



AFRICA EARTH OBSERVATION CHALLENGE

Celebrating a decade of empowering space start-ups

South African Geodesy Working Group (SAGWG)

02 October 2025





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What is AEOC?



A leading platform growing Africa's space ecosystem



WHAT IS THE AEOC?

An annual open innovation competition that aims to select African entrepreneurs utilising space technologies, equip them with business development training, pitch preparation, and incubation support to help grow their businesses.



AEOC FOCUS AREAS

Thematic challenge tracks are aligned with continental priorities, such as:

- **Agriculture**
- **Urban/Rural Planning**
- **Climate Change**
- **Environmental Monitoring**
- **Disaster Risk Management**
- **Health Services**



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

We are looking for:

- **Business at pre-seed/seed stage (TRL 7-9 & BRL 1-3)**
- **Applying space-based data in their business models.**
- **Business must be Africa-based**



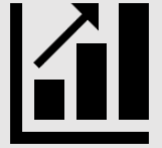
BENEFITS TO STARTUPS

Winners will receive up to \$10,000 in cash prizes, data packages, business and IP support, media publicity, technical assistance, and access to incubation and mentorship.



PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

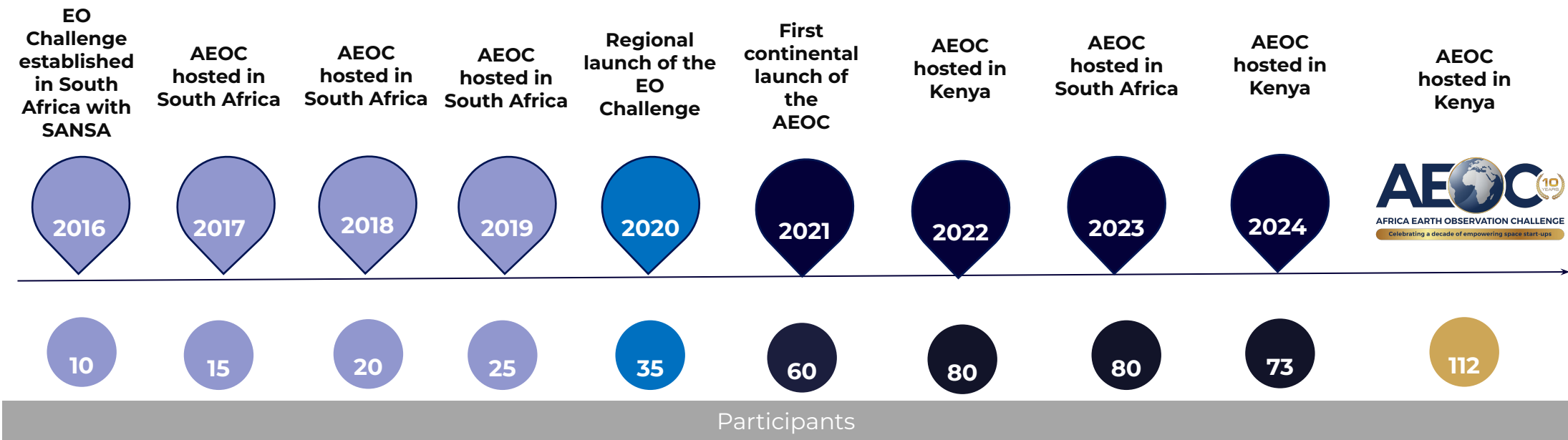
Partners contribute to a collaborative and inclusive programme through mentoring, finalist selection, prize support, and funding, with involvement from space agencies, data platforms, and private sector players across Africa and globally.



GROWTH, IMPACT AND REACH

Since its inception in 2015, the AEOC has engaged with over 300 startups and 40 delivery partners., making it a leading platform for space entrepreneurial development on the continent.

Introduction to AEOC: Africa's innovation challenge using satellites & EO



Africa's flagship innovation programme using space and Earth Observation (EO) data to solve pressing challenges. Since 2015, AEOC has grown from a national competition into a **pan-African pipeline that identifies, equips, and scales high-impact ventures.**

