MINISTERE DE L'ÉCONOMIE ET DES FINANCES
RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN

2026 Edition of The Scientific Days of The Beninese Economy

Innovation, Growth, and Inclusive Development

(CALL FOR PAPERS)

Keynote Speakers

Philippe Aghion	Léonard Wantchékon	Abdoulaye Ndiaye
◦ 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences laureate. ◦ Professor at the Collège de France and INSEAD. ◦ Leading expert in innovation, economic growth, and creative destruction.	◦ Recipient of the Global Economy Prize, awarded by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (Germany) in 2013. ◦ James Madison Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University. ◦ Specialist in political economy and development economics.	◦ Recipient of the inaugural Africa NextGen Economist Prize (2026). ◦ Professor of Economics at New York University (NYU). ◦ Specialist in macroeconomics, public finance and economic development.

Important Dates and Venue

Date :

- July 15, 2026 : Call for Papers opens.
- October 15, 2026 : Submission deadline.
- October 31, 2026 : Notification of acceptance.
- November 20, 2026 : Presentation slides due.
- November 30–December 2, 2026 : Advanced intensive seminars in econometrics and macroeconomics.
- December 3–4, 2026 : Benin Economics Scientific Conference (JSEB).

Venue : Golden Tulip Le Diplomate, Cotonou, Benin.

1. Background

Innovation lies at the heart of nations' prosperity and long-term economic development. Broadly defined, innovation refers to the introduction of new products, production processes, organizational methods, or business models that enhance productivity, address emerging needs, and create new economic and social opportunities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Joseph Schumpeter placed innovation at the center of his theory of economic development, defining it as the process through which entrepreneurs introduce "new combinations" that transform existing economic structures and drive economic progress. According to Schumpeter (1911, 1942), economic growth is fundamentally sustained by a process of "creative destruction," whereby innovations gradually replace obsolete technologies, firms, and economic activities.

Economic history shows that major episodes of prosperity have consistently been associated with successive waves of innovation. The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century, driven by the steam engine and mechanization, fundamentally transformed European economies. Subsequent technological revolutions—including electricity, the internal combustion engine, modern chemistry, computing, the Internet, and, more recently, artificial intelligence—have continuously pushed the productivity frontier, reshaped production structures, and improved living standards. Differences in development across countries can largely be explained by their ability to generate, adopt, and diffuse these innovations.

The importance of innovation as a driver of economic growth has been extensively documented in the economic literature. Solow (1957) demonstrated that technological progress is a fundamental source of long-run economic growth. Building on this insight, endogenous growth theories developed by Romer (1986, 1990), Lucas (1988), Grossman and Helpman (1991), and the modern

Schumpeterian models of Aghion and Howitt (1992) emphasize the central role of innovation, human capital, research and development (R&D), and knowledge accumulation in sustaining economic development. More recent contributions by Aghion and his co-authors further show that the growth effects of innovation depend critically on the quality of institutions, educational attainment, financial market development, and the degree of market competition. These studies also highlight the pivotal role of public policies in fostering growth through support for research, education, entrepreneurship, and knowledge diffusion. Together, this body of work provides one of the leading analytical frameworks for understanding the determinants of prosperity in knowledge-based economies.

In contemporary economies, innovation has become more than ever a strategic driver of competitiveness, resilience, and structural transformation. Ongoing digital, energy, demographic, and climate transitions are reshaping traditional economic models while creating new opportunities for sustainable development. Advances in digital technologies, financial technologies (fintech), biotechnology, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence are opening new avenues for growth, but also raising significant challenges related to employment, skills development, inequality, and governance.

For African countries, innovation offers a unique opportunity to accelerate structural transformation, enhance productivity, foster new economic activities, and expand access to essential services. The rapid diffusion of digital technologies, mobile money, digital platforms, and agricultural innovations already demonstrates the continent's capacity to develop solutions tailored to its economic and social realities. However, innovation does not automatically translate into inclusive development. When its benefits are unevenly distributed or concentrated in specific sectors, regions, or social groups, innovation may exacerbate existing economic and social inequalities. The key challenge, therefore, is not only to promote innovation but also to establish the institutions and public policies needed to ensure that its benefits are broadly shared across society.

Benin's innovation strategy is embedded in the broader structural transformation agenda outlined in the Government Action Program (PAG) 2021–2026. It seeks to position digital transformation as a key driver of public sector modernization, economic competitiveness, and social inclusion. The strategy is built around several priorities, including the expansion of high-speed digital infrastructure, the digitalization of public services through the Smart Gouv initiative, the strengthening of cybersecurity, and the promotion of digital technologies across strategic sectors such as education, healthcare, local government, and public finance.

