRUCTURAL FUNDING GAP

The **lack of infrastructure funding** is one of the main obstacles to the development of African sport today.

Historically, the financing of sport has been mainly based on **public budgets**.

This dependence **limits investment** due to competition with other national priorities such as **education, health, or transport**.



Sports infrastructure requires particularly high investments: a modest stadium can cost more than **\$300,000**, while large-scale projects exceed several hundred million dollars (more than **\$550 million** for the future Hassan II stadium in Morocco).

Beyond the lack of resources, many projects suffer from **low economic profitability** and a **lack of long-term vision**, reducing their impact on the development of the sector.

More broadly, Africa faces an annual infrastructure financing gap estimated at between **\$68 billion and \$108 billion**, which accentuates the difficulties of financing sports facilities.

Key challenge: to develop **sustainable and attractive financing models for investors** in order to ensure the economic viability of sports infrastructure.



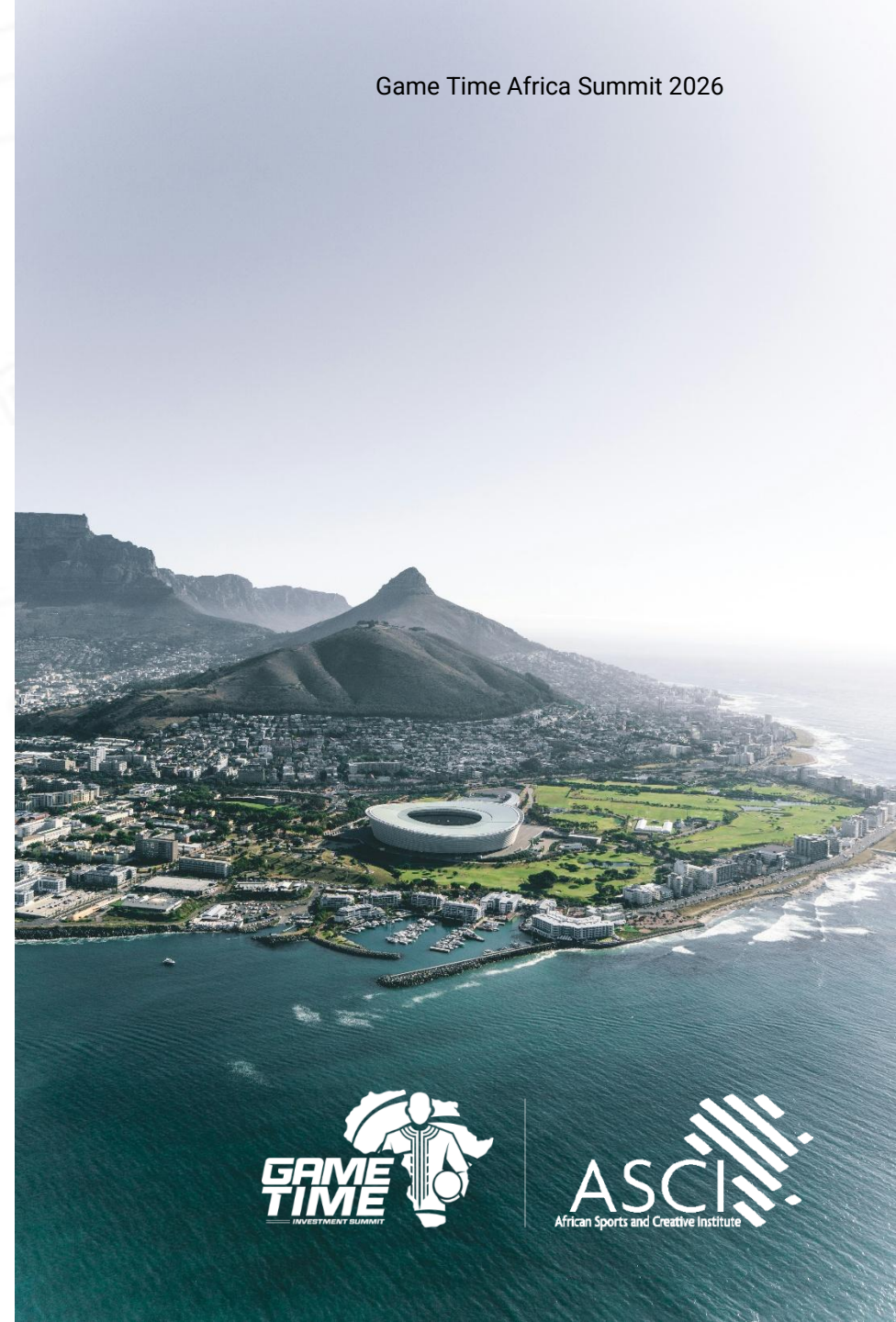
THE LIMITS OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL AND THE EMERGENCE OF HYBRID MODELS

Public funding has long been the main driver of the development of African sports infrastructure.

However, this model has several limitations:

- budgetary constraints of states;
- dependence on political cycles;
- low capacity to finance large-scale projects;
- lack of marketing prospects and profitability; and
- difficulties in maintaining and operating equipment.

In this context, the **mobilization of private capital** is gradually emerging as a necessity rather than an option.





Faced with these constraints, new financing models are being developed.

The objective is no longer to oppose public and private financing but to **build mechanisms** that **combine the advantages of both approaches**.

This evolution reflects a broader transformation in the vision of sport: infrastructure is no longer seen only as public facilities but as **economic assets capable of generating value**.

THE KEY ROLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are central to this evolution.

They make it possible to simultaneously mobilize:

- public resources;
- private sector investment capacities;
- the operational expertise of companies;
- better risk distribution.

PPPs are now emerging as one of the most promising tools to accelerate the development of African sports infrastructure.

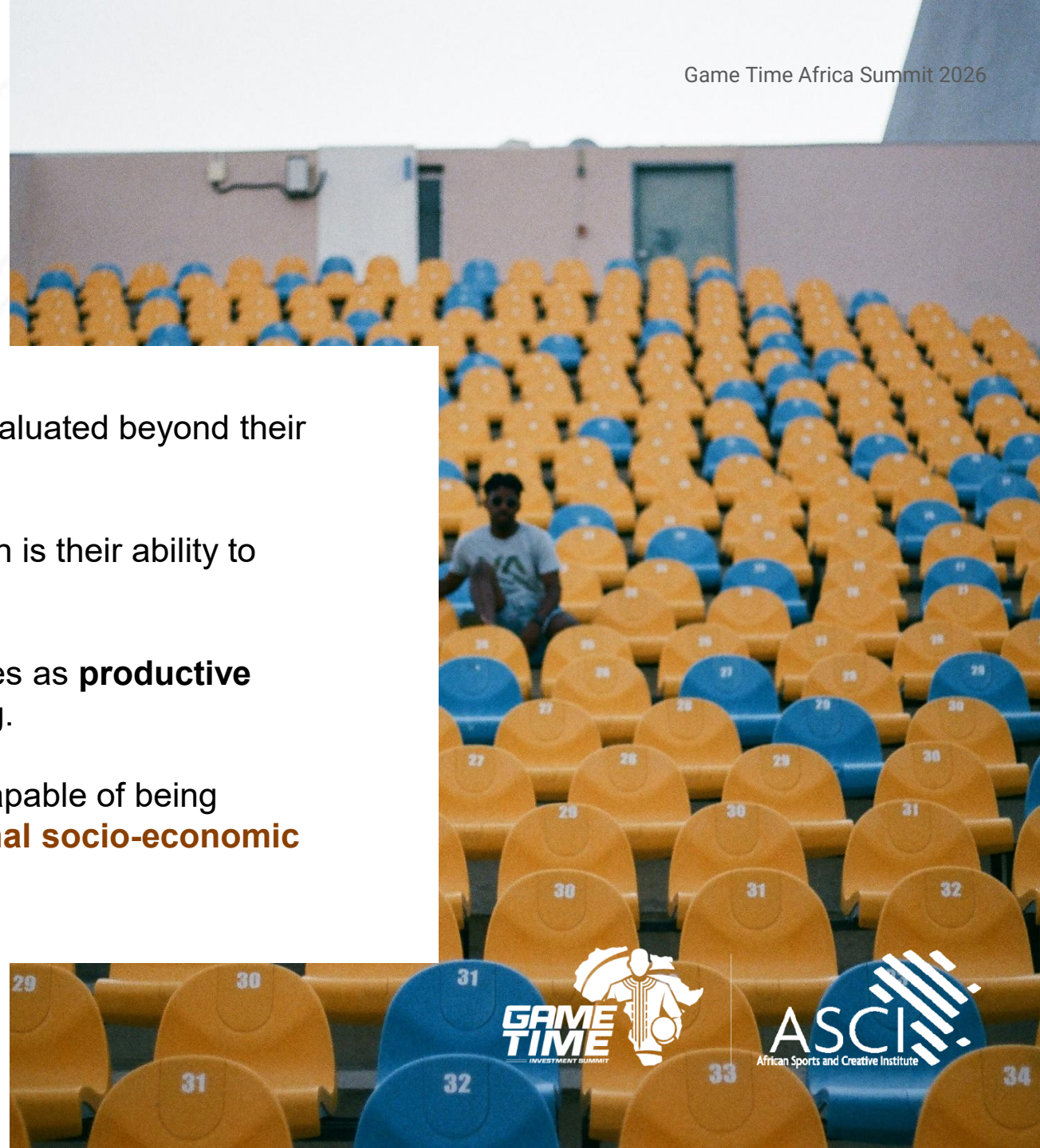
CHANGING THE INVESTMENT LOGIC

The success of sports infrastructures can be evaluated beyond their **construction cost**.

