Ife Adebayo Biography

Ife Adebayo is a Nigerian innovation policy leader and development finance specialist with over a decade of experience designing, financing, and implementing large-scale digital economy programmes across Africa.

He currently serves as National Coordinator of the iDICE Programme (Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Programme) at Nigeria's Bank of Industry, where he oversees a $617 million Federal Government initiative co-financed by the African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, and the Islamic Development Bank. The Programme supports Nigeria's technology and creative ecosystems through talent pipeline development, access to finance, and policy advocacy, and represents one of the largest multilateral co-financed digital economy investments on the continent.

Before joining the Bank of Industry, Ife spent close to eight years as Special Assistant on Innovation to the Vice President of Nigeria, advising both the Vice President and the President on digital technology, innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship policy. In this role, he led the Nigerian government's engagement with the African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, and the Islamic Development Bank that culminated in board approval of the $617 million iDICE Programme. He also co-designed the Nigeria Startup Bill, now enacted law, which established the legal and regulatory framework for startup support and venture capital investment in the country.

His policy advisory work contributed to measurable national outcomes, including the expansion of 4G coverage from 23 percent to 77 percent, growth of Nigeria's fibre optic network from 15,000 to over 60,000 kilometres, and digital skills training delivered to more than 500,000 Nigerians through the Federal Government's Npower Technology Programme. He led the design of the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme, a UNDP flagship initiative supported by €45 million euros in European Union co-financing, and coordinated Nigeria's engagement with the UNDP Timbuktoo Fund, a billion-dollar pan-African innovation vehicle.

Ife has built deep, direct relationships with multilateral and bilateral development partners including the African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, the Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, the European Union, GIZ, the World Bank, and the UK's Department for International Development, working with each on programme design, co-financing structures, and implementation. He has also represented the Nigerian government in strategic partnerships with global technology companies including Google, Microsoft, Visa, IBM, and Meta.

Beyond his national role, Ife is a founding member of the Africa Innovation Council, a continental think tank established in partnership with Princeton University's Africa World Initiative. The Council convenes African innovation policymakers, multilateral institutions, and academic partners to develop evidence-based policy intelligence for the continent's digital and creative economy.

Ife holds a B.Eng. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Ilorin and an MSc in Business Information Systems from the University of East London, with professional experience spanning Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and Germany. He speaks English natively and German at a basic level.

Ife is widely regarded across Africa and the international development community as a skilled coalition-builder and a driver of complex innovation and digital economy programmes, with a track record of translating government policy priorities into bankable, results-driven development finance instruments.