

1st African-European CIVIS Forum for Research and Education

From Joint Challenges to Joint Solutions

Hassan II University of Casablanca, Morocco, 25-27 March 2026

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Context and objectives

In today's interconnected world, grand challenges such as climate change adaptability, ecosystem integrity, mobility and migration, disaster mitigation and resilience, digital and green transition, value-driven education, social inequality, the rise of authoritarianism etc. transcend national and continental boundaries. These complex issues demand collective responses rooted in inclusive and cross-continental collaboration. Recognizing this, universities in both Europe and Africa are stepping up to build meaningful partnerships that bridge geographic, cultural, and disciplinary divides.

CIVIS Alliance—a network of 17 research-intensive universities from Europe and Africa—embodies this commitment. Through shared academic missions, CIVIS promotes collaborative research-driven education focused on shared societal issues. This effort aligns with broader frameworks such as the African Union-European Union Joint Vision for 2030 and the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, both of which underscore the importance of equitable, science-based cooperation between the continents. African and European universities are uniquely positioned to drive this collaboration. They are not only hubs of knowledge and innovation but also key actors in fostering inclusive development, promoting democratic values, and strengthening local and regional capacities.

The CIVIS Universities Alliance is leading the way in forging deep and lasting partnerships between Europe and the African continent—pioneering among other alliances in this regard. We have been creating a unique transcontinental academic alliance rooted in shared values and societal benefit!

This commitment is more than symbolic. It is strategic and action-oriented. The recent agreement for sharing research infrastructures further demonstrates the

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joint resolve of the CIVIS Alliance to invest in tangible, mutually beneficial collaboration.

Together, on the one hand, we are creating pathways to co-design and co-deliver solutions to some of the most pressing societal challenges—from climate resilience and public health to migration and inclusive digitalisation. On the other hand, we are aware of the varying societal contexts across and within continental boundaries, in which those shared challenges manifest themselves. We seek to understand whether and how these contexts are connected and shape the development of joint solutions. Consider, for instance, the different contributions to climate change of European and African societies and their unequal exposure to its effects in return.

In this spirit, the 1st African-European CIVIS Forum for Research and Education builds on this foundation, emphasising the growing role of universities as proactive agents for global solidarity, sustainability and inclusive development, as well as engines of knowledge.

The Forum aims to:

- **Showcase African-European** cutting-edge joint research addressing key societal challenges
- **Encourage and co-develop** new joint research projects and educational offers
- **Engage with societal stakeholders** across Africa and Europe in co-creating impactful solutions
- **Deepen institutional ties** for long-term scientific and educational exchange.

In doing so, CIVIS universities across both continents reaffirm their shared responsibility to address global challenges—together and jointly, as equal partners.

Themes and types of contributions

Submissions should address key societal challenges and emerging opportunities aligned with the CIVIS strategic agenda. Contributions are invited to engage with one or more of the five hub themes of the CIVIS Alliance, preferably by addressing one of the following key questions for the Forum:

Hub 1 – Climate, Environment, Energy

- How can we respond to the environmental and societal challenges posed by the climate crisis through transregional and interdisciplinary cooperation, between the Global North and the Global South?

Hub 2 – Society, Culture, Heritage

- In the context of migration and forced displacement, how can educational systems and institutions foster inclusive, multilingual and multicultural societies?
- What new approaches to belonging, identity, proximity and integration are needed to understand and support evolving forms of neighbourliness in diverse communities?

Hub 3 – Health

- How can next-generation diagnostic tools enhance preparedness for future viral epidemics, particularly in cross-border and under-resourced settings?
- How can we effectively combat health misinformation—especially in relation to vaccines, nutrition, and alternative medicine—while promoting public trust in science?

Hub 4 – Cities, Spaces, Mobilities

- How can integrated urban mobility strategies—such as walking, cycling, public transport and shared mobility—strengthen climate resilience and social inclusion, particularly in African cities, by drawing on European urban models and local cultural practices?
- How can sustainable urban water management—through rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse, desalination and green infrastructure—contribute to climate adaptation, while respecting and integrating local and traditional knowledge systems?

Hub 5 – Digital and Technological Transformations

- How can African and European universities co-develop inclusive and resilient digital learning ecosystems that address inequalities in infrastructure, access, and digital literacy?
- How can cross-regional collaboration ensure the ethical and context-sensitive development of artificial intelligence in areas such as education, social policy, and public services?

The three types of possible contributions are listed below. Please choose the most suitable type based on the impact and added value it is meant to provide.

1.) Panel discussions

We aim to feature panels discussing best practices relating research and education. Focus shall be set on existing African-European research projects that explore shared societal challenges and translate into educational offers of any kind.

Contributions may include:

- Comparative studies of local responses to global issues
- Analyses of Africa-Europe interactions (e.g., migration, global health, sustainable agriculture and food security, digital transformation, energy partnerships)
- Joint solution-oriented projects on healthcare, education, technology, etc.

Joint panel proposals, consisting of about 3-5 individual contributions from African and European scholars, are preferred.

Existing groups can apply, such as members of CIVIS seed funded project, but also others are welcome if they consist of African and European contributors.

Individual applications for a panel contribution can be considered, if they are particularly pertinent to Forum themes and if they can be grouped together with other contributions.

2.) Tandem Talks

Thematic sessions featuring concise research presentations jointly authored by European and African scholars. These collaborative contributions will focus on strategic topics of key importance, including - but not limited to:

- CIVIS's role in fostering African-European science cooperation
- Equity and inclusion in science partnerships
- Methodological and thematic challenges in transdisciplinary research
- Best-practice exchange

3.) Poster session (including digital and video formats)

We invite contributions to an interactive poster session designed to foster the exchange of practices and co-creation through a bottom-up approach. This session will particularly highlight seed funding projects supported by CIVIS. Contributions may take traditional poster form or be presented as digital or video posters to enhance accessibility and engagement.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Participatory research and stakeholder engagement
- Joint funding and mobility strategies
- Co-development of educational programs integrating research components

Contributors are encouraged to propose innovative formats that facilitate dynamic interaction and collaborative learning.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome contributions from all 17 CIVIS member institutions in Africa and Europe:

- Established and early-career researchers
- Research support and administrative staff
- University leaders and institutional partners

The submission must:

- Identify the author(s), and, in the case of a co-authored submission, indicate who would be responsible for presenting it at the Forum
- include the authors' short biographies (up to 150 words each)
- contain a clear and concise abstract with a maximum of 300 words
- include discussion questions for the audience
- be written in English language

We generally welcome submissions from contributors affiliated with an institution outside the CIVIS Alliance; however, we are unable to provide funding.

Contributors to joint proposals (e.g., panels, tandem talks), who would like to participate in the Forum, need to apply individually and indicate their joint proposal in the submission form.

Deadline for submitting proposals: 10 October 2025

Notification of acceptance: 15 November 2025

Please submit your proposal through the submission platform: [Smapply link](#)

For questions, please contact: civis_forum_2026@lists.civis.eu

Authors of the selected contributions will subsequently be contacted by CIVIS local offices afterwards to coordinate their participation.

No funding is guaranteed for the participants. Funds can be explored at each sending institution, according to institutional and local regulations.

Background papers for contributions to panels or talks are welcome, but not a must.

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