The AEOC 2025 thematic tracks

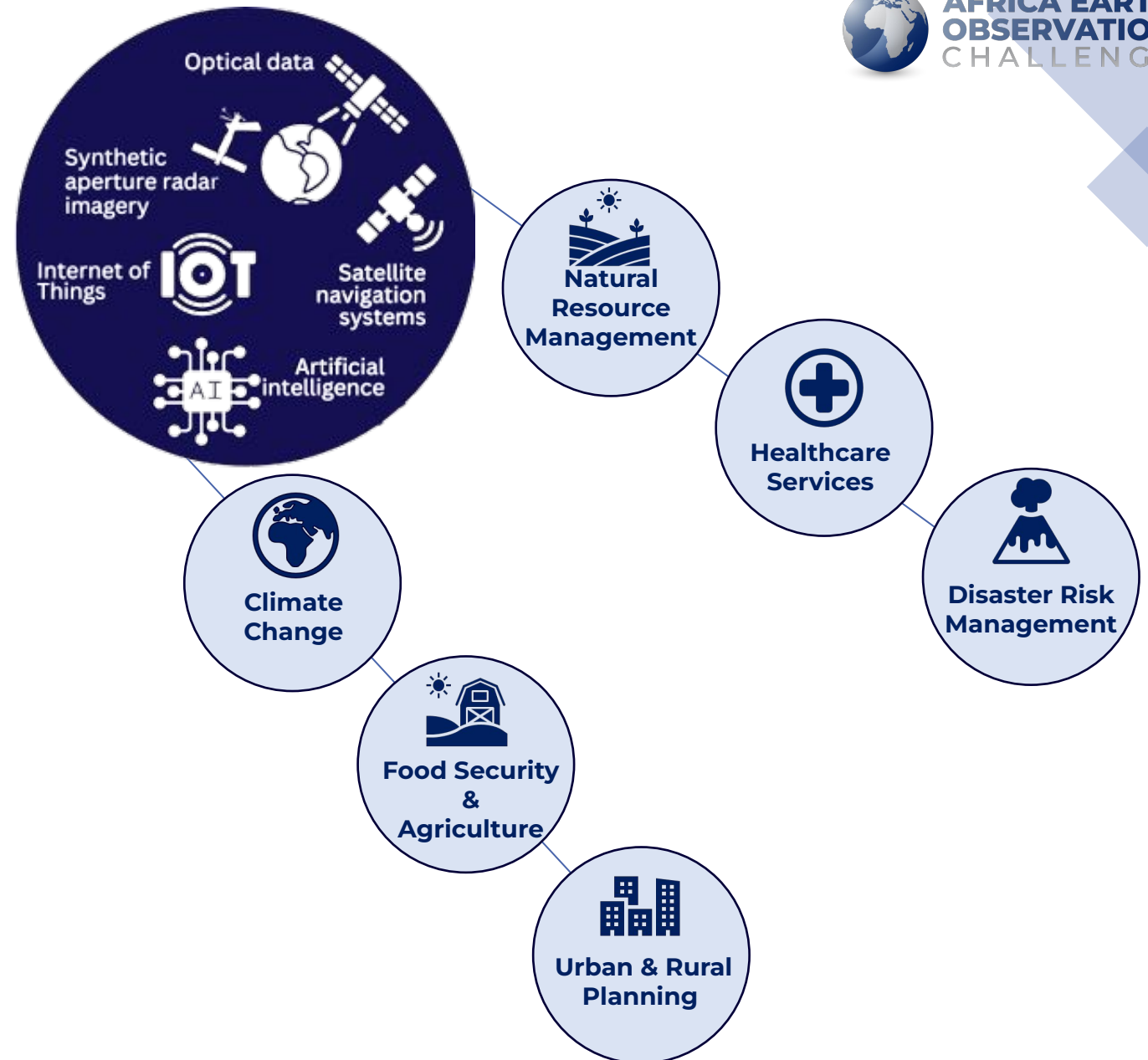
The 2025 AEOC aims to identify innovative applications of **space-based data (SBD)** and technologies across **six** thematic areas.

Emphasis is placed on **five key space-based tools and technologies**, namely:

- Optical data (Earth Observation)
- Synthetic aperture radar imagery
- Satellite navigation systems
- The Internet of Things (IoT)
- Artificial intelligence

Consideration will also be given to **innovative data collection techniques**.

These include **upstream technologies** like new satellites, on-board processing units and innovative *in-situ* **measurement techniques**.





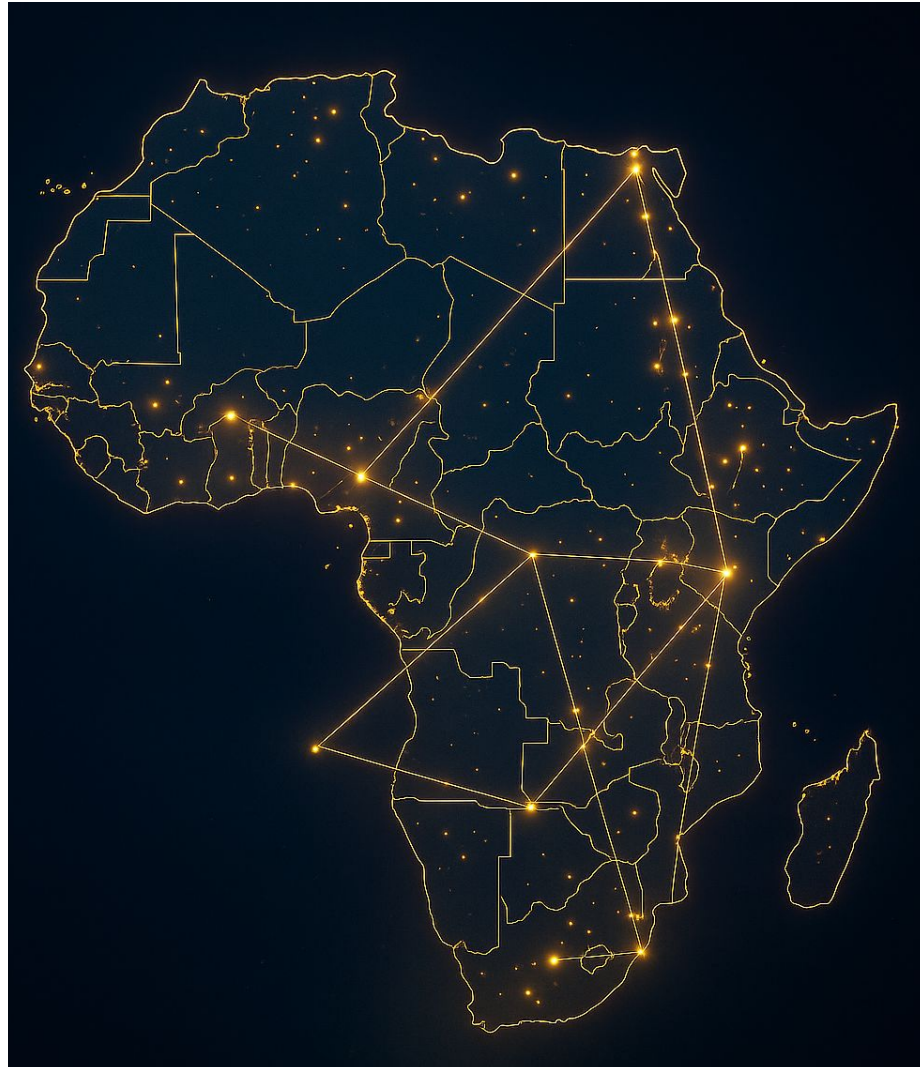
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Why Partnerships Matter



