

Rwandan President Paul Kagame met Saturday with Alibaba founder Jack Ma and Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang to discuss partnerships aimed at boosting entrepreneurship and technological innovation in Africa.

The leaders gathered in Kigali ahead of the Grand Finale of Africa's Business Heroes (ABH), a competition launched by Jack Ma to support African entrepreneurs. The contest, now in its seventh year, brings together the continent's most promising business leaders to pitch ideas for a share of \$1.5 million in funding.

"This is about creating opportunities for African youth and small businesses, and connecting them to global markets," Kagame said during the meeting.



Jack Ma, through his Jack Ma Philanthropy and the Alibaba Foundation, has been instrumental in promoting entrepreneurship, providing training, mentorship, and funding to help African innovators turn ideas into viable businesses. Jerry Yang, a longtime advocate of technology-driven business, joined discussions on how global expertise can further support local entrepreneurs.

Rwanda has hosted the ABH Grand Finale three times, reinforcing its reputation as a hub for innovation, investment, and technological growth on the continent. The event this year brought together more than 1,000 participants, including entrepreneurs, investors, financial advisors, and industry experts.



During the competition, the top 10 finalists presented their projects to a jury, which will determine the distribution of the \$1.5 million prize. The event is part of a broader effort to accelerate job creation and economic development through innovation.

Rwanda's collaboration with global tech leaders highlights the government's commitment to building a knowledge and technology-based economy, supporting youth entrepreneurship, and attracting international investment.