In addition to the social impact, the real question is their ability to **generate income** over several decades.

This approach implies considering infrastructures as **productive investments** and not as simple public spending.

The objective then becomes to build facilities capable of being sustainably integrated into the **local** and **regional socio-economic fabric**.



The central issue in the financing of sports infrastructure is that of **profitability**.

A stadium or arena only creates value if it is **used regularly** and **generates sufficient revenue** to ensure its operation.

This reality requires a broader reflection on the uses of equipment and its integration into the surrounding economic ecosystem.



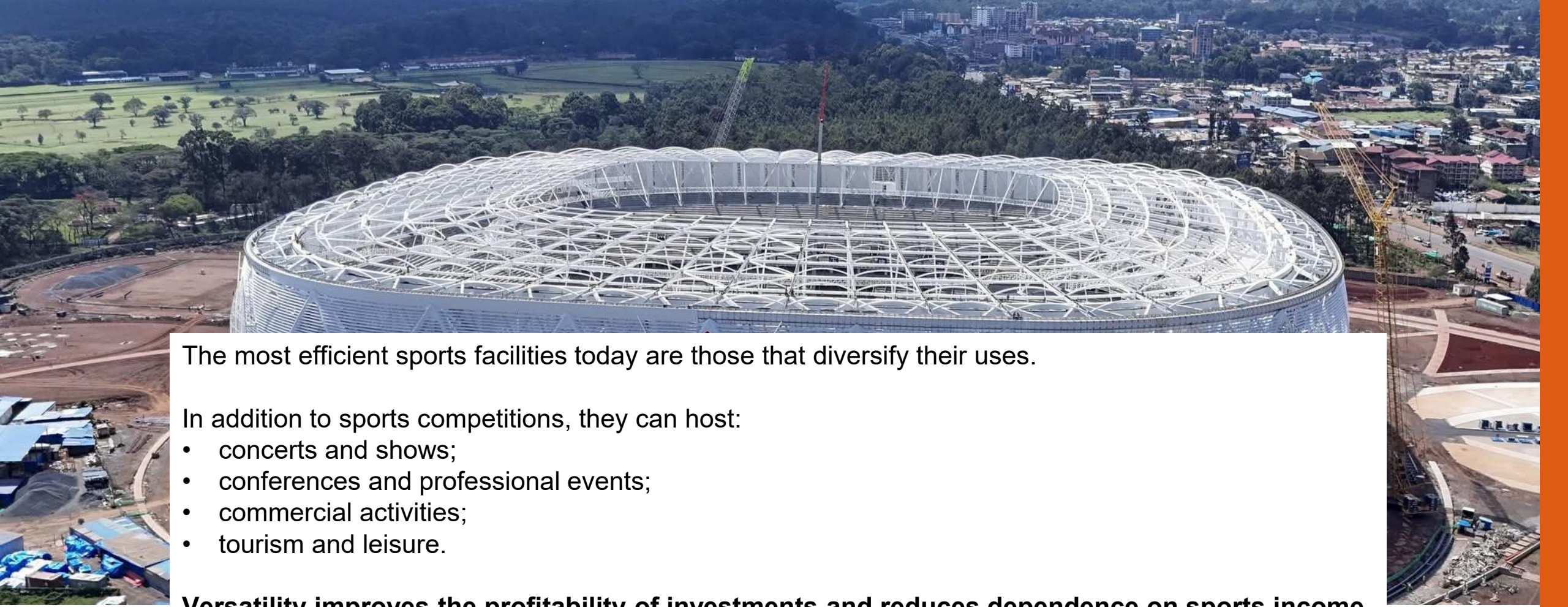
AVOIDING THE TRAP OF THE "WHITE ELEPHANT" THROUGH MULTIFUNCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The history of international sport shows that many infrastructures built for major events become underused after their inauguration.

These "white elephants" represent costly investments whose economic contribution remains limited.

To avoid this scenario, projects must be designed from the outset with a long-term vision that integrates the future needs of the market.





The most efficient sports facilities today are those that diversify their uses.

In addition to sports competitions, they can host:

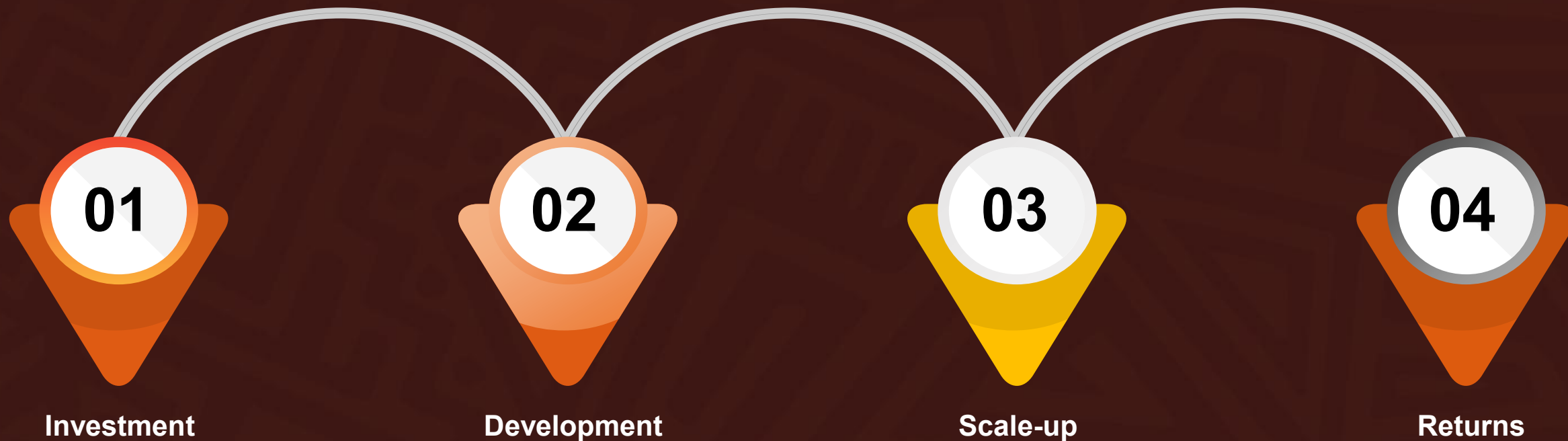
- concerts and shows;
- conferences and professional events;
- commercial activities;
- tourism and leisure.

Versatility improves the profitability of investments and reduces dependence on sports income alone.

THE NEED FOR "PATIENT CAPITAL"

- ❑ The development of sports infrastructure requires **long investment horizons**.
- ❑ Returns on investment are often progressive and depend on the ability of projects to integrate sustainably into their economic environment.
- ❑ This reality underlines the importance of "**patient capital**", i.e. investors capable of supporting projects over several years before reaping the full benefits.
- ❑ In an ideal scenario, the "patient" capital will be supplemented by **concessional rate** from development banks, thus generating a balanced financing model.
- ❑ In addition, the social impact of the infrastructure, the integration into the **urbanization plan**, and its **carbon footprint** are important criteria for these same banks.

« PATIENT CAPITAL »



CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 3

Faced with persistent budgetary constraints and sports funding that is still largely dominated by public resources, African states need to rethink their approach to sports infrastructure development. The challenge is no longer just to build new facilities, but to design **projects capable of generating income**, ensuring their own maintenance and producing sustainable economic benefits for the territories.

