



CLUSTER – Cooperation with African partners for a sustainable future

Mission statement

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Why?

Africa and Europe face several common challenges that will determine the future of both continents. Some of these challenges are based on our existing proximities – be they social, economic, historic or environmental. Others are entirely new. Partners may have different perspectives on these challenges, but this opens up opportunities to learn from each other, and to develop solutions together.

Only through cooperation between institutions and communities can we bring the much needed solutions, which can be found in both Africa and Europe and in our relations with each other.

Science, technology and engineering will play a critical role in many of these solutions. This is why it is important to connect African and European universities dedicated to these fields, today. By doing so, we build a community of students, scholars and staff, around a common purpose.

By cooperating, we aim to learn from each other, strengthen each other's capacities and take responsibility jointly for this common future.

What?

The complex challenges are of such a nature that all means available for collaboration need to be deployed: research, education and service to society. In this, we see the whole academic community as a stakeholder – students, researchers and staff.

With our African partners we aim to co-create a forward looking agenda in these fields. This requires a symmetric partnership, an open dialogue and a relationship based on reciprocity.

We want this cooperation to be sustainable and value driven. Therefore we think multidisciplinary, inclusiveness, diversity, transparency and joint responsibility are key elements of this partnership.

How?

In the field of **research**, we will be looking for collaboration on these complex common challenges to which science, technology and engineering may offer solutions. A process to jointly identify opportunities and suitable funding channels will be developed. Especially the EU's heightened attention for cooperation with Africa (in Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, AU-EU Innovation Agenda) will draw our attention.

Beyond project funding, we aim to initiate elements for a more sustainable, long term partnership. This can take the form of supporting doctoral schools and in developing joint research training programs.

In the field of **education** and training we have an excellent opportunity to learn from one another. Our historical ties call for a sharing of African and European perspectives on the role of science, technology and engineering. Student and staff mobility between Africa and Europe, as well as joint programs and virtual exchanges will be deployed to reach as large a number of students as possible.

To strengthen our **service to society** we aim to engage the multitude of (non-academic) stakeholders that shape innovation ecosystems in both Africa and Europe. We aim to link these ecosystems by creating platforms for information sharing and collaboration. Out of this may stem new innovations and solutions that will benefit our societies at large.

CLUSTER Values

CLUSTER universities share a common world view with European members, and associate members and partners around the world, connecting and respecting different societal and multicultural communities and equality. CLUSTER promotes creativity, originality and inspiration in education of future engineers, for finding innovative solutions to global challenges. CLUSTER is committed to ethical, safe and sustainable use of technology, campaigning also for open science.