At the same time, Benin has strengthened its technological ambitions through the adoption of the National Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Strategy (2023–2027), which aims to build national capabilities in data governance, artificial intelligence, and digital innovation. This strategy is complemented by initiatives to foster startups, promote technology entrepreneurship, and accelerate the digital transformation of the private sector. Through these efforts, the government seeks to position Benin as a regional hub for digital innovation in West Africa. These achievements are reflected in the country's improved performance in the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI), where Benin rose from 177th place in 2016 to 146th place in 2024, highlighting significant progress in public sector modernization and the expansion of digital public services.

Against this backdrop, the 2026 Benin Economics Scientific Conference (JSEB) will provide a unique platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange among researchers, policymakers, private sector representatives, development partners, and civil society around the theme "Innovation, Growth, and Inclusive Development." The conference aims to showcase the latest scientific research to inform public policy and identify the conditions under which innovation can become a powerful driver of sustained, inclusive, and resilient economic growth in Benin, across Africa, and in developing countries more broadly.

2. Conference Tracks

Under the central theme **"Innovation, Growth, and Inclusive Development,"** the 2026 Benin Economics Scientific Conference (JSEB) invites theoretical, empirical, and policy-oriented contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following tracks :

- **Track 1 :** Innovation, Economic Growth, and Productivity.
- **Track 2 :** Innovation, Creative Destruction, and Structural Transformation.
- **Track 3 :** Innovation, Industrialization, and Global Value Chains.
- **Track 4 :** Digital Innovation, Artificial Intelligence, and Development.
- **Track 5 :** Human Capital, Education, Skills, and Innovation.
- **Track 6 :** Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Startups, and Innovation Ecosystems.
- **Track 7 :** Financial Innovation, FinTech, and Economic Inclusion.
- **Track 8 :** Innovation, Employment, Inequality, and Social Inclusion.
- **Track 9 :** Green Innovation, Energy Transition, and Sustainable Development.
- **Track 10 :** Innovation and Development Finance.

The 2026 Benin Economics Scientific Conference (JSEB) will feature :

- An inaugural keynote address by **Philippe Aghion**, Professor at the Collège de France and INSEAD, co-recipient of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.
- A inaugural keynote address by **Léonard Wantchékon**, James Madison Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University and Fellow of the Econometric Society.

- A plenary keynote address by **Abdoulaye Ndiaye**, Professor of Economics at New York University (NYU) and recipient of the 2026 Best African Economist Under 40 Award.
- A three-day intensive training program in econometrics and advanced macroeconomics, organized in the lead-up to the conference for PhD students, early-career researchers, faculty members, and economists from public institutions. The program will be delivered by **Firmin Doko** (University of Adelaide, Australia), **Prosper Dovonon** (Concordia University, Canada), **Gilles Dufrénot** (Aix-Marseille University, France), **Romain Houssa** (University of Namur, Belgium), and **Patrick Villieu** (University of Orléans, France).

The registration for JSEB and the seminar will take place on the DGE website at www.dge.finances.bj.

3. Submission Guidelines

The Call for Papers is open to researchers from academia, public institutions, international organizations, and the private sector who have produced original research related to one or more of the conference tracks and whose findings have clear policy and operational relevance. Authors are invited to submit full papers no later than **October 15, 2026**, by email to : dres.dge@finances.bj.

Priority will be given to submissions focusing on Benin or offering direct policy implications for the country. Nevertheless, the Scientific Committee also welcomes high-quality contributions addressing Africa more broadly or other developing countries. Only full papers meeting the submission requirements below will be considered. All submissions will undergo peer review by the Scientific Committee, which will evaluate them based on their scientific quality, methodological rigor, originality, policy relevance, and alignment with the conference theme and tracks. Authors of accepted papers will receive the reviewers' comments together with the Committee's decision.

Papers and presentations may be submitted and delivered in English or French. To encourage broad participation, the conference will be organized in a hybrid format. Participants will have the option of presenting their work and attending the conference either in person or online. Both the keynote lectures and parallel sessions will be streamed live via Zoom, allowing remote participants to actively engage in discussions by asking questions and providing comments.

Submitted papers (in English or French) must be original, preferably prepared in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5 line spacing, and should not exceed 30 pages or 50,000 characters (including spaces). The first page must include the title, together with a short abstract of no more than 200 words (in both English and French), a maximum of 5 keywords, and up to 5 JEL classification codes. Authors should also provide their name, affiliation, telephone number, and the active email address of the corresponding author on the first page.