In this perspective, public-private partnerships (PPPs) appear to be one of the most credible solutions for mobilizing the capital needed to develop the sector. By combining **institutional support** from the public sector with the **instruments of public development banks** and the **financial capacity of the private sector**, they reduce risk for investors while improving the effectiveness of projects.

However, the attractiveness of these investments depends on several conditions: **transparent governance, long-term planning, a stable regulatory framework, and appropriate incentive mechanisms**. Together, these conditions can allow African sport to release funding that is currently insufficient and accelerate its development.

This evolution reflects a gradual transition from a historically subsidized model to a hybrid model, in which private investment plays an increasing role in the financing and enhancement of sports infrastructure.



CHAPTER 4

INVESTMENT, FRANCHISES AND CLUB GOVERNANCE

From sports association to economic asset

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SPORTS CLUBS: FROM ASSOCIATION TO COMPANY

The development of African sport also requires a profound transformation of sports clubs.

For a long time, many clubs operated according to an **associative model** based mainly on **public funding, sponsors or limited resources**.

However, the evolution of sport into a real industry implies a gradual professionalization of these structures.

Clubs are no longer just sports organizations: they are gradually becoming **economic actors** in their own right capable of **generating revenue, attracting investment and creating value**.



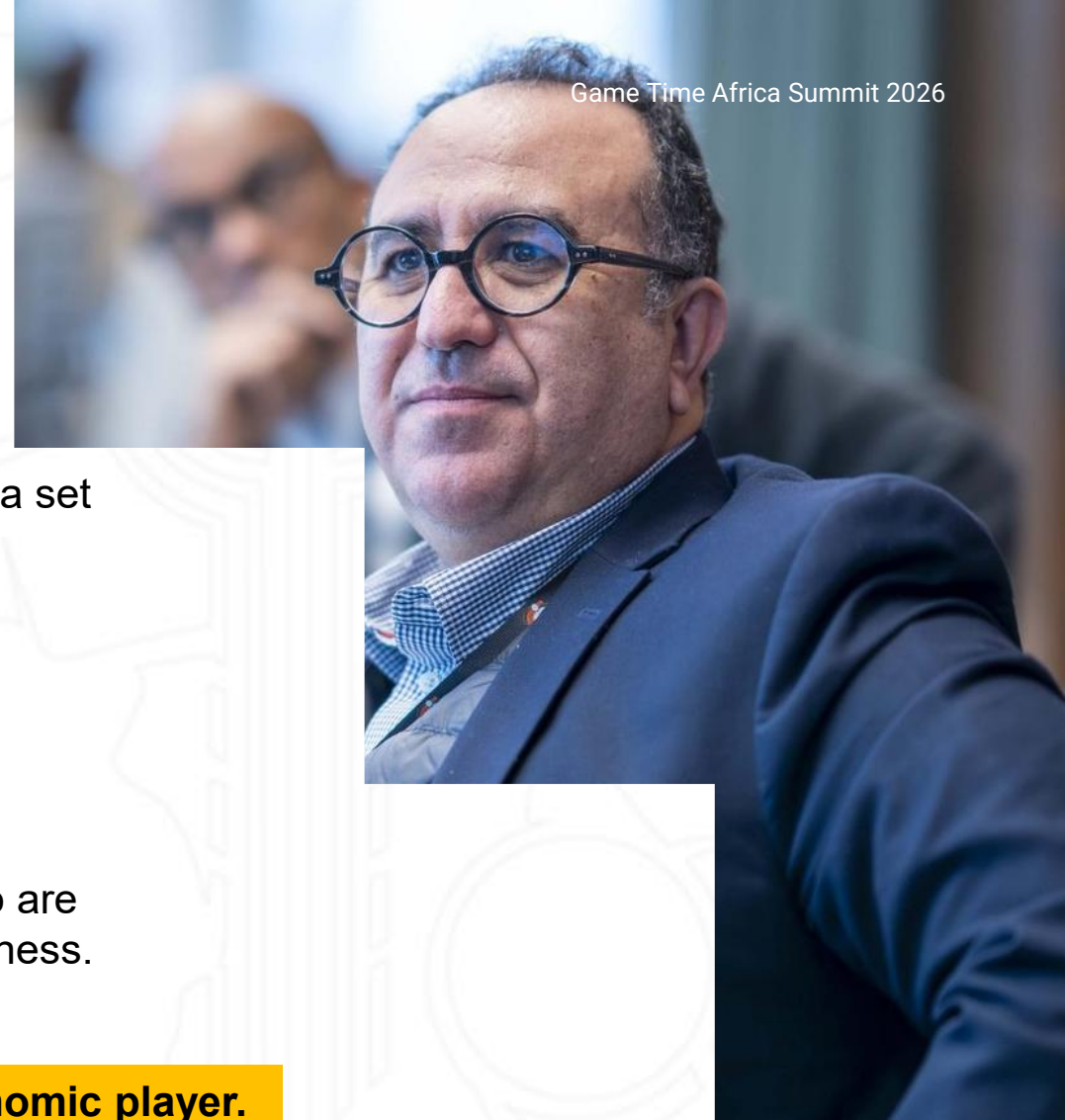
In the most developed markets, sports clubs have become real companies.

Their activity is no longer based solely on sporting results but on a set of economic activities:

- **sponsorship;**
- **media rights;**
- **merchandising;**
- **ticket office;** and
- **infrastructure operation.**

This development is an important reference for African clubs who are now looking to strengthen their financial autonomy and attractiveness.

The modern club is no longer just a sporting player, but an economic player.



PROFESSIONALIZATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESS

The transformation of clubs requires, above all, an improvement in their internal organization.

The discussions on the panels of the Game Time Africa Summit highlighted several priorities:

- **professionalization of management;**
- **improvement of management processes;**
- **financial transparency;**
- **strategic planning.**

Without these foundations, the prospects for growth and investment remain limited.

The attractiveness of a club to investors depends less on its popularity than on its ability to function as a credible and structured organization.

Four elements appear to be particularly important:

- i. A viable investment proposition;
- ii. strong governance;
- iii. a clear legal framework;
- iv. a sustainable economic vision.

These conditions are now prerequisites for attracting capital and supporting the growth of the sector.



GOVERNANCE AT THE HEART OF VALUE CREATION

Governance is a key factor in value creation in sports organizations.

It directly influences the attractiveness of clubs to investors and their ability to develop sustainably.

Weak governance	→	Strong governance
Financial secrecy		Transparency
Difficulty attracting investors		Attractiveness for investors
Short-term decisions		Strategic Vision
Dependence on subsidies		Diversified income
Low value creation		Economic Value Creation

CLUBS AS INVESTMENT ASSETS: BETWEEN POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS

The evolution of world sport shows a clear trend: clubs are gradually becoming financial assets.

- The example of **Marc Lasry** is particularly revealing. In 2014, he participated in the acquisition of the NBA Milwaukee Bucks for about **\$550 million**.
- In less than a decade, the franchise has exceeded **\$3.5 billion** in valuation, illustrating the sport's ability to generate significant value creation.



The growth of media rights, the development of sponsorship, the enhancement of brands and the commercial exploitation of infrastructure are the economic pillars of this model.

The most successful European and North American franchises and clubs generate several hundred million euros in annual revenue, confirming the transformation of sport into a unique economic industry.

Despite delayed investments, this dynamic is emerging in Africa, and some actors have understood it.

This is notably the case of **Moïse Katumbi with TP Mazembe**, who has contributed to structuring the club and improving its competitiveness on the continental scene. Mr. Katumbi also insisted on international collaborations, citing English club Arsenal and former tactician **Arsene Wenger** during his club's role then.

INVESTING BEFORE EXPANDING

The discussions also highlighted that before considering complex strategies such as **multi-ownership** of clubs, it is necessary to consolidate the fundamentals.

Investments must first focus on:

- infrastructure;
- governance;
- team management;
- sustainable business models.

Sustainable growth depends first and foremost on a strong institutional and financial foundation.

Before any expansion logic, clubs must first demonstrate their ability to create sustainable values.



CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 4

The transformation of clubs is a central issue in the development of sport in Africa. Transitioning from an **associative model** to a **business model** is the most important condition for attracting investment and structuring the sector.

International examples from more developed markets, particularly in Europe and North America, show that clubs can become major financial assets. However, this evolution is based on solid fundamentals: **governance, legal framework, business model** and **structuring**.