AEOC's partner footprint



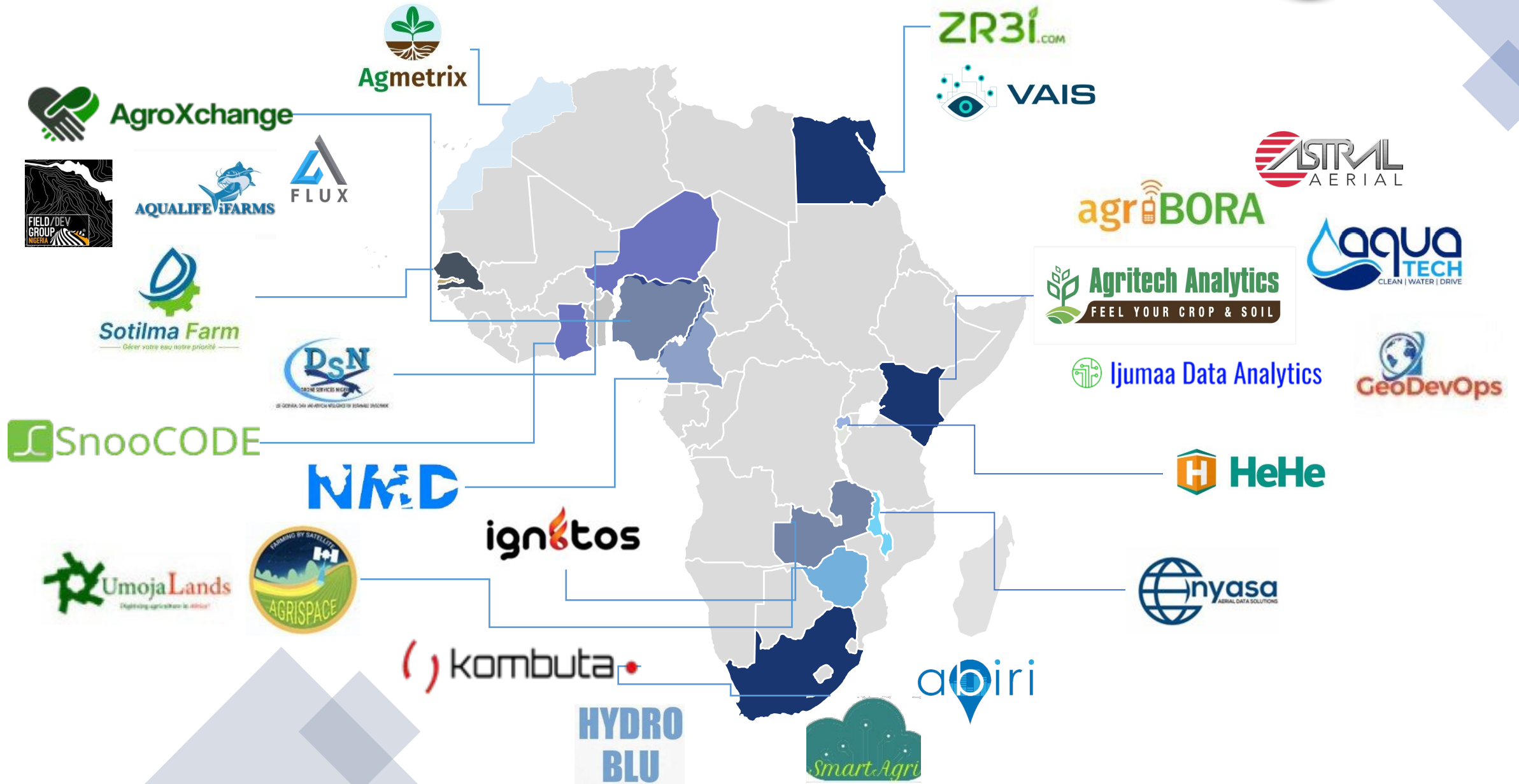
The vision

- AEOC Hubs in major African cities — physical spaces for innovation, training, and collaboration
- Pan-African Network of partners across public, private, and academic sectors
- Community of Practice anchored in local realities, solving regional challenges





