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Glossary

Abbreviation	Full Term
<i>AEIP</i>	Africa-Europe Innovation Platform
<i>AfCFTA</i>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<i>ARISE</i>	African Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence
<i>AU</i>	African Union
<i>BSOs</i>	Business Support Organisations
<i>CSOs</i>	Civil Society Organisations
<i>DFI(s)</i>	Development Finance Institution(s)
<i>EFSD+</i>	European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus
<i>EIC</i>	European Innovation Council
<i>EISMEA</i>	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>HLPD</i>	High-Level Policy Dialogue
<i>ICT</i>	Information and Communication Technology
<i>IP</i>	Intellectual Property
<i>IPO</i>	Initial Public Offering
<i>NGO(s)</i>	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
<i>PPP(s)</i>	Public-Private Partnership(s)
<i>R&I</i>	Research and Innovation
<i>SMEs</i>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<i>STI</i>	Science, Technology, and Innovation
<i>STISA-2024</i>	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024
<i>TTO</i>	Technology Transfer Office
<i>TVET</i>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<i>VC</i>	Venture Capital

1 Introduction

The Africa-Europe Innovation Platform (AEIP), a Horizon Europe initiative, is a collaborative Platform designed to connect stakeholders of the innovation value chain across and between Africa and Europe. Over the next two and a half years, it will develop into a fully operational and sustainable Platform. Functioning as a "network of networks", it will serve as a catalyst for collaboration, bringing together policymakers, academia, business support organizations, start-ups, SMEs and corporates, investors and funders, and civil society.

Launched in January 2025, the project will implement a series of tailored activities, including networking events, challenges, training sessions, and other initiatives designed to foster collaboration and innovation within a community. These efforts aim to encourage cooperation across different continents. To successfully design the project activities, a continuous stakeholder needs assessment will be carried out throughout the project period. This approach aims to continuously identify the needs and priorities of all target groups. It also aims to categorise them across the value chain (vertical), within target groups (horizontal), and across target groups (cross-cutting).

This document provides an initial assessment of the primary needs identified among key stakeholders targeted by the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform. It aims to enhance the understanding of expectations surrounding innovation-related initiatives and to identify the main barriers preventing key actors from thriving and innovating. The assessment addresses the primary challenges faced by actors from both continents, as well as the obstacles to effective collaboration in promoting and generating innovation.

These initial needs assessment focuses on six categories of stakeholders who are central to the innovation ecosystems on both continents: (1) Public authorities and policymakers, (2) Academia (universities and research institutions), (3) Business support organisations (incubators, accelerators, etc.), (4) Start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and corporates, (5) Investors and funders, and (6) Civil society.

This categorization of stakeholders aims to cover the entire innovation value chain. In addition to these stakeholder groups, further categorization into sub-groups can be made to better understand needs and more accurately tailor the support.

Table 1 Taxonomy of stakeholders

Target groups	Sub-group A	Sub-group B	Sub-group C	Sub-group D	Sub-group E
1. Public authorities and policy makers	National policy makers (government, national regulatory agencies...)	Sub-Regional policy makers (REC level organisations and authorities)	Continental and Global policy makers (EU, AU, UN)	Thematic agencies (whose geographical coverage is not fit to the other categories)	



2. Academia	Traditional and comprehensive universities (no specialisation)	Universities of Research, Technology and Entrepreneurship	Research and technology organisations	Science & Technology Parks (offering connection between R&I ecosystems and often services)	TVET institutions with activities related to innovation
3. Business Support Organisations	Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Development & Innovation Agency	Business Incubator (must offer services)	Accelerator	Other BSOs and service providers
4. Start-ups and SMEs and corporates	Start-ups (a temporary organisation searching for a scalable business model)	SMEs (established business that has launched product)	Corporates	Multinationals	
5. Investors and funders	Early-Stage investors, Angel investors, venture capitalists	Public investors/funders (DFIs, Research Councils, etc.)	Private investors (debt financiers)	Impact & Mission-Driven Investors	Later-Stage & Private Market Investors, Private Equity Firms
6. Civil society	Advocacy organisations (their main goal is to represent certain interests towards policy makers)	Development Organisations (address social challenges issues relating to development, education, health, environment, etc.)	Charity and Humanitarian Organisations (receive donations for the purpose of acting towards immediate poverty, hunger, disaster... relief)	Community-Based Organizations (directly address the immediate concerns of their members)	Consumer Organisations and Special Interest Groups

At this stage, the needs assessment focuses on the target groups, to gain a broad understanding of the main challenges. It does not yet delve into the specific needs of each sub-group. This initial assessment will be updated throughout the project.