Ultimately, the ability of African clubs to transform themselves into viable economic entities will largely condition the development of sport on the continent.

CHAPTER 5

HUMAN CAPITAL AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Keeping more value on the continent

HUMAN CAPITAL: THE FIRST ASSET OF AFRICAN SPORT

Africa is now recognized as one of the world's leading reservoirs of sports talent. In many disciplines, African athletes are occupying an increasing place in the most prestigious competitions.

- This advantage is also based on exceptional demographic dynamics.
- The continent currently has about **1.5 billion people**, or nearly **18% of the world's population**, with one of the youngest populations in the world.
- According to United Nations projections, Africa's population is expected to reach **2.5 billion by 2050**, representing nearly a quarter of the world's population, including **30% of the world's working population**.

This growth constitutes a considerable pool of future practitioners, consumers and talents.



This abundance of human capital represents one of Africa's key competitive advantages in the global sports economy.

However, the presence of talent does not automatically guarantee local value creation.

The central challenge now is to strengthen training structures, professionalize sports sectors and enable the continent to capture a greater share of the economic wealth generated by its athletes.



PERSISTENT VALUE LEAKAGE

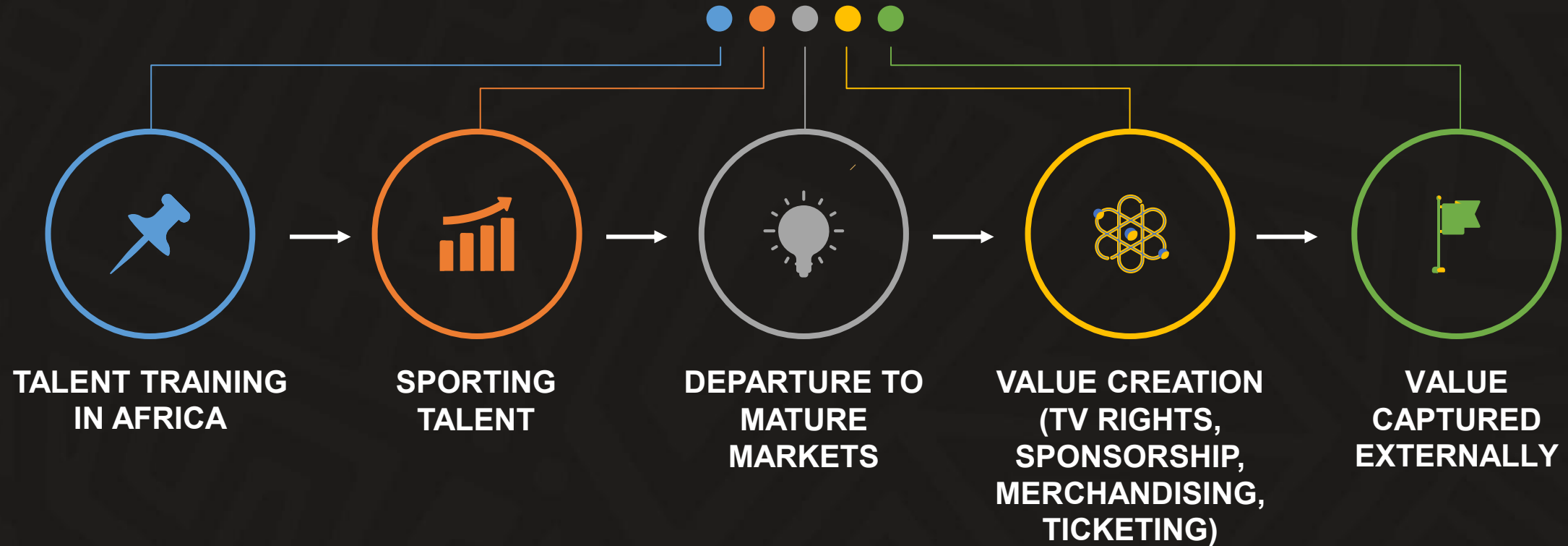
The current model is largely based on the early export of talent to the most developed markets. The export of this talent especially to the European and North American markets creates an imbalance between the value these athletes generate and what Africa receives from them. For example, more than **500 African footballers play in the 5 major European leagues** and allow their clubs to generate **hundreds of millions of euros**.

This dynamic helps athletes to access **better infrastructure, high-level competitions** and **higher incomes**.

However, it also helps to transfer much of the economic value created outside the continent.

The challenge is therefore not only to train more talent but to build pathways to retain a greater share of this value within local ecosystems.

CURRENT MODEL





REBUILDING VALUE CHAINS

The development of human capital implies a broader reflection on the organization of the sports ecosystem.

The objective is to develop more value-generating activities around talent:

- training;
- local competitions;
- sports marketing;
- brand development;
- support for athletes.

This approach would increase the economic benefits of sport for the benefit of local stakeholders.

THE ACADEMIES: STRATEGIC ASSETS

Talent training should be seen as a real vector of value creation.

Not only for the export of the best talent, but also to keep as many good athletes as possible who will stay on the continent for a long time and make it shine.

Academies therefore act as real strategic assets, capable of generating value in the long term.





The discussions from the panels of the Game Time Africa Summit highlighted the need to develop **integrated academy models**, combining sports training and academic education, in order to secure the careers of young talents and optimize their development.

The **Right to Dream** academies in Ghana or **Génération Foot** in Senegal are success stories that have demonstrated their ability to generate value, training players transferred to European clubs while developing a strong educational and institutional network as well as local sources of income.

INVESTING IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

One of the key characteristics of successful academies is their ability to combine sport and education.

This approach has several advantages:

- better preparation of athletes;
- development of transferable skills;
- securing career paths;
- sustainable value creation.

The development of African sport therefore cannot be separated from a reflection on education and support for talent.





Alex Song

Football Legend
Cameroon

Anthony Baffoe

Football Legend, Ghana



INVESTING IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Valuing human capital in sport cannot only be limited to valuing sports performance. The athlete can be a decisive asset in an ecosystem. The view that an athlete is only about his or her athletic performance is outdated. The discussions at the Game Time Africa Summit highlighted the importance of recognizing athletes as full stakeholders, capable of contributing to the governance, investment and entrepreneurship of the sports business.

The question of post-career is critical.

- ❑ **67% of footballers are unsure of their trajectory after their sporting career and 54% have not received any help in terms of career planning**, which shows the inadequacy of structured retraining schemes. This problem is all the truer in other disciplines.
- ❑ Although experience, understanding of the discipline and the image of the athlete are real assets for sports structures or large institutions, the **reconversion of athletes** in the sports movement remains largely under-exploited.

The summit panels thus insisted on the need to **develop programs for the training, support and integration of athletes** in the governance structures of sport and in its marketing.

With the income accumulated in their careers, some athletes through their "family office" are asserting themselves as top investors ready to engage in the sports ecosystem.



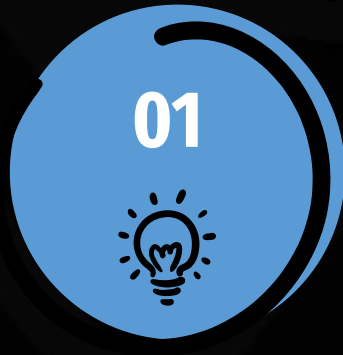
TOWARDS A MORE BALANCED MODEL

The development of human capital is one of the main levers for the development of African sport.

The challenge is not to prevent the international mobility of talent but to build a model in which the economic benefits generated benefit local structures more.

This development requires investment in training, academies and the professionalization of the entire value chain.





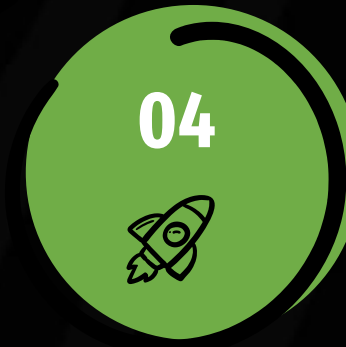
**LOCAL VALUE
CREATION**



**PROFESSIONAL
CLUBS**



**GOVERNANCE AND
PROFESSIONALIZATION**



**HUMAN CAPITAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Local value creation is based on the transformation of human capital into sustainable economic assets.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 5

Human capital is the most obvious and sustainable comparative advantage in African sport. Driven by a dynamic population and a globally recognized talent pool, the continent has a major strategic asset in the global sports economy.

However, the real challenge lies not only in the production of top athletes, but in the ability to transform this potential into sustainable value creation for local economies. Without appropriate structures, a significant part of the economic benefits generated by African athletes continue to be captured outside the continent.