The partners

- 💰 Funders: Support startups, youth, and infrastructure
- 🎓 Mentors: Guide early-stage innovators and student teams
- 🗺️ Policy Shapers: Embed EO solutions in national plans and governance
- 🚀 Incubators/Accelerators: Provide technical and business support for growth

A Pan-African Initiative



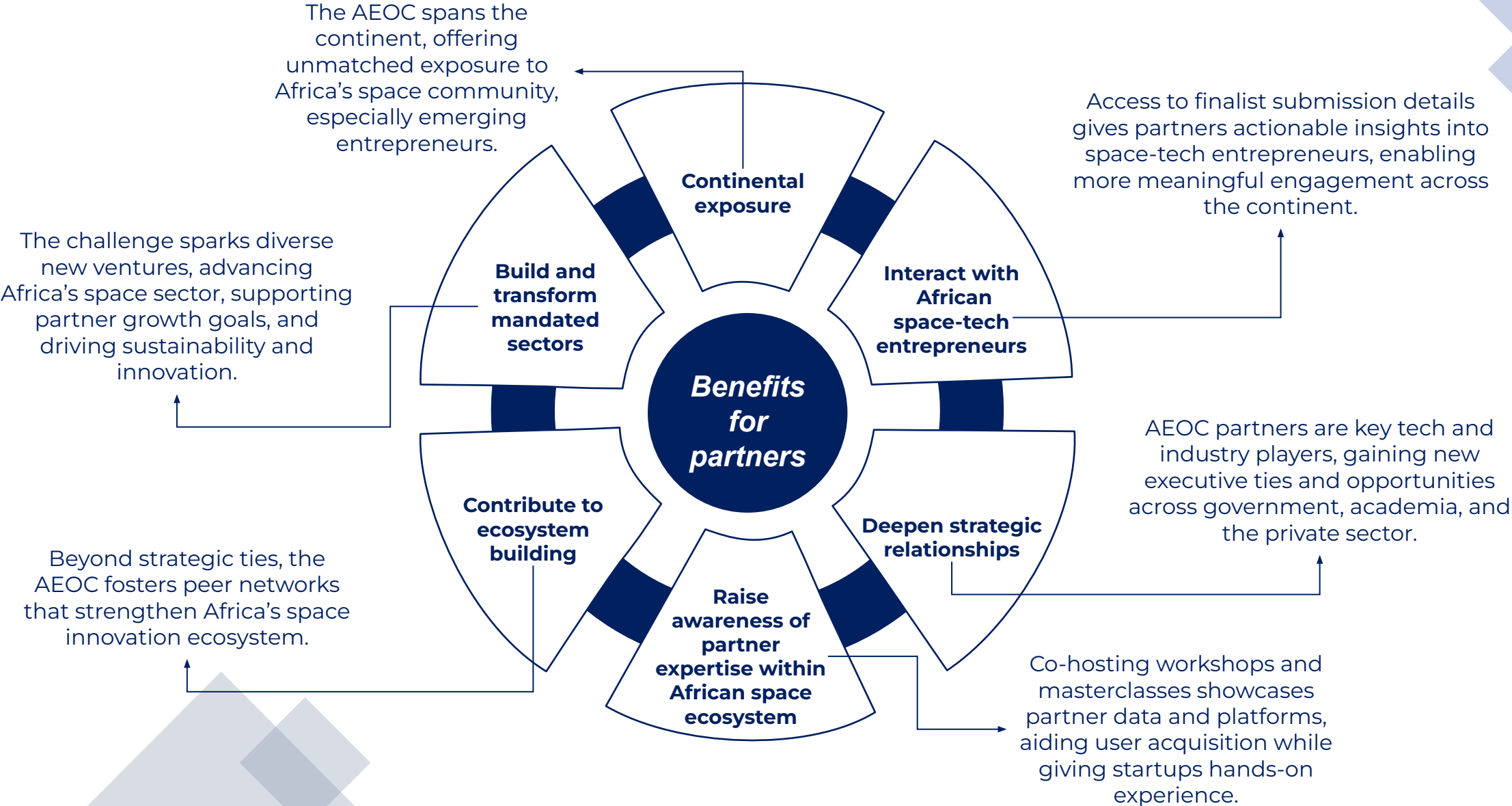
Partnership Model

-  Policymaker shaping the frameworks
-  Funder unlocking opportunity
-  Researcher advancing knowledge
-  Mentor guiding the next generation

Three-Tiered Partnership Model



Partner Benefits



Network of partners and reach 2015 - 2025

The programme has deepened its reach to participation from **17+ countries on the African continent** and **international space players** with an interest in **Africa's space innovation ecosystem**.