2 Methodology

The need assessment is based on four parallel approaches and a triangulation process. This methodology aims both at engaging stakeholders early in the Platform's design and ensuring a cross-cutting understanding of their main challenges. It also aims to provide an extensive analysis of existing data, key stakeholders background, and qualitative feedback on their needs. Thus, this assessment combined:

- A comprehensive desk review.
- A survey targeting all groups of stakeholders.
- Key Stakeholder Interviews.
- Co-construction workshops.

2.1 Desk review

The desk review was conducted to build on existing knowledge from other actors and researchers about the key challenges faced by innovation stakeholders in Africa and Europe. The goal was both to capitalise on previous work and to avoid duplicating efforts already underway.

All reports analysed were collected from open sources matching a combination of the following keywords: “stakeholder mapping,” “needs assessment,” and “innovation.” To ensure relevance, only documents published after 2020 were considered. In total, more than 50 documents were screened and analysed for this desk review. The reviewed documents can be classified into five distinct categories:

1. **Ecosystem Assessments & Mapping Studies** – Mostly produced by development actors, international collaborations or tech-focused initiative.
2. **Strategic Outlooks & Foresight Reports** – published by think tanks, international networks & private research groups.
3. **Policy and Institutional Frameworks** – mostly official sources (AU, EU, research partnerships).
4. Reports published by Private Initiatives, NGOs or Innovation Networks.
5. **Surveys & Quantitative Data Reports** – from research institutes, foundations, or national networks.

The mapping of studies, policy frameworks, and private sector reports offered complementary perspectives: from policy making to on-the-ground realities.

To support the analysis, a tool designed and developed by Technopolis Group, called the **AI Policy Concierge**, was used alongside a set of research questions defined by the team.

The complete list of documents can be found in Annex 5.1.

2.2 Stakeholders’ survey

To complement the desk review and deepen the understanding of current needs, gaps, and expectations among innovation stakeholders, **a targeted online survey was designed and disseminated in April 2025**. The objective was to gather direct insights from actors operating in the innovation ecosystem in both Africa and Europe. The survey aimed to identify the main challenges faced by each stakeholder group; map existing interest in cross-continental collaboration & participation in AEIP activities; contribute to the stakeholder mapping and identify first guidelines for the Platform design.



The online questionnaire was administered between April 1st and April 30th, 2025 (see Annex 0) and was structured around the following four main sections:

1. General questions (name, geography, stakeholder group of the responding entity, etc.).
2. General needs (interest in activities, other stakeholder groups, etc.).
3. Specific needs tailored to the stakeholder group the respondent belongs to.
4. Engagement (contact details and subscription to the newsletter).

To facilitate the survey's dissemination, all Consortium partners actively engaged their networks, encouraging stakeholders to share and complete the questionnaire.

To maximise visibility and outreach, the survey was also promoted during several strategic events:

- **The People's Dialogue Festival (March 5–8, 2025, Nairobi, Kenya)** helped enrich the stakeholder database by identifying and engaging civil society organisations previously unknown to the Consortium.
- **The Global Democracy Coalition (GDC) Forum (March 28, 2025, Nairobi)** served as a communication channel to introduce the AEIP and drive traffic to its website.
- **The AU-EU Innovation Agenda Working Group meeting (April 2, 2025)** provided a key dissemination opportunity; members of the Working Group were encouraged to circulate the survey within their broader networks.
- **The GITEX Africa Fair (April 14–16, 2025, Marrakech, Morocco)** offered wide exposure to the innovation ecosystem. Over 100 survey responses were collected during the event thanks to targeted outreach.

As for the end of April 2025, the survey had collected 191 complete responses and 260 partial responses, which have been analysed for the purposes of this first need assessment report. NB: all charts of this report were elaborated by the Consortium, based on responses to the survey.

