

Innovation Fair

“ENABLING THAT STEP FORWARD”

#MakingItPossible #NotARegularEvent



Union for the Mediterranean
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Innovation Fair 2025 – “Enabling that step forward”

Thursday 23 October, Brussels, Maison de la Poste, 8:00 – 18:00 CEST

The *Innovation Fair – “Enabling that step forward”* will take place on **Thursday, 23 October 2025**, in **Brussels** and online. Organised in the framework of the EU’s Research and Innovation (R&I) cooperation with **Africa** and the **Mediterranean region**, the event is a key milestone supporting the implementation of the **AU–EU Innovation Agenda (2023–2033)** and the **New Pact for the Mediterranean**, alongside the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) R&I Roadmaps**.

With the theme of *“Enabling that step forward”*, the Innovation Fair aims to showcase the vibrancy of cooperation among European, African and Mediterranean innovation ecosystems, while supporting the scale up and de-risking of their most promising innovative solutions. Building on the successful previous editions held in **Nairobi (2022)**, **Cape Town (2023)** and **Cairo (2024)**, this year’s Fair will feature innovative projects, start-ups, SMEs, business support organisations and ecosystems from across Europe, Africa and the Mediterranean.

The event brings together innovators, researchers, entrepreneurs, and investors to highlight transformative solutions with real potential for market and societal impact, foster collaboration, leverage funding opportunities and contribute to socio-economic growth.

Against this backdrop, the Innovation Fair provides a dynamic platform to celebrate innovation, promote market-ready solutions, and connect innovators with investors, policymakers, business support actors and peers. Through pitching sessions, exhibitions and matchmaking opportunities, the Fair seeks to empower innovators to take the next leap in scaling their ideas and bring their solutions *one step forward*, closer to the marketplace and society!

PROGRAMME

Timeslot (CEST)	Session
08:00 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
	• Arrival of participants and networking • Access to permanent stands and exhibition preview
09:00 – 10:00	Official Opening Session Co-moderated by <i>Ms Nienke Buisman</i> (Head of International Cooperation – Asia, Africa, Middle East & Pacific, European Commission, DG Research & Innovation) and <i>Dr Mahama Bachir Saley</i> (Senior Scientific Officer, Head of Division of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, African Union Commission)

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	- European Commissioner for Start-ups, Research & Innovation <i>H.E. Ms Ekaterina Zaharieva</i> - African Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation <i>H.E. Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona</i> - Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean <i>H.E. Amb. Joan Borrell</i> - President of the European Innovation Council <i>Dr Michiel Scheffer</i> - President of the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) <i>Mr Arnaud Vajda</i> - City of Brussels, Secretary of State of Brussels-Capital Region <i>Ms Ans Persoons</i> (video message)
10:00 – 10:45	Setting the Scene By Co-moderators <i>Ms Nienke Buisman</i> (Head of International Cooperation – Asia, Africa, Middle East & Pacific, European Commission, DG Research & Innovation) and <i>H.E. Amb. Joan Borrell</i> (Deputy Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean)
10:00 – 10:15	Warm-up, introduction of the day's programme & demonstration of the <i>Matchmaking App</i> for the Fair Co-moderators <i>Ms Nienke Buisman</i> (European Commission) and <i>Dr Mahama Bachir Saley</i> (African Union Commission)
10:15 – 10:30	- Overview presentations: - The 10 year- AU–EU Innovation Agenda (2023–2033) [<i>Dr Vincenzo Lorusso</i> (European Commission) and <i>Mr Lukovi Seke</i> (AUDA-NEPAD)] - Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Scalability Action Plan [<i>Mr Alessandro Calabro'</i> (European Commission) and <i>Ms Heba Gaber</i> (EU Delegation to Egypt)]
10:30 – 10:45	
10:45 – 11:30	Pitching Part 1 – Open Innovation Challenge (Start-ups, SMEs, Spin-offs) Moderated by <i>Dr Vincenzo Lorusso</i> (European Commission) and <i>Ms Eudy Mabuza</i> (Embassy of South Africa to the EU) Public Health - Belkhanousse Souad, AlgoCaps, Algeria - Laure Pontis, Bluesquare, Belgium - Abakar Mahamat, Telemedan, Chad - Aude Kaze Marionne, K'wezi.Midwife, Rwanda