In this perspective, the **development of academies**, the **improvement of training systems**, the **professionalization of coaching** as well as a greater **integration of former athletes in sports governance** appear to be essential levers. These investments would not only strengthen the competitiveness of African sport, but also increase the economic, social and institutional benefits generated by its human capital. Beyond athletic talent, Africa will have 30% of the world's workforce in 2050, so it is a question of developing a new generation of sports professionals: marketing, events, media, etc. capable of accelerating industry growth.



CHAPTER 6

MONETIZATION: MEDIA RIGHTS, SPONSORSHIP AND FAN ENGAGEMENT

Turning audience into economic value

MONETIZATION AT THE HEART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN SPORT: THE EUROPEAN LESSON

The growth of African sport does not depend solely on the production of talent or the development of infrastructure.

- It is also based on the ability of industry stakeholders to create sustainable business models and generate recurring revenue.
- In the most developed sports markets, this value creation is mainly based on three levers: **sponsorship**, **media rights** and **fan engagement**.

The challenge for African sport today is to adapt these mechanisms to the realities of the continent to better capture the value created by its audience.

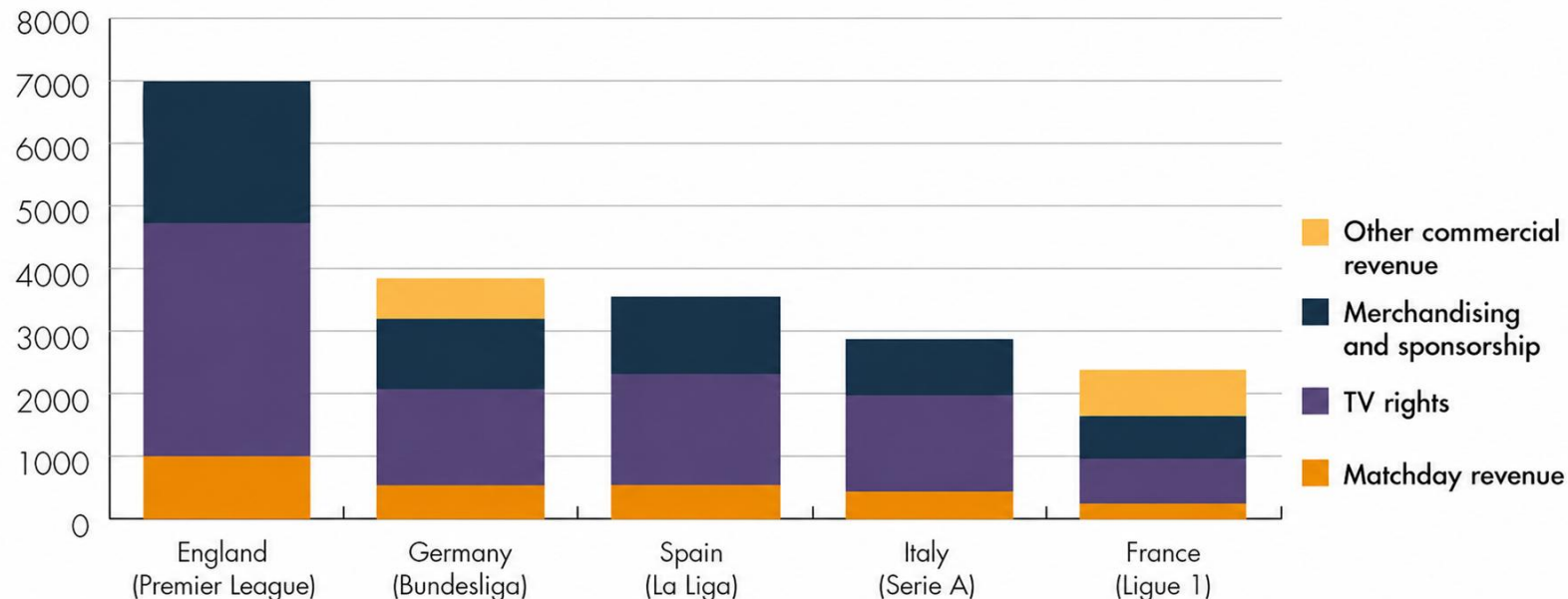
Source : lafinancepourtous.com d'après Deloitte



European lesson: whether it's football, basketball, rugby or tennis, the most successful sports organizations rely on a plurality of revenues rather than a single source of funding.

TOTAL REVENUE OF EUROPE'S FIVE BIGGEST LEAGUES

IN BILLIONS OF EUROS FOR THE 2022/2023 SEASON



Source: lafinancepourtous.com from Deloitte



SPONSORSHIP: FROM A PASSIVE MODEL TO AN ENGAGEMENT LEVER

The global sports sponsorship market size stands at **\$103.92 billion in 2026**. In mature markets, sponsorship is a major revenue lever. Commercial revenues, including sponsorships, represent on average more than **40% of the revenues of the main European clubs**.

Less than 5% of global sponsorship spending is attributed to Africa. Lack of trust of sponsors in rights holders, lack of understanding of sponsors' needs, inability to deliver quality championships or events, are all reasons penalizing the growth of sponsorship budgets on the continent.

Indeed, if the sponsorship strategy was for a long time based on a brand visibility model, today it is more of a **fan engagement** and **fan experience** model.

Modern sponsorship is no longer just about displaying a logo on a jersey or on the side of a pitch. Brands are looking to insert themselves into **digital uses**, **produce content** and **interact directly with audiences**.

Rights holders need to gain the trust of sponsors, adapt their offers, get support from marketing professionals, to really maximize sponsorship opportunities.





Panels 3 and 4 of the Game Time Africa Summit highlighted this transformation:

- sponsorship is moving towards more integrated models, focused on fan engagement rather than just exposure.
- This evolution is consistent with the dynamics identified in the previous chapters, in particular the rise of digital technology and the growing importance of attention as an economic resource.



SPORT AS A BRAND PLATFORM

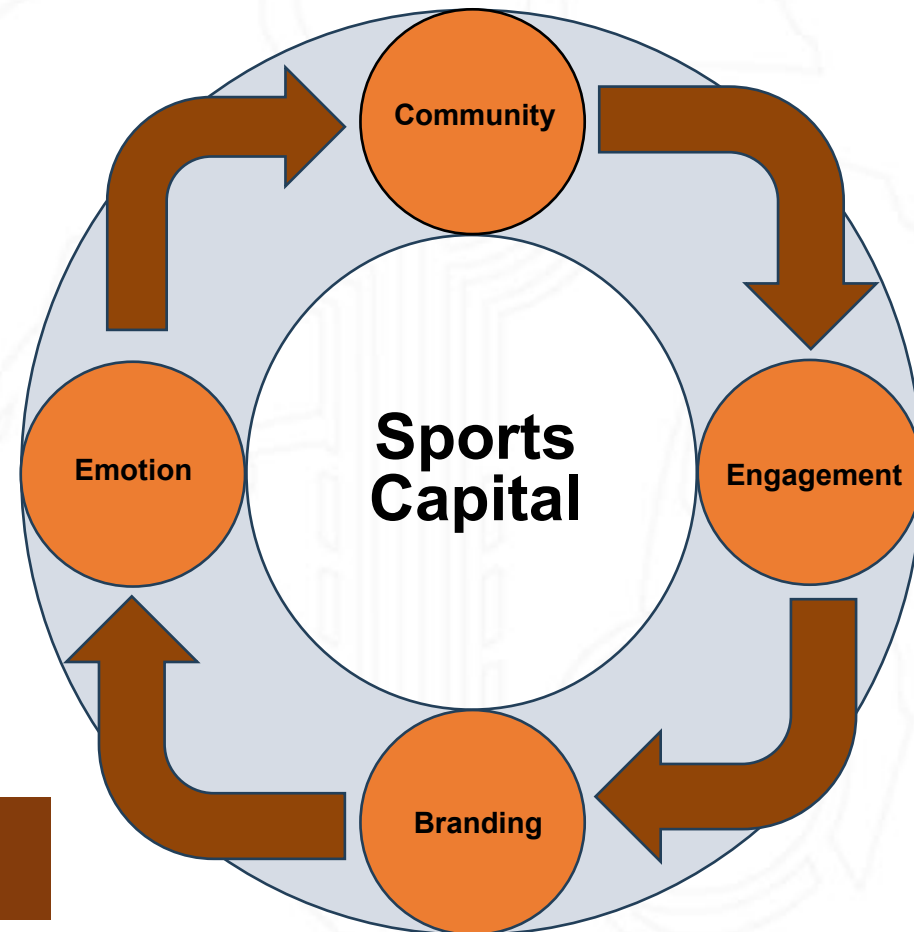
For sponsors, the value of sport is no longer based solely on visibility.