2015-2020



2021



2022



2023



2024





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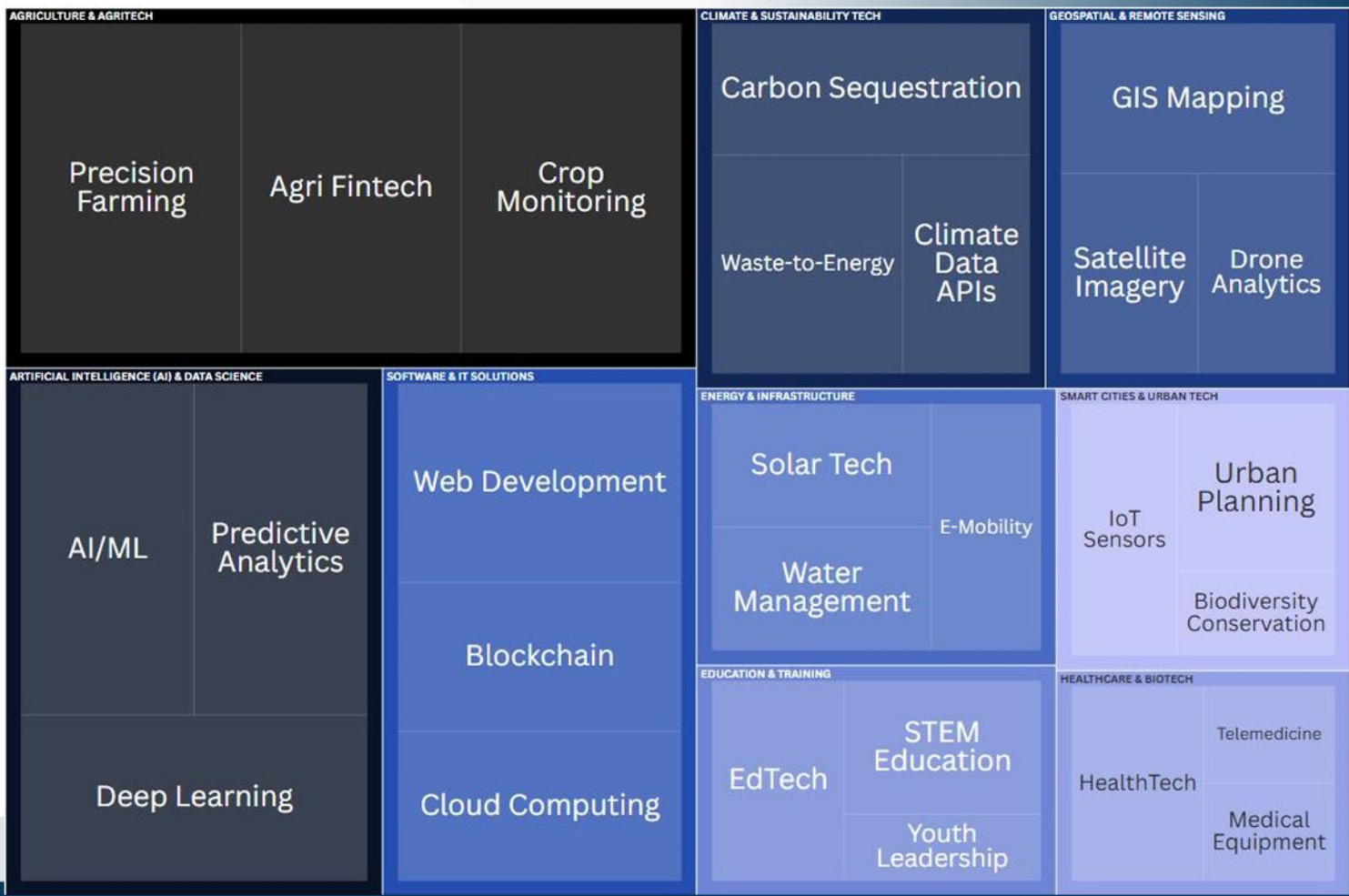
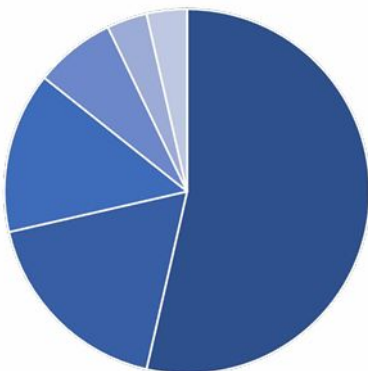
Where We Are



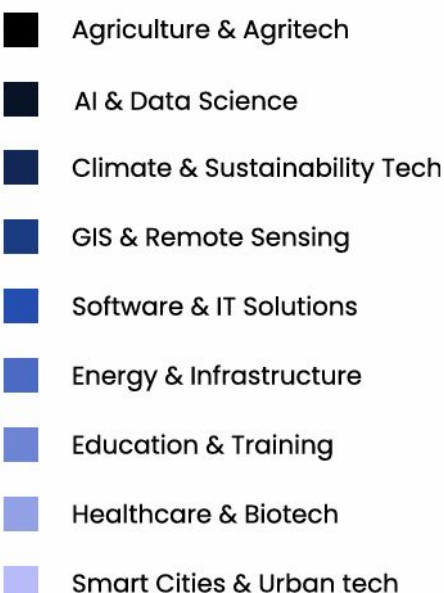
AEOC 2025 Applications Statistics

Application Statistics

Business Stage



Skills and Markets





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Where We Are Going








Why the Next Decade Matters

The next ten years are not just a continuation — they're a turning point.

AEOC will evolve into a catalytic force, not just supporting promising startups, but also enabling structural shifts in how innovation is sourced, funded, and scaled across sectors.

What lies ahead is bigger than competition or recognition. It's about building entire ecosystems that are:

-  Sustainable
-  Pan-African
-  Data-driven
-  Investor-ready
-  Policy-aligned

Africa needs infrastructure to help entrepreneurs thrive. From funders to founders, from local governments to global partners, we will build this future together.