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	Food & Nutrition Security & Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) - Reham Yehia, Baramouda Sustainable Solutions, Egypt - Guadaluna Chaer, LUXEED Robotics, Netherlands - Joseph Simukoko, Green Giraffe Zambia Limited, Zambia Climate Change & Sustainable Energy (CCSE) - Bayan Al-Abdullat, ADADK, Germany - Theophilus Venn, Venth Ventures Limited, Nigeria - Yosr Abid, My AloéOléa, Tunisia Innovation & Technology - Laurent Fourez, Cogniwave Dynamics, France - Adeoye Samuel Adeboye, Isio, Nigeria - Aasiyah Adams, Abaguquli4IR, South Africa - Meliha Ulamiş, Astrosit Technology Inc., Türkiye Capacities for Science - Yaakoub Benarab, Snai3i (صنايحي), Algeria - Magatte Sylla, Quitus, Senegal - Agnes Wambui, Wekraft Ltd, Rwanda - Vincenzo Di Donato, Gene4All, Spain
11:30 – 12:00	COFFEE BREAK
12:00 – 12:30	Pitching Part 2 – Business Support Organisations (BSOs) Moderated by <i>Mr Lukovi Seke</i> (AUDA-NEPAD) and <i>Ms Tanja Gillmann</i> (Global Service Facility for the European Commission) Public Health - Zivile Pauzaite, Tech-Park Kaunas', Lithuania - Faith Osier, Imperial Chanjo Hub, United Kingdom Green Transition (FNSSA & CCSE) - Krystel Khalil, Berytech, Lebanon - Aïcha Dosso, Village des Technologies de l'Information et de la Biotechnologie, Côte d'Ivoire - Luisa Schillinger, Ovation SRL, Belgium Innovation & Technology - Tendai Pasipamire, ENRICH in Africa Center, South Africa - N.N., Novation City, Tunisia (tbc)

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	Capacities for Science - Nwanne Nwonwu, Rising Tide Africa, Nigeria - Gabriella Dellino & Anna Ressa, Tecnopolis Science and Technology Park, Italy
12:30 – 13:15	Pitching Part 3 – R&I Projects with Market- or Society-Ready Solutions Co-moderated by <i>Mr Giuseppe Provenzano</i> (Union for the Mediterranean) and <i>Ms Heba Gaber</i> (EU Delegation to Egypt) Public Health - Olaf Valverde, DNDi HAT, Switzerland - Prof. Bernhards Ogutu, PAMAFrica, Kenya - Alejandro J. Krolewiecki, STOP2030, Spain - Marco de la Feld, SWITCHtoHEALTHY, Italy Food & Nutrition Security & Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) - Luke Metelerkamp, AfriFOODlinks, South Africa - Prof. Emily Poppenborg, UPSCALE, Germany - Christoph Stahl, TECHONEY, Luxembourg - Prof. Lotfi Baghli, MG-FARM, France Co-moderated by <i>Mr Alessandro Calabro'</i> (European Commission) and <i>Ms Silvi Serreqi</i> (EISMEA) Climate Change & Sustainable Energy (CCSE) - Prof. Michael Singer, DOWN2EARTH, UK - Johannes Sattler, SoCoNexGen, Germany - Edgardo Kurz, SmaCuMed, Germany - Vincenzo Verrastro, Relacs, Italy Innovation & Technology - Francie Sadeski, Africa-Europe Innovation Platform, Côte d'Ivoire - Gideon Brefo, SEADE, Ghana - Isabel Vicente, Bizeolcat, Spain - Prof. Gian Luca Chiarello, Fish-Photo CAT, Italy
13:15 – 14:30	Networking Lunch - Buffet lunch & informal interactions - Access to permanent stands and demo displays

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14:30 – 17:00	Fair Opening followed by Exhibition & Matchmaking Fair (at Maison de la Poste only) • 50+ booths showcasing innovations from EU, AU & Mediterranean regions • Dedicated spaces for: ○ Start-ups & SMEs ○ R&I Projects ○ Business Support Organisations Facilitated networking via Matchmaking App Awarding of Open Innovation Challenge winners Presented by: • European Commissioner DDG for R&I, <i>Ms Signe Ratso</i> • African Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation <i>H.E. Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona</i> • <i>H.E. Amb. Joan Borrell</i>, UfM Deputy Secretary-General
17:00 – 18:00	Networking Cocktail (at Maison de la Poste only) • Hosted by the European Commission, African Union and the Union for the Mediterranean • Informal networking among innovators, investors and policymakers