It is also based on its ability to:

- create emotions;
- develop communities;
- strengthen proximity to consumers;
- Improve brand image.

This evolution gradually transformed sponsorship into a real strategic tool for business development.

Sustainable monetization is about transforming the audience into an engaged community.



MEDIA RIGHTS: A STRATEGIC ISSUE

Media rights in the European and North American sports markets are the main driver of value creation.

- The global market exceeded **\$55 billion in 2024 and continues to grow strongly.**
- In Africa, two groups dominate the media rights market: the pay-TV media network and the national free-to-air television channels known as FTAs.
- In the pay-TV segment, Canal+ (Vivendi) dominates French-speaking territories while SuperSports (MultiChoice) dominates English-speaking countries.
- We note the emergence of the Togolese network New World TV offering content in local languages.
- The recent and historic acquisition of MultiChoice by the Vivendi group for more than \$3 billion is redefining the stakes of the market. This is a quasi-monopoly situation that will increase the pressure on rights holders.
- National public television stations are generally on the rise throughout the continent. CRTV in Cameroon, RTI in Côte d'Ivoire, 2M in Morocco offer a reasonable range of sports content. Morocco has even launched a 100% sports-focused national channel broadcasting all the national championships.



Finally, we note the emergence of OTT platforms created by athletes, clubs or federations.

All these platforms (paid, public, OTT) offer a wide range to fans. However, in view of the penetration rate of smartphones and the challenges of access to electricity and connection in homes, the future of content will first be played out on phones and tablets.

The growth in demand for content, especially local, is a trend that will continue to grow as much as the number of content creators.

On a global scale, the share of the sports streaming market in Africa remains very low - around 3.8% of the global market - but its growth is attractive: the size of the market will have doubled in 2030.

Technological developments are opening new opportunities for rights holders to develop a more direct relationship with their audiences (DTC) and consider new revenue streams.

STREAMING AS A NEW OPPORTUNITY

The development of digital platforms is profoundly changing the distribution of sports content.

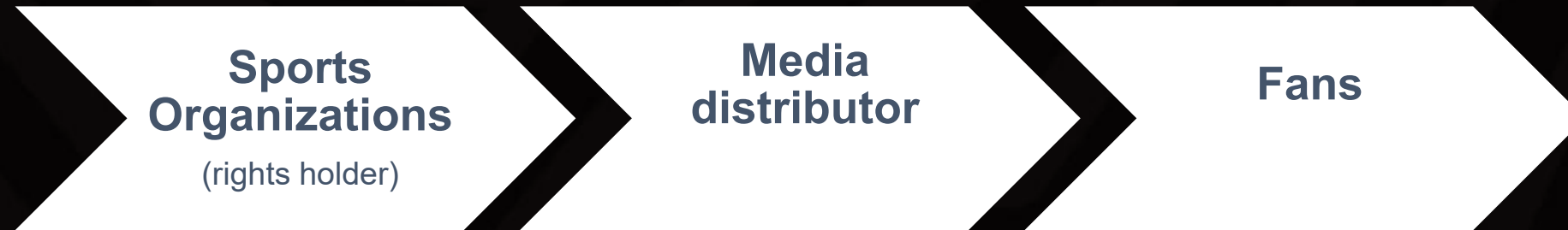
Direct-to-consumer (DTC) models now allow sports organizations to deliver their content directly to fans without relying exclusively on traditional broadcasters.

This evolution offers several advantages:

- direct access to audiences;
- better knowledge of users;
- new sources of revenue;
- Greater flexibility in content distribution.



Traditional model (Dominant intermediary)



Streaming model (direct relationship)



By reducing the role of intermediaries, streaming brings rights holders closer to their communities and strengthens their monetization capabilities.

FAN ENGAGEMENT: AN ECONOMIC ASSET

The digital transformation has profoundly changed the way sports are consumed. In Africa, this dynamic is amplified by a young and connected population.

Platforms such as TikTok or Instagram are now central to the consumption of sports content, favoring short and interactive formats.

In this context, an initiative such as FTBLR, presented at the **"Under the Baobab"** event during the Game Time Africa Summit, illustrates a fundamental change: the fan is no longer just a consumer, but becomes an actor/creator in the content.

By allowing users to produce and share their own content, the platform increases engagement while reducing production costs.



PIRACY: ***REVEALING THE LIMITS OF THE MARKET***

Piracy is a widespread practice in sports broadcasting in Africa. Globally, more than **230 billion visits** to pirate sites were recorded in 2023.

Media rights are the number one source of revenue in the sports ecosystem. Piracy severely affects both rights holders and media platforms. It is considered the major obstacle to the monetization of sports.

This is why rights holders and broadcasters work together to protect their intellectual property. The fight against piracy cannot be limited to repressive measures. It must involve adapting economic models, through more accessible offers and optimized distribution.

The capture of part of this so-called "pirate" audience represents a significant market share. This will require technology and an adapted media offer.

ADAPTING MODELS TO AFRICAN REALITIES

The success of future monetization models will largely depend on their ability to transcend local constraints.

Some of the main challenges include:

- connectivity and electrical access limitations;
- linguistic diversity;
- household budget constraints;
- continent-specific consumption habits (short-, medium- and long-form content formats).

The most successful models will be those capable of transforming these constraints into opportunities.

The initiatives presented at the "Under the Baobab" event illustrate the emergence of economic models adapted to the specificities of the African market.

"Under the Baobab" is the deal room bringing together entrepreneurs who pitch to investors.

Match We Can offers an integrated approach, combining content, experience and services, with a mobile-first approach. This strategy helps contextualize the sports experience and create a stronger relationship with users.

13 Productions is positioned into the production of digital content, with short formats optimized for social networks. By generating several million monthly views, the company demonstrates the ability of local content to capture attention and attract business partners.

The initiatives presented at "Under the Baobab" prove that the most successful initiatives are those that manage to adapt to local uses rather than replicating imported models.



Game Time Africa Summit 2026

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 6

Sponsorship, media rights and fan engagement are now the main levers for value creation and monetization of African sport. As the sector becomes more professional, these revenue streams become essential to reduce dependence on public funding and ensure sustainable growth of sports organizations.

The rise of digital technology and the increasing spread of mobile technologies offer the continent new opportunities to grow its audience, increase the visibility of competitions and create direct interactions between clubs, federations and fans. This digital transformation also facilitates the emergence of new business models based on digital platforms, social networks and dematerialized sports content.

However, these opportunities come with significant challenges related to purchasing power, technological infrastructure and the still uneven structuring of African sports markets. The success of this transition will therefore depend on the ability of the sector's key players to adapt the proven models in mature markets to the economic realities of the continent.

In this context, the ability to turn an audience into recurring and sustainable revenue appears to be one of the main determinants of the future development of the African sports industry.

It will determine the attractiveness of the sector for investors, the professionalization of sports organizations and the creation of long-term value.



CHAPTER 7

THE NEW FRONTIERS OF GROWTH

Gaming, esports and new sports markets

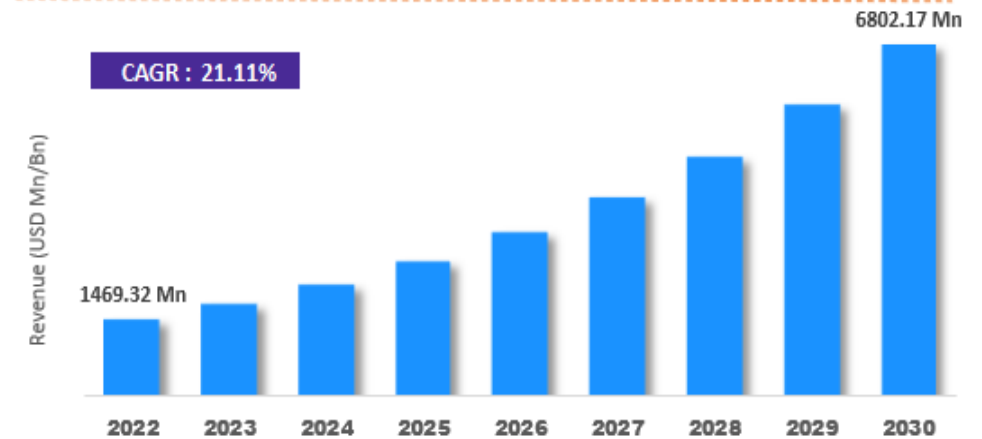
CHANGING PERCEPTION: ESPORTS AS AN INDUSTRY

Panel 7 of the Game Time Africa Summit highlighted the challenge of recognizing eSports by institutions and economic actors.