AEOC 2025 And Beyond



AEOC Junior: Where it begins

School-aged learners discovering Earth Observation and space tech through local clubs and curriculum



Post-School Pathways

Young minds nurtured through research, prototyping, and early exposure to entrepreneurial thinking



AEOC Challenge: Where ideas mature

Providing structured access to mentorship, technical support, and real-world problem framing



Incubation & Acceleration

Alumni enter incubation and in-kind programs, refining their models for sustainability and scale



Investor Readiness

Graduates exit the funnel as investable, scalable African ventures, backed by AEOC's growing VC and donor network

Diversifying The Innovation Pipeline

Age

AEOC Junior clubs for youth, university engagement, and mentorships at foundation level

Gender

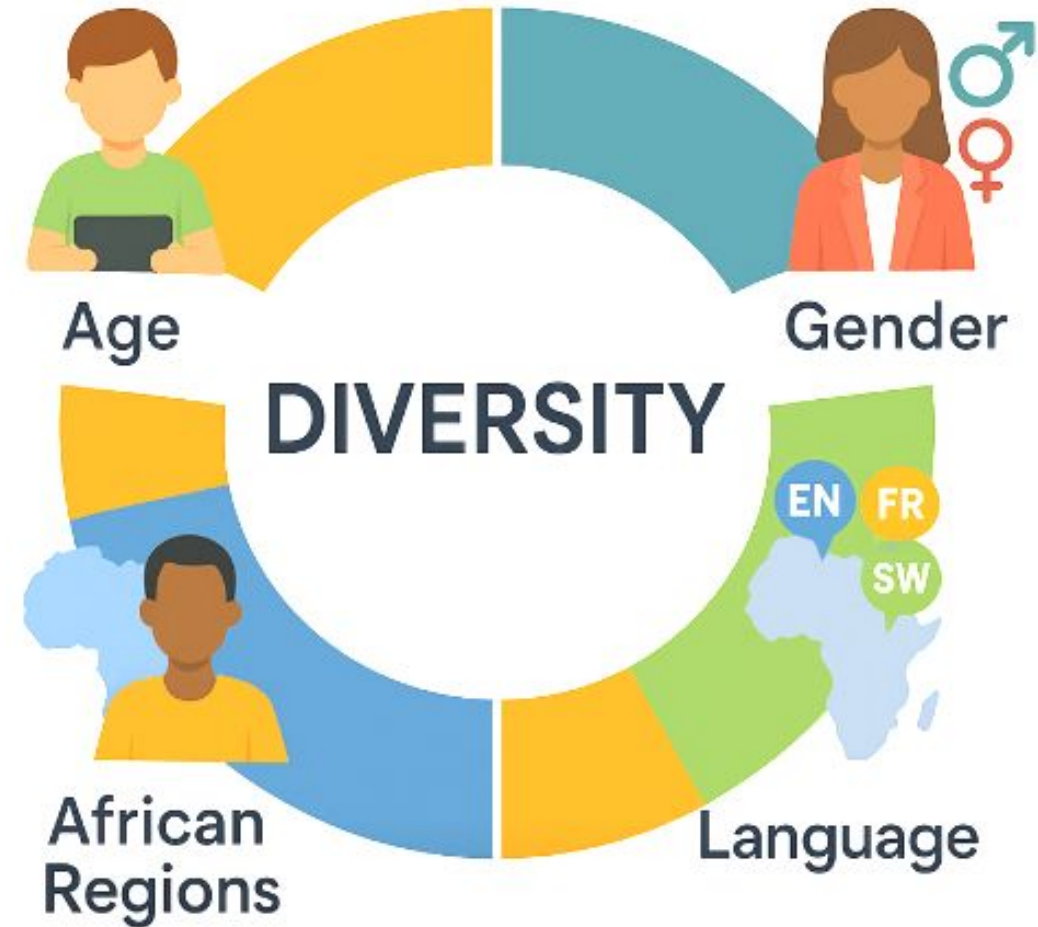
Partnerships with women in space networks, gender-equity in judging and leadership

Language

Francophone, Lusophone, Arabic, and Swahili-speaking inclusion

Regions

Full representation from all five AU regions






Investing Early In Talent



AEOC Junior is a youth-focused extension of the AEOC.

Objectives

-  Inspire early interest in space and Earth Observation
-  Build a future talent pipeline across all African regions
-  Bridge education with real-world tech exposure

Pathways

- Space Clubs: Hosted in schools across the continent
- Learning Toolkits: Simple EO content aligned to school curricula
- Innovation Challenges: Student projects aligned to AEOC tracks
- Mentorship: Linkages with space agencies, researchers, startups

