



## FORECASTING AFRICAN STORMS APPLICATION (FASTA) - UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### THE CHALLENGE

The Forecasting African STorms Application (FASTA) is a project that emerged from promising research undertaken by the University of Leeds to improve weather forecasting across Africa. Researchers have found that satellite information can be used to make more accurate predictions of high-impact weather on short timescales, a type of forecasting known as “nowcasting”, due to its real-time nature. The project could help to save both lives and livelihoods in Africa, where meteorological stations are scarce and weather information tends to be incomplete. As extreme weather events become more frequent due to climate change, the need for nowcasting is growing every day.

The project is part of the African Science for Weather Information and Forecasting Techniques (SWIFT), a programme funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

Because of the unique nature of the project and its high-impact potential, FASTA was conceived as a project with wide-ranging impact in Africa, improving forecasting capabilities throughout the continent. Finding a path towards self-sustainability was key, in order to end dependency on external funding and instead generate income to cover the costs of deployment and expansion.

### BLUE GLOBE’S APPROACH & STRATEGY

Blue Globe created a three stage plan:

Firstly, analysis and market evaluation determined priority countries and partners of interest, identifying Kenya with its Meteorological Department as the key first deployment partner. Potential users were also studied as well as potential competitors. Blue Globe worked to identify technical and financial considerations of the project, including an internationally-capable API adaptable to a wide range of regions.

During the second stage, Blue Globe engaged with potential partners through a series of interviews, determining the potential value of FASTA and identifying key sectors of interest. Transport, agriculture, insurance, and disaster management were noted as particularly relevant industries. From the interviews, additional API technical requirements were raised, and trials with users were early arranged. Different business models were studied to provide guidance for a path to commercialisation.

During the third stage, Blue Globe created a communication strategy through the production of a pitch video communicating the benefits of the project. Commercial projections and scenarios were created using collected data from the outreach process, evaluating potential competitors and available funding sources.

### OVERALL RESULTS

The FASTA project demonstrates Blue Globe’s capability with multi-stage projects and bringing together groups from a variety of communities and countries. Though the overall output of the project had limited commercial viability at the time of the project conclusion, the overall findings prove future viability and application in a variety of contexts, especially as trials with potential users continue to progress.

Learn more here: <https://africanswift.org/fasta/>

Speak to the Blue Globe Innovation Team -  
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