- The global eSports market size was valued at around \$2 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of more than 21% between 2024 and 2032.
- The market is projected to reach nearly **\$7 billion by 2030**. However, the sector is still considered by many as a recreational activity more than an economic sector.

The development of eSports in Africa requires the creation of a complete ecosystem: players, coaches, organizers, content creators and commercial partners.

Global Esports Market 2030



Source: zionmarketresearch.com

Esports is more than a hobby: it is a fast-growing global market that creates new investment opportunities.

ESPORT: AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRUCTURE

ESPORTS: AN OPPORTUNITY ENHANCED BY AFRICAN REALITIES

The development of eSports has several advantages in the African context.

- ❑ Africa is a young, fast-growing market, with an average age of 19, more than 60% of the 1.5 billion inhabitants are under 25 years old, and eager to consume and create electronic games.

These economic elements are solid foundations for developing the market across the entire value chain:

- game creation,
- talent development,
- event organization,
- promotion and marketing,
- streaming and media distribution, etc.

The growth of the sector could thus contribute to job creation and the emergence of new economic models.





BUILDING A COMPLETE ECOSYSTEM

The sector is booming, many African events are reaching international standards: Morocco Gaming Expo, Insomnia Egypt, rAge Expo South Africa, PUBG Mobile Africa Cup Kenya, Carry1st Africa Cup Nigeria to mention but a few.

The sustainable development of eSports cannot be limited to the organization of competitions.

Like other sports industries, it requires the creation of a real ecosystem including:

- academies and training structures;
- specialized coaches;
- content creators;
- event organizers;
- business partners;
- institutional recognition.



The structuring of this value chain is an essential condition for its development.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

One of the main challenges for the sector remains its recognition by sports institutions and public authorities.

This recognition would enable

- better sector organization;
- more institutional and logistical support;
- attractive financing instruments for investors;
- the development of adapted training programs.

The gradual integration of eSports into national strategies could thus accelerate its growth.



INITIATIVES ALREADY UNDERWAY

The projects presented at the "**Under the Baobab**" event show that this dynamic is already underway.

Initiatives such as **Sages Africa** or **A314** illustrate the gradual development of specialized players seeking to structure the market and create new economic opportunities around gaming and eSports.

These projects are a testament to the innovative capacity of the African ecosystem.

NFL, PFL AND PADEL: PROGRESSIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The development strategies of emerging sports are based on adaptation to local markets.

- ❑ The National Football League (NFL) is taking an approach via flag football (a sport derived from American football) with programs rolled out in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana. The goal is to build a grassroots base before developing a professional market.
- ❑ The Professional Fighters League (PFL) launched PFL Africa and held its first MMA event in July 2025 in Cape Town (South Africa). This event marks a desire to create a structured league on a continental scale. The PFL continues to organize regular events in several African countries, in order to build an audience and local credibility.

Padel follows a different logic, it is mainly built around urban clubs and a high frequency of use. In Africa, the growth is particularly visible in South Africa, where there are around 600 courts and more than 200 clubs in 2025, making the country the continent's largest market and confirming the potential of this model. These examples illustrate the same logic: gradually building the market rather than importing existing models.



HYBRIDIZATION: BETWEEN LOCAL CULTURE AND GLOBAL FORMATS

The growth of African sport also involves a **hybridization** between **traditional local practices** and **modern broadcasting formats**. Some of the continent's emblematic disciplines, such as *dambe* in Nigeria or Senegalese wrestling, are becoming increasingly visible when they are adapted to the codes of contemporary sports entertainment, particularly through digital media and online broadcasting platforms.

The stakes go beyond the sporting dimension alone. It is a question of promoting a cultural heritage while creating new economic opportunities. The aim is to transform practices that have historically been rooted in "habits" into attractive sports products, capable of generating

audiences, commercial partnerships and sustainable revenues.

This strategy appears to be particularly relevant in a continent where attachment to cultural identities remains strong. Traditional sports and games benefit from a significant symbolic capital among local populations, which gives them significant economic potential when they are integrated into marketing and media models adapted to international standards.

One of Africa's competitive advantages lies in the enhancement of its fantastic intangible capital: history, art and culture.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 7

The new frontiers of growth in African sport are based on more **flexible business models**, often **less capital-intensive** and more **aligned with the consumption habits of new generations**. The rise of digital technology, the democratization of smartphones and the evolution of entertainment practices are paving the way for new development opportunities for the continent's sports industry.

Esports, combat sports and **flag football** illustrate this transformation. Their economic potential is based less on the construction of expensive infrastructure than on the ability to federate communities, produce attractive content and generate a high level of engagement with audiences. In these models, value is primarily created through audience, visibility, and interaction with fans.

Conversely, some emerging disciplines such as **padel** require dedicated infrastructure, but benefit from relatively controlled investment costs and profitable business models. They thus offer prospects for gradual development, particularly in fast-growing urban areas.

In this context, the future development of African sport will be based above all on the ability of actors to adapt economic models to local realities, to the constraints of the continent and to the expectations of new generations, rather than on the simple reproduction of models historically developed in Western markets.



CHAPTER 8

ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES: A LIVING AFRICAN MODEL, UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Lessons from the "Under The Baobab" Deal Room



FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Throughout the summit, the projects presented during the pitches of the "Under the Baobab" deal room provided a concrete illustration of the transformations currently at work in the African sports ecosystem.

These initiatives demonstrate that the opportunities identified in the previous chapters are no longer solely a matter of foresight.

Entrepreneurs, startups and project leaders are already developing solutions to monetization, fan engagement, training, media and gaming issues. Innovation thus appears to be a major lever for structuring the market.



OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN

The projects observed do not focus on a single segment of the sports industry. They intercede at different levels:

- content production;
- broadcasting;
- community engagement;
- training;
- technology;
- monetization.

This diversity confirms that the opportunities for value creation go far beyond the sports competition itself.

Opportunities are not just on the playing field: they exist at every levels of the sports ecosystem.



FROM AUDIENCE CAPTURE TO MONETIZATION

A first group of initiatives focuses on capturing and enhancing attention.

Initiatives such as **13 Productions** and **FTBLR** illustrate this logic. The former develops digital sports content on a large scale (more than 1.2 million followers and 2.2 million monthly views), demonstrating the ability of local content to generate engagement. The second structures amateur football via a social and data-driven platform, transforming an informal practice into a monetizable ecosystem (matchmaking, payments, content).



INTEGRATED PLATFORMS AT THE HEART OF THE SPORTS EXPERIENCE

A second set of stakeholders is taking a more integrated approach, building complete ecosystems around sport.

Match We Can is the most successful example of this. The platform offers a global experience combining content, tourism, hospitality and services, creating multiple revenue streams (sponsorship, premium experiences, partnerships).

In a complementary logic, **PayCashPlay** seeks to digitize and structure the football ecosystem through an integrated solution adapted to the African and European markets.

INTEGRATED SPORTS PLATFORM

Includes



Content



Hospitality



Payments



Partnerships



Community



Tourism

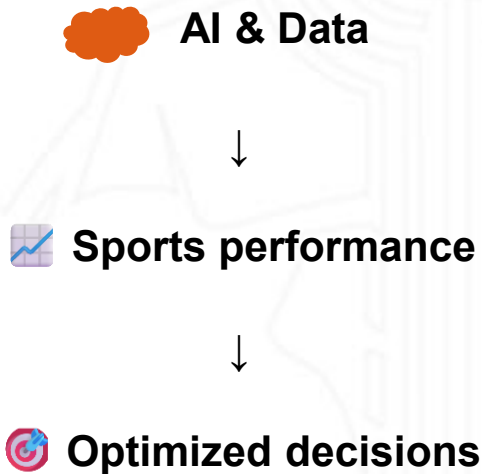
TECHNOLOGY AND PERFORMANCE: STRUCTURING THE SPORTS OFFER

Other initiatives focus on improving the performance and structuring of the sector.

Silicone Mind develops data analysis and artificial intelligence solutions to optimize sports performance and decision-making. The company thus connects sports performance to economic and organizational issues.