Embedding Equity

How we're advancing gender equity in practice

Women-led Programming

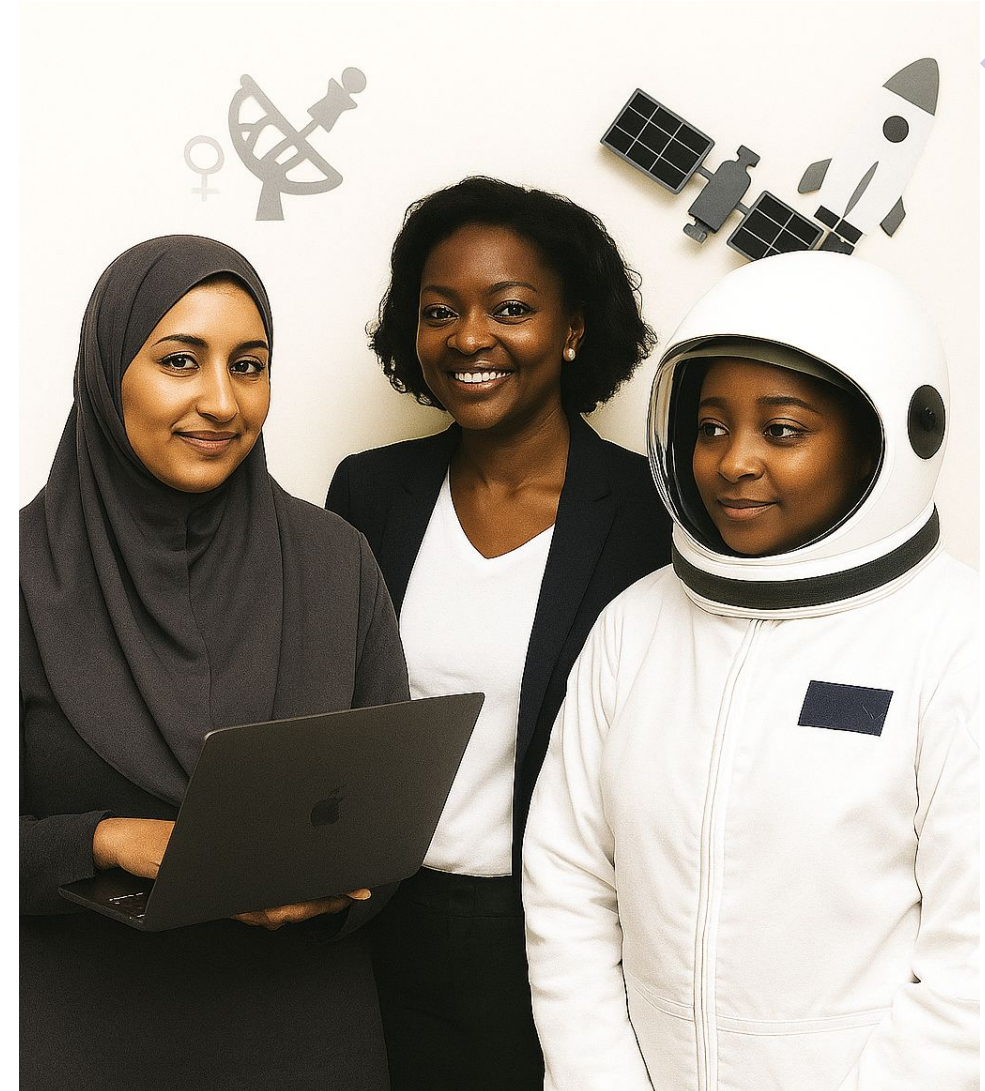
Women shape and lead key elements of AEOC's design and delivery

Targeted Outreach

Actively encouraging girls and women to apply, ensuring strong female representation in the pool of applicants

Equity Metrics

Monitoring women's participation, leadership, and progression throughout the program



Regional And Linguistic Inclusion


Reflecting the full richness and diversity of the African continent — ensuring that no geography, language, or culture is left behind in Africa's space innovation journey.

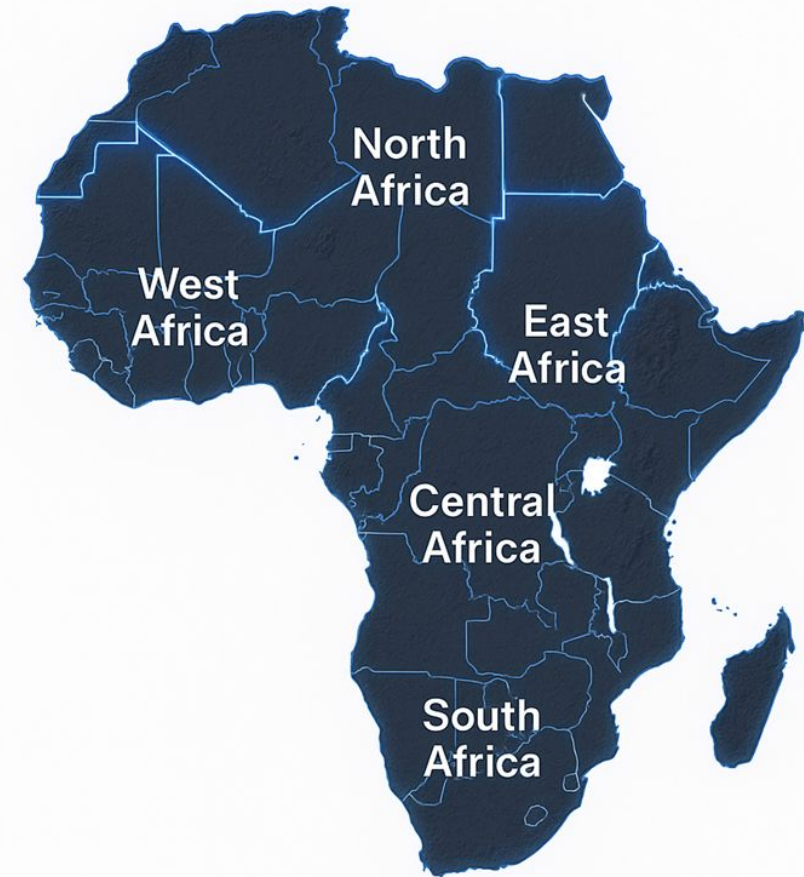
Our Inclusion Approach

 Regional Equity: Engaging innovators from all five AU regions — North, South, East, West, and Central Africa