Complementary information regarding the survey respondents can be found in Annex 5.2.

2.3 Interviews with key stakeholders

In parallel with the survey, the Consortium adopted a more targeted approach by **identifying key stakeholders** that could inform the Platform's design and constitute the core of its strategic partnerships. This included established initiatives and networks with a continental or international footprint that are at the heart of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and have a certain complementarity with the AEIP. These stakeholders were contacted and interviewed according to an interview guide elaborated by T1.3 Engagement plan (see Annex 5.4). These interviews allowed to get more detailed insights on needs and challenges that key targeted players face.



Interviews have been led at this stage with Euraxess, Euroquity, Boost Africa, BIC Africa, Innowide, AEDIB 2.0. Further contacts were taken with SEADE, EIC, EBRD, IP HelpDesk, WFP Innovation Lab, UNDP Timbuktoo.

2.4 Co-construction workshops

Finally, in addition to the document review, survey, and targeted interviews, a series of internal workshops with Consortium members (see Presentation of the Consortium in Annex 5.5) was organised to ensure a participatory approach for this the needs assessment. The goal of these workshops was:

- To present and analyse the first draft of the gaps analysis and needs assessment.
- To finetune needs and gaps based on knowledge of the consortium members.
- To work on the possible features of the future Platform.
- To identify key stakeholders to be onboarded at the first stage of engagement.
- To think about sustainability of the future Platform.

Six workshops were organised in total, corresponding to the six stakeholder groups. Each workshop mobilised Consortium members that work closely with the stakeholder group in question:

1. Public authorities and policy makers: ACTS, IQIB, Afrilabs, SPI, EBN, TYC
2. Academia: AAU, SARIMA, IQIB, ACTS, EiAC
3. Business Support Organisations: EBN, Afrilabs, EiAC
4. Start-ups and SMEs and corporates: EBN, VC4A, SPI, Afrilabs, EiAC
5. Investors and funders: VC4A, DA, EiAC
6. Civil society: TYC, IQIB, SPI



3 Needs assessment analysis

Innovation is increasingly recognised as a key driver of sustainable development and economic growth in both Europe and Africa. Both the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) have elevated science, technology, and innovation (STI) in their strategic agendas – from the AU's Agenda 2063 and Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) to the EU's strategies like the Global Approach to R&I and the recent AU-EU Innovation Agenda. These strategies emphasise that **stronger collaboration in research and innovation can generate tangible benefits** such as new products, services, businesses, and jobs across both continents. However, to realise this potential, it is crucial to address the needs and gaps faced by different stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem.

