

# Côte d'Ivoire's Tech Future: Cybastion Drives Growth

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Abidjan is humming with the promise of a digital future. From bustling tech workshops in community centres to high-level forums shaping policy, Côte d'Ivoire is leaning into technology as a driver of growth, and Cybastion has become one of the names most closely linked to this push.

The American cybersecurity and digital solutions company, working closely with the Ivorian government and partners like Cisco and the U.S. Embassy, focuses on a simple but powerful idea: technology can transform lives if the right skills, platforms, and infrastructure are established.

The Easter Break Tech Camp, launched in April 2025 with all the trappings of ceremony, was one of the signals on how serious that commitment has become. Held in five American Spaces across the country, the camp gave hundreds of young Ivorians hands-on training in computer hardware, cybersecurity, and the Internet of Things. Those who completed the courses walked away not just with new skills but with Cisco-verified digital badges, the kind of credentials that matter in an increasingly competitive job market.

For Thierry Wandji, Cybastion's CEO, the symbolism was as important as the practical lessons. "This is about more than certificates," he told the audience at the opening. "It is about confidence. It is about giving young Ivorians the tools to build their digital future rather than waiting for it to be built elsewhere."

At his side was U.S. Ambassador Jessica Davis Ba, who underscored the international dimension of the partnership. "When governments, the private sector, and communities come together like this, the results are far greater than the sum of their parts," she said. "What we are seeing here in Côte d'Ivoire is not just the



Cybastion's CEO, Thierry Wandji Ketchiozo and Amadou Coulibaly, the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy of Côte d'Ivoire at the signing of a partnership agreement

teaching of skills but the creation of opportunities."

That sense of urgency is grounded in stark numbers. The country is expected to need five million digital jobs by 2030. The DigiEmpower programme, a joint initiative between Cybastion, Cisco, and the Ivorian government, aims to meet part of that demand by training 200,000 young people and women within five years.

For Dr Patrick Fouda, Cybastion's Managing Partner for Education, the challenge is to ensure that the digital wave doesn't leave people behind. "It's easy to talk about global trends," he said, "but we are focused on real people in real communities. If a teenager in Bouaké or Korhogo can start their journey into technology through DigiEmpower, then we are succeeding."

If education is one front, tourism is another. In July, Abidjan hosted

the DIGITOURISME Forum, an ambitious gathering convened by the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure. Cybastion, a sponsor of the forum, used the occasion to spotlight its partnership with the government on the creation of a national eTourism platform. The platform, to be rolled out over the next decade, promises to streamline travel services, strengthen governance, and position Côte d'Ivoire as a digital leader in African tourism.

"Digitalisation is not an option, it is a necessity," a ministry official told participants at the forum. "If we want Côte d'Ivoire to stand out as a global destination, we must be connected, modern, and sustainable."

The unveiling of the eTourism platform was accompanied by the signing of a strategic pact, bringing together government agencies, business associations, and technology

firms. Yves de Lamotte Yoboué, Project Director for Cybastion's Digital Solutions Business Unit, signed on behalf of the company. "We are not here to impose solutions," he said after the signing. "We are here to co-create tools that will make tourism not just more efficient but more inclusive."

The commitments in the pact were ambitious: a promise from the ministry to strengthen digital infrastructure and integrate artificial intelligence into policy; pledges from tech firms to provide training and mentorship; and agreements from tourism associations to push digital adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises. For a sector long dominated by traditional models, it was a bold step forward.

But perhaps the most striking demonstrations of this new digital movement have come at the

grassroots. In early August, Abidjan's Anoumabo Cultural Centre filled with the energy of 100 women attending a day-long digital training organised by THEYA Foundation, Cybastion's philanthropic arm, in partnership with DigiFemmes Côte d'Ivoire. The women were introduced to online safety, misinformation awareness, and digital platforms that could help them expand their small businesses.

"Training women is an investment in the growth of the entire community," said Fatima Kourouma, programme director at THEYA Foundation. "When a woman learns how to sell online or protect herself from digital scams, the benefits ripple out to her family, her neighbours, and her city."

The women who took part echoed that sentiment. One participant, who runs a small fabric stall in Abidjan, said the training gave her "the courage to take my shop online." Another noted that cybersecurity lessons were an unexpected highlight:



With an estimated 5 million digital jobs needed in Côte d'Ivoire by 2030, Cybastion is playing a leading role to help the country meet its targets.

"I never knew how vulnerable I was until today. Now I feel ready."

For Wandji, stories like these are what give meaning to the larger strategy. "Digital transformation

is not just about algorithms and infrastructure," he said. "It is about dignity. It is about sovereignty. It is about communities taking control of their futures."

What sets Côte d'Ivoire's partnership with Cybastion apart is its breadth. It spans high-level commitments and grassroots empowerment, technical training and tourism policy, international cooperation and local ownership. The common thread is a belief that technology, if used wisely, can open doors that once seemed locked.

In the coming months, the country will watch as the eTourism platform inches closer to launch and the next wave of DigiEmpower camps expands to new regions. There will be challenges—connectivity gaps, regulatory hurdles, questions of scale—but there is also momentum. The partnerships struck in recent months have created a framework that, if sustained, could help Côte d'Ivoire leapfrog into a new digital era.

As Ambassador Davis Ba noted in Abidjan, "This is not just about keeping up with change. It is about leading it." And in Côte d'Ivoire today, there is a growing sense that the country is ready to do exactly that.



