

2nd DIGITAfrica Consultation Workshop

April 28, 2026, Tunis



The DIGITAfrica Workshop organised in Tunis brings together public policymakers, research leaders, technical experts, and African and European partners to advance a shared vision for pan-African, sustainable digital research infrastructures and stronger cross-continental collaboration.

The morning sessions set the strategic context, presenting the DIGITAfrica vision, the European research infrastructure framework, and perspectives on the research landscape in Tunisia. A dedicated panel then explores the conditions for enabling pan-African research collaboration, including the landscape, funding, and partnership opportunities. Afternoon sessions showcase DIGITAfrica Blueprints and proof-of-concepts, and the cooperation with SLICES and SoBigData, the two European Research Infrastructures liaising with the DIGITAfrica initiative. The programme also discusses national perspectives on digital research strategies and infrastructures, as well as skills and capacity building.

The workshop concludes discussing a call to action for organizations to become early adopters of DIGITAfrica Blueprints, translating shared priorities into a co-designed approach, operational cooperation and long-term impact through sustainable deployment.



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Full-Day Program

08:30 - 8:50	Registration
Opening Session	
09:00 - 09:30	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Farouk Kamoun, UMA, Tunisia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks <i>Prof Ameer Cherif, President UMA, Tunisia</i> • EU-Africa cooperation <i>Patricia Postigo Mclaughlin, Policy officer at European Commission, Belgium</i> • Opening Speech (TBC) <i>Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tunisia</i> • DIGITAfrica welcome <i>Prof Serge Fdida, Sorbonne Université, France</i>
09:30 - 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIGITAfrica vision and the European research infrastructure framework <i>Prof Serge Fdida, Sorbonne Université, France</i>
Keynote 2	
10:00 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Landscape in Tunisia <i>Prof. Mourad Bellassoued, Director General for Scientific Research (DGRS), Chief of Cabinet Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tunisia</i>
Panel 1: Enabling Pan-African Research Collaboration: Landscape, Funding and Opportunities	
10:30 - 11:30	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Thomas Magedanz, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilel Jamoussi <i>Deputy Director of ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Switzerland</i> • Sami Trimech <i>Director of Strategic Development and Planning at the Arab ICT Organization, AICTO, Tunisia</i> • Dr. Fathi El Mansouri <i>consultant to the General Secretariat of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils- League of Arab States, FASRC, Egypt</i> • Prof. Brando Okolo

	<p>Senior Advisor, STI, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, South Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvain Nangue <i>strategic advisor, Smart Africa Alliance, Rwanda</i>
11:30 - 11:50	Coffee Break
Session 1: From Concepts to Demonstrators: DIGITAfrica Blueprints & Proof-of-Concepts	
11:50 - 12:40	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Raffaele Bruno, Research Director, CNR, Italy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heterogeneous Networking Blueprint <i>Prof. Joyce Mwangama, University of Cape Town, South Africa</i> Edge-Interoperable AI & ML Blueprint <i>Prof. Louis Fendji, University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon</i>
12:40- 14:00	Lunch —
Session 2: Research Infrastructures as Enablers for Research & Innovation: EU Success Stories	
14:00 - 14:50	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Prof. Anja Habacha, National School of Computer Science, UMA, Tunisia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLICES-RI: Scientific Large-Scale Infrastructure for Computing / Communication Experimental Studies <i>Prof Raffaele Bruno, CNR, Italy</i> SoBigData RI: Data & AI Services for Digital Sciences <i>Prof Giulio Rossetti, CNR, Italy</i>
Session 3: National Perspectives on Digital Research and Innovation	
14:50 - 15:50	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Prof. Mohamed Jemni, The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, ALECSO, Tunisia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Comprehensive Map of Senegal's and Pan-African AI Strategy <i>Prof Seydina Moussa Ndiaye, Cheikh Hamidou Kane Digital University (UN-CHK), Senegal</i> From Local Talent to Global Impact: How African Centers of Excellence Drive Digital Innovation <i>Behjet Bousofara, Director General, Talan, Tunisia</i> Sèmè City: a flagship innovation, education, and entrepreneurship initiative in Benin. <i>Dr Mahuna Akplogan, Head of the Department of Innovation Valorization Sèmè City Development Agency, Benin</i> University of Manouba Research Landscape <i>Prof. Azza Frikha, Vice President, University de la Manouba, Tunisia</i> Cloud and HPC: a Higher Education & Resarch Infrastucture

	<i>Prof. Saoussen Krichen, Head of Al-Khawarizmi Computing Center, Tunisia</i>
15:50 - 16:10	Coffee Break
Panel 2: Empowering Research & Innovation Communities: Priorities, Skills and Capacity Building	
16:10 - 17:10	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Prof. Vitalis Ozianyi, Strathmore University, Kenya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Juhaina Gherib <i>Vice president International Association of Universities (IAU), UNESCO Chair Holder, UMA, Tunisia</i> • Yousef Torman <i>CEO, Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), Jordan</i> • Prof. Eyouléki Tcheyi Gnadi Palanga <i>CEO, West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN), Ghana</i> • Carmela Salzano <i>Senior Project Officer, Campus Africa, UNESCO, France</i> • John Matogo <i>Corporate Social Responsibility Leader for Africa & the Middle East, IBM, Kenya</i> • Alais, Olivier <i>Programme Coordinator, Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), ITU, Switzerland</i>
Closing Session: Getting Involved in DIGITAfrica	
17:10 - 17:30	<p><u>Moderator:</u> Prof. Serge Fdida, DIGITAfrica Project Coordinator, Sorbonne Université, France</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to Action: Become an Early Adopter of DIGITAfrica Blueprints • DIGITAfrica long-term sustainability