3.1 General needs

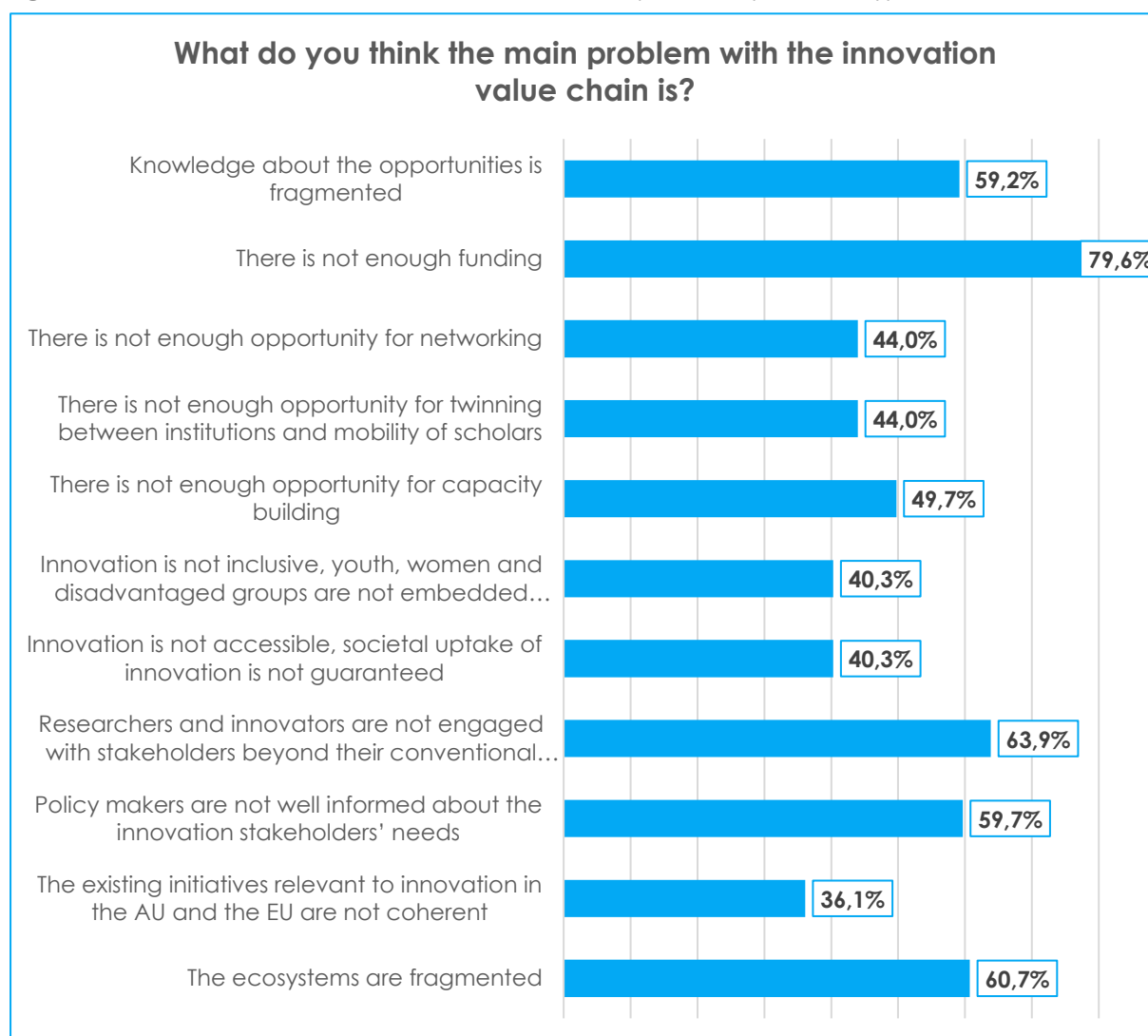
This needs assessment focuses on the core stakeholder groups of the innovation ecosystem: Public Authorities and Policy Makers; Researchers and Academia; Business Support Organizations; Start-ups and SMEs; Funders and Investors; and Civil Society Organizations. The choice to structure the analysis by stakeholder group reflects the distinct needs and well-documented challenges faced by each. In addition, insights from the survey provide a valuable cross-cutting perspective. This consolidated feedback highlights shared challenges and offers first insights on stakeholders' priorities for the Platform's design and capabilities.

The survey highlights five main issues that are considered by more than 50% of respondents as key challenges in the innovation value chain:

1. **The lack of funding: 79,6% of respondent considered it as one of the main issues in the innovation value chain.** Naturally, access to funding is critical in any economic sector, but even more so in innovation, where risk and uncertainty are high. It must be highlighted that this concern was shared across all stakeholder groups, making it the most recognised issue. This reflects three realities. Firstly, it highlights structural challenges in the innovation financing landscape: fragmented sources of funding, insufficient capital flow into innovation, and a lack of tailored financial instruments. Secondly, it underscores a barrier to the ability of key stakeholders to carry out their activities, public initiatives that run out of funding included. Finally, in cross-continental contexts like AU-EU cooperation on STI, funding gaps are often exacerbated by mismatches between the funders' criteria and local market realities. Survey respondents indicated facilitating access to funding as one of the main expectations for the Platform. Without adequate and accessible funding, many promising innovations struggle to progress beyond the pilot stage or to reach those who need them most. Addressing the funding issue requires a multidimensional and long-term approach, where every stakeholder group has its role to play.