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# André Biyong on Africa's Digital Growth and Cybastion's Tech Initiatives

By Ajong Mbapndah L

As the Chief Operating Officer of Cybastion, André Biyong is a key part of the dynamic leadership at one of the most ambitious technology enterprises shaping Africa's digital destiny. A U.S.-based company delivering cutting-edge cybersecurity and digital solutions, Cybastion has been pivotal in accelerating the continent's digital transformation. Under Biyong's leadership, the company has seen exponential growth—expanding its footprint across Africa while forging deep partnerships with governments and private sector stakeholders.

With a career spanning private equity, transformation consulting, and leadership roles at global firms like Deloitte, PwC, and Alvarez & Marsal, Biyong brings both technical expertise and strategic vision to his work. Armed with degrees in Mathematics, Computer Science, Telecom Engineering, and Information Systems, as well as an MBA from the Wharton School, he blends academic rigor with practical execution. Today, as Cybastion's COO and acting Country Director in Côte d'Ivoire, he is committed to



Cybastion is committed to Côte d'Ivoire's vision of digital sovereignty strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure, & accelerating digitalization of government services, says Andre Biyong

driving sustainable digital ecosystems that empower nations to achieve digital sovereignty. It is against this backdrop that Pan African Vision

sat down with André Biyong for an insightful conversation on Cybastion's transformative work in Côte d'Ivoire and across the continent.

cybersecurity, and data analytics. This partnership ensures Côte d'Ivoire is not only catching up but positioning itself as a regional leader in digital transformation.



Cybastion CEO Dr. Thierry Wandji and Chief Operating Officer Andre Biyong were named among Africa's Top 100 Players in Cybersecurity in 2024

**Could we start with an overview of Cybastion projects and partnerships in Côte d'Ivoire?**

Cybastion is grateful for our trusted partnership with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. Together, we are advancing the country's vision of digital sovereignty by building sovereign data centers, strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure, and accelerating the digitalization of government services. One key focus has been capacity building. Through our Education & Training Business Unit, we are equipping government IT professionals with advanced skills, while our nonprofit initiative, THEYA Foundation, runs the Africa DigiEmpower program to train young people and women in fields like AI,

**We'd love to hear more about the construction of the digital innovation hub. What will be its impact on Côte d'Ivoire?**

The innovation hub in Grand-Bassam marks a defining moment for the nation. At its heart is a sovereign data center—providing the secure backbone for a fully digital government ecosystem. Beyond infrastructure, the hub is designed to foster entrepreneurship, create jobs, and power inclusive growth by equipping the next generation with digital skills. It is more than a building; it is a symbol of Côte d'Ivoire's readiness to lead in the digital age, blending connectivity, innovation, and sustainability into



In Abidjan, our Tech Academy offers specialized courses in AI, data science, and cybersecurity., says Andre Biyong.

one ecosystem.

**Cybastion launched the Africa DigiEmpower training program in Côte d'Ivoire this year. Tell us more about the initiative and what was achieved?**

Digital transformation cannot succeed without local talent. By 2030, Côte d'Ivoire will need an estimated 5 million digitally skilled workers—yet women and youth remain underrepresented in the tech space. To bridge this gap, we launched Africa DigiEmpower in partnership with Cisco and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. The program aims to train 200,000 young people and women by 2030. Already, in just a few months,

more than 10,000 young Ivorians have received training in digital skills. By working with schools, universities, and community organizations, we're creating pathways into high-demand fields such as AI and cybersecurity. This is not just about employability; it's about giving young Africans the tools to shape their digital future.

**We understand Cybastion is partnering with the Ivorian Ministry of Tourism to launch the e-Tourism platform. Could you shed some light on this?**

Tourism is a vital driver of Africa's economies, and Côte d'Ivoire has incredible potential to lead in this

space. Our partnership with the Ministry of Tourism focuses on launching an e-Tourism platform, a digital interface where visitors can explore, plan, and book cultural and leisure experiences seamlessly. For government and local businesses, the platform provides advanced tools to manage services, optimize visitor flows, and boost revenues. In essence, it modernizes the entire tourism ecosystem, helping Côte d'Ivoire position itself as a premier travel destination in West Africa.

**There is so much talk about AI. How is this going to impact Côte d'Ivoire and Africa, and anything is Cybastion doing to**

**help young Africans up their skills?**

AI has the power to revolutionize every sector—whether it's agriculture, health, education, or finance. But for AI to truly serve Africa, it must be built on resilient digital infrastructure and coupled with workforce readiness. That's why our Africa DigiEmpower program places such emphasis on AI training. In Abidjan, our Tech Academy offers specialized courses in AI, data science, and cybersecurity. Working with Cisco NetAcad, we ensure these courses lead to recognized certifications, giving young Africans not just theoretical knowledge but practical credentials to compete globally. This is about preparing a workforce that can lead Africa confidently into the AI era.

**Any other big projects or initiatives coming up from Cybastion that you may want to share as we wrap up this interview?**

Our flagship Digital Fast Track program is perhaps the most exciting. It offers governments an accelerated roadmap to achieve digital transformation—from building sovereign data centers to securing national digital infrastructure and training digital workforces. What makes it special is its adaptability: each country can tailor the program to its unique needs and priorities. For Côte d'Ivoire, it means scaling digital services, empowering young professionals, and ensuring that digital sovereignty translates into real socioeconomic benefits. We are deeply committed to this journey and proud to be walking alongside Côte d'Ivoire as a trusted partner.

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