SAGES Africa acts as a market “catalyst” in eSports, combining the organization of competitions, training and community development.

Silicone Mind



SAGES Africa



ACCESSIBILITY AND NEW USES

Finally, some initiatives focus on accessibility and adaptation to local uses.

A314 develops gaming experiences that are accessible without downloading, transforming the cell phone into a monetization and engagement channel for brands.

WellPass, on the other hand, illustrates the expansion of the scope of sport towards well-being, by offering fitness solutions accessible via subscription for companies, with performance and profitability monitoring.

A314

 **Accessible Mobile Gaming**



 **User Engagement**



 **Brand monetization**

WellPass

Fitness solutions



 **Subscribing companies**



 **Performance &
profitability**



CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 8

The initiatives presented under the Baobab should not be analyzed as independent projects, but as the different components of an African sports ecosystem still being structured. Although developed in a variety of contexts, they bear witness to the same dynamic of transformation and innovation.

These initiatives share several common characteristics:

- an approach focused on **audience and community engagement**,
- a **strong integration of digital tools** into development models, as well as
- an ability to adapt to **local economic, social and cultural realities**.

This flexibility is a key factor in their success in environments where financial resources and infrastructure may be limited.

Beyond their diversity, these projects demonstrate that it is possible to create value without systematically replicating the dominant models observed in Europe or North America. They highlight the gradual emergence of an African model of sport, based on innovation, proximity to the public and the enhancement of the specificities of the local market.

Together, these initiatives illustrate the continent's ability to develop original solutions adapted to its challenges, while laying the foundations for a more sustainable, inclusive and attractive sports industry for investors.

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a light-colored suit and a dark tie, stands at a podium with a microphone, addressing a group of people. The audience, consisting of several men in suits, is seated at a long conference table in the foreground. The table is set with water bottles, tissues, and documents. The background features a large screen displaying abstract blue and white curved shapes. The overall setting appears to be a formal meeting or conference.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

WHY INVEST NOW IN AFRICA?

CONCLUSION

African sport is now at a decisive moment in its development. The analysis carried out in this work shows that the continent has particularly favorable fundamentals:

- a) young and fast-growing population,
- b) rapid digitalization,
- c) increasing urbanization and
- d) growing interest from international investors in emerging sports markets.

These elements are growth factors - they create the conditions for the emergence of a sports industry capable of generating economic value, employment, new long-term investment opportunities, and above all impact.

In this context, Africa is both a **reservoir of sporting talent** and the **future of the global sports market**.



Major challenges remain **institutional weaknesses, lack of infrastructure, and the fragility of certain economic models**. But these limits do not negate the market potential; above all, they confirm that it is still in the structuring phase.

And it is precisely in this phase of transformation that the best opportunities are concentrated. The initiatives studied already show the emergence of new models: **monetization of engagement, digital formats, public-private partnerships, emerging sports, and local entrepreneurship**.

These are all signals of the continent's ability to build solutions adapted to its economic and social realities.



This dynamic bottom line is : the development of African sport will not come from a simple copy of Western models, but from their **adaptation** and **hybridization**.

One of the main lessons-learned from the discussions at the **Game Time Africa Summit 2026** is clear: in the African sports industry, value creation depends less on the resources available than **key stakeholders' ability to structure the ecosystems** that connect them.

Organizations that invest early, support this structuring, and build sustainable models will have a major (first-mover) advantage in a market that is set to have more influence in the global sports economy.

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- African Union Commission & OECD Development Centre (2025), *Africa's Development Dynamics 2025: Infrastructure, Growth and Transformation*, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/10/africa-s-development-dynamics-2025_d153f2a8.html, accessed on 22/05/2026.
- French Development Agency (2022), *The Sports Economy in Africa: A Mirror of a Continent Undergoing Major Transformation*, <https://www.afd.fr/fr/actualites/leconomie-du-sport-en-afrique-miroir-dun-continent-en-pleine-mutation>, accessed on 18/03/2026.
- AVCA (2024), *African Private Capital Activity Report 2024*, <https://www.avca.africa/data-intelligence/research-publications/2024-african-private-capital-activity-report/>, accessed on 14/04/2026.
- Business of Sports Institute Africa (2025), *Top Private Equity Deals Shaping African Sports in 2025*, <https://bosinstitute.com/articles/top-private-equity-deals-shaping-african-sports-in-2025/>, accessed on 27/05/2026.
- Business Research Insights (2025), *Sports Sponsorship Market Report*, <https://www.businessresearchinsights.com/market-reports/sports-sponsorship-market-117488>, accessed on 07/06/2026.
- Daily Maverick (2025), *Are SA Padel Investors in a Bit of a Pickle?*, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-02-13-are-sa-padel-investors-in-a-bit-of-a-pickle/>, accessed on 08/05/2026.
- Deloitte (2026), *Football Money League 2026*, <https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/services/consulting-financial/analysis/deloitte-football-money-league.html>, accessed on 29/05/2026.
- EcoActu (2023), *Morocco's Sports Industry Exceeds 2.5% of GDP and 115,000 Jobs*, <https://ecoactu.ma/lindustrie-du-sport-au-maroc-depasse-la-barre-des-25-du-pib-et-des-115-000-emplois-etude/>, accessed on 16/04/2026.
- European Club Association & UEFA (2025), *The European Club Finance and Investment Landscape 2025*, <https://ecfil.uefa.com/>, accessed on 07/04/2026.
- FIFA (2023), *Professional Football Report 2023*, <https://inside.fifa.com/legal/news/fifa-publishes-professional-football-report-2023>, accessed on 11/05/2026.
- FIFA (2024), *Club Licensing*, <https://inside.fifa.com/advancing-football/fifa-club-licensing>, accessed on 25/04/2026.
- FIFPRO (2021), *Mind the Gap Survey: What You Need to Know*, <https://media.fifpro.org/media/dvgd2hgx/fifpro-mind-the-gap-report-2021.pdf>, accessed on 19/05/2026.
- Forbes (2023), *The World's 50 Most Valuable Sports Teams 2023*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikeozanian/2023/09/08/the-worlds-50-most-valuable-sports-teams-2023/>, accessed on 31/03/2026.
- GSMA (2025), *The Mobile Economy Africa 2025*, <https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/the-mobile-economy-africa-2025>, accessed on 06/06/2026.
- MarketIntel (2025), *Sports Media Rights Market Research Report 2034*, <https://marketintel.com/report/sports-media-rights-market>, accessed on 13/04/2026.
- Newzoo (2025), *Global Games Market Report 2025*, <https://newzoo.com/resources/trend-reports/newzoo-global-games-market-report-2025>, accessed on 24/05/2026.
- NFL Football Operations (2024), *International Players' Road to the NFL*, <https://operations.nfl.com/journey-to-the-nfl/the-nfl-s-international-impact/international-players-road-to-the-nfl>, accessed on 02/06/2026.
- Oliver Wyman (2024), *Africa's Sporting Appetite Could Spark Economic Growth*, <https://www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2024/mar/africa-to-boost-economic-growth-through-sport.html>, accessed on 09/04/2026.
- Quartz Africa (2022), *The Number of African Football Players in European Leagues Tops 500*, <https://qz.com/africa/2161410/the-number-of-african-football-players-in-european-leagues-tops-500>, accessed on 28/03/2026.
- Right To Dream (2025), *Right To Dream*, <https://www.righttodream.com/>, accessed on 21/04/2026.
- Sports Commerce Institute (2025), *The Future of Sports Business in Africa: Why Your Learning Matters*, <https://sportscommerceinstitute.com/the-future-of-sports-business-in-africa-why-your-learning-matters/>, accessed on 03/06/2026.
- Statista (2025), *Global Visits to Media Piracy Sites by Content Type 2025*, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/819983/media-piracy-site-visits-by-medium/>, accessed on 30/05/2026.
- United Nations (2024), *Young People's Potential, the Key to Africa's Sustainable Development*, <https://www.un.org/ohrrls/news/young-people%E2%80%99s-potential-key-africa%E2%80%99s-sustainable-development>, accessed on 15/03/2026.
- Zion Market Research (2025), *Esports Market*, <https://www.zionmarketresearch.com/report/esports-market>, accessed on 04/06/2026.
- Comparative Study of Sports Budgets in Africa (2021), <https://africansci.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Etude-Comparative-Budget-Sport-Afrique-040121-.pdf>, accessed on 12/03/2026.

LEARN, CONNECT, CELEBRATE, INVEST

GAME
TIME
INVESTMENT SUMMIT