All papers presented during the JSEB will be published in the Conference Proceedings to be issued after the conference. Manuscripts of outstanding quality will be selected for publication in the **Revue Économique**, the **Journal of Economic and Financial Policy Analysis (RAPEF)**, and the **Economic and Monetary Review (REM)**. An edited volume will be published to mark this major scientific event.

The Best Paper presented at the JSEB will receive a trophy and a certificate, both bearing the title **"Best Paper Award – JSEB 2026."** Eligible papers are those recognized for their scientific rigor and quality. They must not only address one of the themes specified above but also include operational policy recommendations for economic policymaking in Benin.

4. Conference Steering Team

- **Supervision :** Aristide Medenou, Minister of Economy and Finance, in charge of Cooper.ation.
- **Coordination :** Adéchina Elie Idohou, Deputy Director General of the Economy.
- **Scientific Committee :** Denis Acclassato Houenou (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Alastaire Alinsato (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Désiré Avom (University of Yaoundé, Cameroon), Marie-Odile Attanasso (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Théophile T. Azomahou (Université Clermont Auvergne, CNRS-CERDI, France), Alain Babatoundé (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Chrysost Bangaké (University of Artois, France), Dramane Coulibaly (University of Lyon, France), Barthélémy Biao (UADC, Benin), Moussa P. Blimpo (University of Toronto, Canada), Augustin Chabossou (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Prudence Dato (Clean Air Task Force, USA), Achille Diendéré (Thomas Sankara University, Burkina Faso), Firmin Doko (University of Adelaide, Australia), Prosper Dovonon (Concordia University, Canada), Gilles Dufrénot (Aix-Marseille University, France), Jude Eggoh (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Rose Fiamohe (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Blaise Gnimassoun (Université de Lorraine, France), Albert Honlonkou (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Bernard Houmènou (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Romain Houssa (University of Namur, Belgium), Charlemagne Igue (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Cheikh Tidiane Ndiaye (Gaston Berger University, Senegal), Boris Lokonon (University of Parakou, Benin), Gervais Somèdo (University of Tours, France), Yves Soglo (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin), Patrick Villieu (University of Orléans, France), Sanni Yaya (Imperial College London, United Kingdom), and Etienne Yehoue (International Monetary Fund (IMF), USA & WAEMU).
- **Organizing committee :** Samuel Agbéti, Janvier Alofa, Achille Assouto, Armand Chabi, Mathieu Dossou, Jude Eggoh, Blaise Gnimassoun, Marius

Guezo, Gabin Mehou, and Denis Mouzoun.

5. Why participate in the JSEB ?

Participating in the JSEB 2026 means :

- Presenting your research to leading experts and policymakers.
- Engaging with internationally renowned scholars, including Professors Philippe Aghion, Léonard Wantchékon and Abdoulaye Ndiaye.
- Contributing to strategic policy recommendations for Benin.
- Competing for the Best Paper Award, which recognizes the most outstanding paper presented at the conference.
- Having the opportunity to publish in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, including **Revue Économique** and **RAPEF**.
- Contributing to an edited volume featuring selected papers from the conference.

6. Keynote Speakers

- **Philippe Aghion** is the 2025 recipient of the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, awarded jointly with Joel Mokyr and Peter Howitt for his pioneering contributions to the theory of sustained growth driven by creative destruction. Professor at the Collège de France and INSEAD, and also affiliated with the London School of Economics, he has profoundly shaped our understanding of the dynamic relationship between innovation and long-term economic growth.
- **Léonard Wantchékon** is the James Madison Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University and a globally recognized authority in political economy and development economics. A pioneer in the use of randomized controlled trials in political economy, his research has fundamentally transformed the study of institutions, governance, and economic development. Recipient of the Global Economy Prize, awarded by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (Germany) in 2013, he is also the founder of the African School of Economics (ASE).
- **Abdoulaye Ndiaye** is Professor of Economics at New York University's Stern School of Business and one of the most promising African economists of his generation. Winner of the inaugural Africa NextGen Economist Prize in 2026, his research focuses on macroeconomics, public finance, and economic development. A former Research Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, he has also served as a Visiting Researcher at the United Nations, Harvard University, and Princeton University.

7. Key Dates & Venue

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- November 20, 2026 : Revised paper and slides Submission.
- November 30 – December 2, 2026 : Intensive Econometrics Workshops.
- December 3–4, 2026 : JSEB dates.

- **Venue** : Golden Tulip Le Diplomate, Cotonou (Benin).