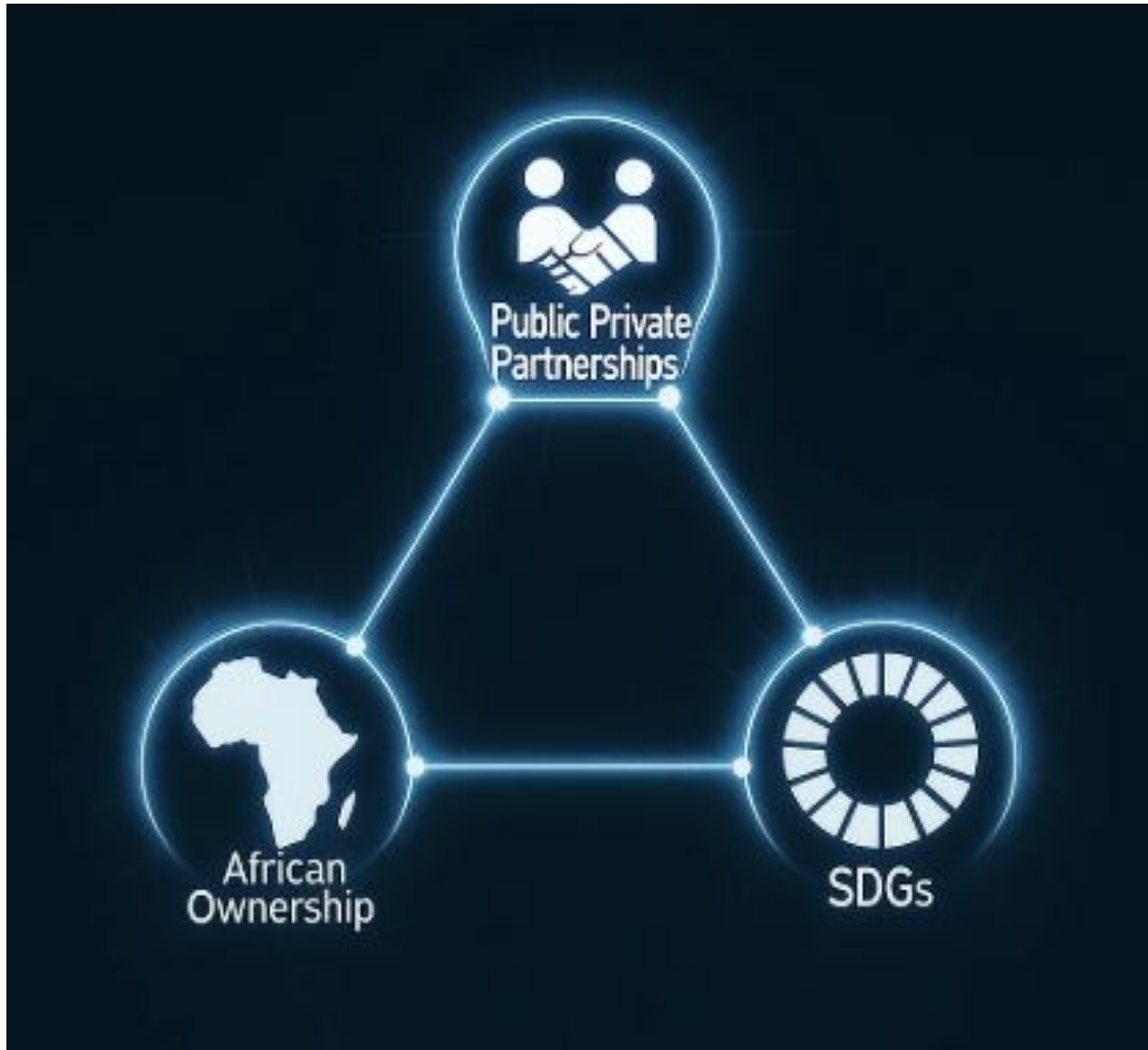
 Linguistic Accessibility: Programs and content tailored for Francophone, Lusophone, Arabic, Swahili, and English-speaking communities

 Localized Outreach: Targeted engagement with rural areas, underserved cities, and emerging innovation hotspots

 Co-hosted Activities: Partnerships with national institutions, space agencies, and universities for context-specific implementation



Sustainability Model



AEOC's growth is anchored in a sustainability model built on:

Long-term funding mechanisms

- Public-private partnerships
- Space Innovation Fund

Ecosystem ownership

- Co-created with African institutions
- Local innovation hubs, co-hosted with universities, space and innovation agencies

Alignment with global goals

- Agenda 2063
- Sustainable Development Goals



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Enabling space start-ups utilising digital technologies



LOOKING AT AFRICA'S CHALLENGES THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS



KENYA SPACE AGENCY
Kenya Space Agency



Digital Earth
AFRICA



AIRBUS

