



### **The WAITRO SDG-Impact Poster Award**

When we at the Secretariat canvas WAITRO Members about their interests in capacity development, without fail, the most common area of interest is what I have come to call the f-word: funding. No one has had enough of it. In early 2022, however, we held an online event for the finals of the WAITRO Innovation Award (see the [2021 Annual Report](#)) and the invited plenary speaker for that event was Jean-Marc Champagne, then with the World Wide Fund for Nature. He uttered a quote that has become quite famous in WAITRO circles: “I think the money’s there but what we need to do is develop and design projects to fit where that money needs to go.”

Jean-Marc’s point is that private sector funding (think public and private sector debt, global equities, sovereign wealth funds, etc.) dwarfs what is available from conventional sources like international development assistance. At the last Summit in Cape Town in 2022, we ran an SDG-Impact poster award instead of the WAITRO Innovation Award. The event was a success, but it became obvious that most of the projects that WAITRO members were putting forward were too early stage or lacked the development required to be considered “investor ready.”

So this year, as part of the WAITRO Summit 2024, we tweaked the formula to start with a webinar telling all our members just what is required to develop a roadmap to investor-readiness. Join us on Thursday July 25<sup>th</sup> to discover how you can unlock the f-word to the benefit of you and your organization! [Free registration](#) will get you the Zoom link in time to participate.

#### **The Speakers:**

**Jean-Marc Champagne** is the Managing Director of Seneca Impact Advisors in Hong Kong, where he leads all aspects of Seneca’s work.

Before founding Seneca, he dedicated 7 years to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). In his capacity as the head of Bankable Nature Solutions for the Asia-Pacific region, he nurtured and expanded scalable bankable projects with positive environmental and social impact. His responsibilities included overseeing bankable project initiatives in the region, including those supported by the Dutch Fund for Climate and Development, as well as leading finance and bankable projects within WWF’s global Freshwater Practice. Jean-Marc was also instrumental in co-establishing the Climate Impact Asia Fund, a long-only equity fund, and currently serves on its investment advisory committee.

Jean-Marc’s earlier career spanned 17 years in the financial industry, where he advised institutional investors on equities and equity derivatives. His investment banking journey commenced in 1997 with Merrill Lynch in New York. Since 2004, he has been based in Hong



Kong, with significant time spent in Tokyo and Singapore, working with institutions such as BNP Paribas and Jefferies.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Clarkson University in Potsdam, New York. Jean-Marc's commitment to sustainable finance and environmental impact underscores his influential role in shaping positive change.

**James Devitt** is head of Corporate Policy, University of Huddersfield in the UK. James manages a proactive business intelligence and eco-system development function designed to support and strengthen the University's areas of strategic research interest. James works with academics to develop strategic research partnerships and industrial collaborations (on regional, national, and international levels) and contributes to accelerating the University's reputation and research income through engagement in UK and global policy shaping and influencing agendas.

**Wesley Okeke** is a visionary leader and the CEO of Headway Idea Labs and CUBIO Innovation Hub. He grew up in West Africa before graduating with a degree in Engineering from Boston, MA. After more than two decades in Business Development, Marketing, and Sales within technology companies in Boston and Silicon Valley, and extensive global experience across Asia, Europe, Canada, South America, and the USA, Wesley has a deep understanding of what it takes to develop new markets and support product development on a global scale.

Wesley founded Headway Idea Labs following his tenure in the corporate world. There, he emphasized a simple, clear process to transform ideas into successful launches, always with a focus on human-centered design and purpose.

Over the last 11 years training startups along with the support of hundreds of advisors, investors, and marketing professionals, Wesley has refined the "Investor Readiness" process—the blueprint for a business to define its core value, purpose and strategies while being mindful of the economic realities of each startup's journey. Wesley is committed to seeing businesses thrive by achieving Investor Readiness and then strategically positioning themselves within their industry.



The banner features the WAITRO SUMMIT 2024 logo at the top left, with the tagline "From Innovation to Impact" and "Strategies for Sustainable Solutions". Below the logo, the dates "November 13-15, 2024" and the location "Nanjing | China" are displayed. The banner also includes logos for partner organizations: NICE, JITRI, eadway, SENECA, and TÜBITAK. A large, colorful, circular graphic composed of dots is positioned on the right side. At the bottom, the word "NANJING" is written in large, stylized letters, with a city skyline silhouette in the background.