



**Samba Bathily,  
Founder and Chairman, ADS Group**

Born in Mali, Samba Bathily is a world-renowned African entrepreneur who pioneered the financial structuring of major infrastructure projects. To date, Samba Bathily has structured a project portfolio worth more than \$ 5 billion in many strategic areas such as optic fiber, renewables, hydraulic dams, identification, data centers, road infrastructures and water supply. Thanks to his global network, he excels at establishing innovative financial strategies involving private and public entities, local and international financial institutions, funds and banks. He is now recognized as one of those leaders whose contribution is critical to transform the African continent as a global growth driver.

Amongst Mr Bathily's first successes is the deployment of the internet backbone ahead of the 2002 African Cup of Nations in Mali with its company CIME Global Network, a joint venture created with French company CIME, AZLAN Group and US provider CISCO Systems.

In order to better structure his various businesses, Samba launched in 2005 the ADS Group (*ADS standing for: Africa Development Solutions*) in 2005; under this umbrella there is a dynamic group active in the sectors of project-financing and consulting on major infrastructure projects; new technologies, telecommunications, media and communication; industrial development; renewables and access to water; retail and franchising; infrastructures, construction, real estate and hotels; automobile, maritime transport and logistics.

Later on, ADS Group has started Solektra, which initiated the Akon lighting Africa campaign, designed to increase awareness and use of innovative solar solutions amongst African rural communities, so that they can be provided with clean and sustainable energy sources. To date more than 1800 localities have been positively impacted across the continent by Solektra. The company has also founded a solar academy has been founded, with two centers, in Bamako, Mali, and in Diamniadio, Senegal. Solektra is one of the founding members of the GASCA Alliance (Global Alliance for Smart Cities and Villages in Africa - GASCA), created by 20Regions for Climate Action to deploy smart cities and villages across Africa and officially launched as part of the Africa Pledge of the One Planet Summit Africa in Nairobi on 14 march 2019.

ADS is also the mother-company of Multi Industries Group, which leverages solar solutions to manufacture electricity equipment, mobility solutions and computers in the new smart economic hub of Diamniadio, Senegal. Other famous ventures include IT expert companies such as Africa Digital Solutions which aggregate solutions and products to offer tailored support to African Governments, Institutions and the Private sector, with a triple focus on 'smart infrastructure', 'smart citizen' and 'smart government'. The group is in the process of

delivering the western African digital pool, a game-changing project aimed to deploy interconnectivity in 7 western African countries (Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Sierra-Leone) as part of efforts to achieve the Single Africa Digital Market designed by the Smart Africa Alliance.

In the financial sector, ADS' subsidiary Ecosystem Capital has set up financing and advisory structures to support young African entrepreneurs and start-ups, notably via venture capital projects and funds such as MansaLab, Teranga Capital and Emergence Capital.

As part of his commitment to Africa's development, Samba Bathily is also leading the Volunteers of Africa Foundation (*Fondation Volontaires d'Afrique*) which is a pan-African non-profit organization that is aimed to improve living standards and create opportunities for vulnerable communities, including young people, women, and rural populations across Africa.

FVA is the philanthropic project of Mr Bathily. FVA is committed to social justice in order to find appropriate and sustainable solutions to the key problems confronting most Africans, such as poverty, marginalization, exclusion, hunger, illiteracy, diseases, access to water, energy, etc. Through its interventions, FVA has enabled millions of Africans to benefit from fundamental human rights such as the Right to Life, the Right to Food, the Right to Health, the Right to Education, the Right to a Healthy Environment, the Right to Basic Infrastructure such as electricity and water, the Right to Security and the Right to Participate in public life as a citizen. FVA has a special focus on investing in human capital, increasing opportunities and improving the overall standards of living for communities, thanks notably access to sport and culture - especially for women and girls.

In addition, Samba Bathily is one of the co-founders and advisors to the AfroChampions Initiative, an innovative platform promoting intra-African trade as a means to accelerate Africa's growth.

In 2019, Samba Bathily has also launched some initiatives to develop Africa's sport, leisure, and creative industries, which he considers having a strategic potential for the continent. Key projects in these areas include:

- In the sports sector: the partnership between NBA Africa and ADS group through its subsidiary Solektra for the deployment of solar-powered and internet-connected sports infrastructures; also, the support to the *African Football Night*, a major event celebrating the legends of African football each year.
- In the area of culture and art creation: the AfroCreativeEcosystem (A.C.E.), a platform designed to bring together representatives of all creative industries to foster synergies and define a common roadmap on key issues such as talent detection, training, financing and renewed partnerships with foreign multinationals to better position African creations and know-how. ACE's first meeting took place in December 2019 in Mindelo, Cesaria Evora's homeland, on the island of Sao Vicente in Cape Verde, the event was attended by famous Africans active in the movies, fashion, fine arts, literature, and audio-visual industries.