Figure 1 Main issues in the innovation value chain – All respondents (2025 Survey)



2. **Researchers and innovators are not engaged with stakeholders beyond their conventional circles: 63,9% of respondent considered it as one of the main issues in the innovation value chain.** This finding highlights the persistent silos within the research ecosystem, where connections between academia, specialised labs, and industry remain weak. Such fragmentation undermines opportunities for co-creation, hinders the design of innovations that truly respond to community needs. This challenge is especially strong in developing countries, where few institutions or Platforms are dedicated to fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, including economic actors, researchers, and civil society organisations.
3. **The ecosystem is fragmented: 60,7% of respondent considered it as one of the main issues in the innovation value chain.** Closely related to the previous finding, it highlights a wider fragmentation that impacts every stakeholder group. Building



bridges between diverse actors (academia, industry, civil society, funders, and policy makers) will strengthen innovation dynamism. It will also contribute to ensure that solutions remain relevant, and support long-term sustainability, especially in cross-continental initiatives.

4. **Policy makers are not well informed about the innovation stakeholders' needs: according to 59,7% of respondent, this issue is of the main problem of the innovation value chain.** This can be explained by the lack of structured dialogue with innovation actors and strong siloes in the information flow between key stakeholders. Moreover, the rapid evolution of technologies often outpaces regulatory framework and policy making processes. Multi-channel engagement and responsive institutional mechanism are key to answer this challenge.
5. **Knowledge about the opportunities is fragmented: 59,2% of respondent considered as a key challenge in the innovation value chain.** This issue also emerged as a top expectation for the Platform. Stakeholders struggle to find and navigate critical information, from stakeholder mappings and ongoing initiatives to project calls and funding alerts. By consolidating and structuring these diverse data streams, the Platform can bridge this information gap and empower all actors to engage more effectively.

When analysing **specific needs of each stakeholder group**, strong patterns can be identified that pinpoint typical thematic areas common to all stakeholders. Notably, five topics present needs and gaps in nearly all stakeholder groups: Networking, Policy Framework, Funding, Capacity Building, and other key dimensions (most commonly, infrastructure).

The synthesis table presented below provides a comprehensive overview of key stakeholders needs gathered through this document. It tackles every critical challenge needed to build a thriving innovation ecosystem. Each section of the table drills down into specific components, illustrating the roles and contributions of various stakeholders.

By analysing these elements, we can identify strengths, uncover gaps, and seize opportunities, enabling targeted interventions and strategic planning to drive innovation and growth.

Table 2 Results of the needs assessment

	Policy makers	Academia	Start-Up and SMES	BSOs	Funders & Investors	Civil society
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating across multiple sectors More inclusive innovation policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcing links with private sector or industry Commercialisation of research outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market access and scaling opportunities Open innovation and linkages with ecosystem A vibrant innovation ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of networks and partnerships Access to international markets and partnerships Strong partnerships with the corporate world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust deal pipeline and market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership building for public calls Closer links to innovators and funders
Policy framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning stakeholders toward common innovation goals Links with private sectors and CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy and Supportive Policy Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducive regulatory environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling policy and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment-friendly policies and investment climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal avenues for participation in innovation processes Ethical and social safeguards for innovative products
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to finance at all stages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk mitigation and co-funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify funding
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity for evidence-based policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Building and Talent Retention Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills and mentorship Intrapreneurship and talent retention to stay competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building and skills development Knowledge sharing mechanisms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity and empowerment
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling infrastructure and incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and environmental impact alignment Exit opportunities and returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing societal challenges through innovation

3.2 Specific needs of public authorities and policy makers

Public authorities, including government ministries, agencies, and policymakers at local, national, and regional levels, **play a central role in creating an environment where innovation can thrive.** Their involvement in designing policies, regulations, and investment strategies positions them at the core of the research and innovation (R&I)



ecosystem. They are responsible for removing barriers to innovation and establishing a regulatory framework that encourages the emergence of new ideas.

In both Europe and Africa, policymakers face the challenge of coordinating across multiple sectors (education, science, industry, finance, etc.) and aligning stakeholders toward common goals, particularly in the innovation field.

The answers to the survey translate this cross-disciplinary aspect of innovation, with respondent from very diverse sectors. Out of 38 respondent the define themselves as policy makers or public authorities. If 80% of their respondent were involved mostly in education & research, their spectrum of promoting innovation was broader. More than half were working on innovation in different fields such, agriculture and food for 13 of them, energy and mining for 12 of them or private services for 5 of them.

This illustrates the challenge surrounding the promotion of innovation by policy makers and public authorities. The key needs and priorities for public authorities identified at this stage include:

3.2.1 Effective innovation policy frameworks

Science, technology and innovation (STI) are powerful enablers for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Policymakers therefore need to design clear national innovation strategies and STI policies that set priorities (e.g. digital innovation, green technologies, health research) and provide predictable and sustained support. In Africa, many countries are working to implement the African Union's STISA-2024 vision¹, which notably set a target for member states to invest 1% of their GDP in research and innovation. **However, according to the latest** available World Bank data on R&I expenditure as a percentage of GDP, no African country had yet reached this 1% target. It should be noted that some of these figures are outdated, and countries such as Rwanda, Morocco, Tunisia, or Egypt may have reached or approached the target by 2024². This gap nonetheless highlights the urgent need for greater and more consistent public investment in innovation across the continent.

3.2.2 Cross-sectoral coordination

Innovation does not fall under the purview of a single ministry: it cuts across education, science and technology, industry, finance, and beyond. Therefore, public authorities need coordination mechanisms, such as inter-ministerial committees **or national innovation councils, to ensure cohesive and effective policymaking**. For example, supporting a start-up might require coordinated action on skills training (education ministry), research grants (science and technology), and venture capital regulation (finance ministry). Joint AU-EU Platforms, like the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), provide a valuable model by bringing together ministers and stakeholders from both continents to define common priorities

¹ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/37448-doc-stisa-2024_french.pdf

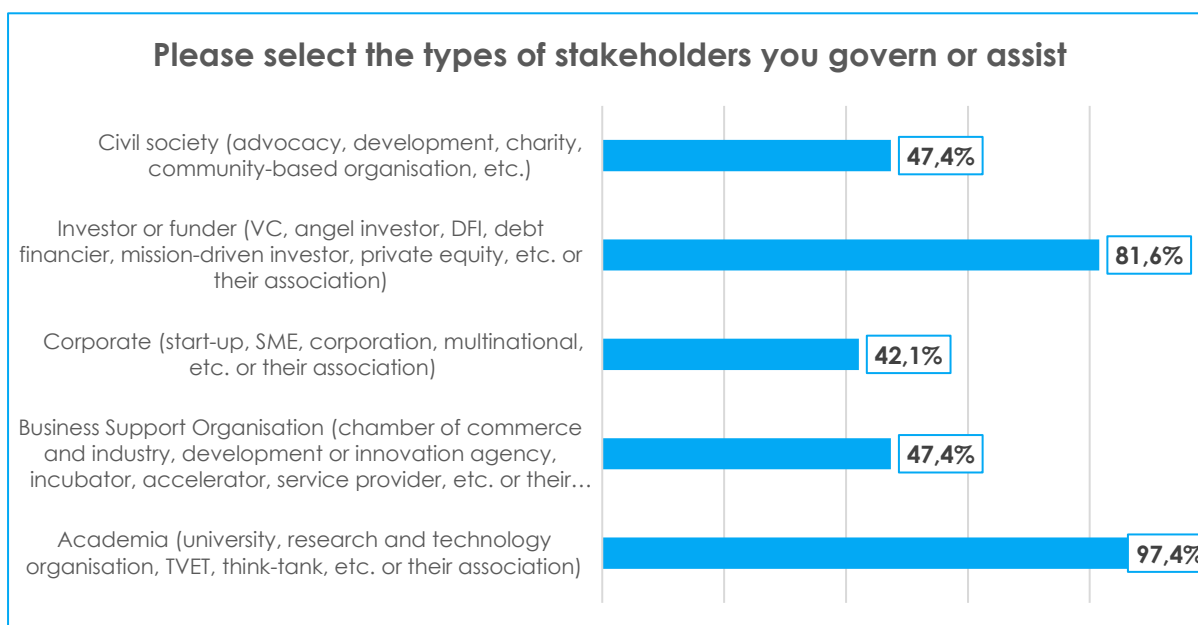
² World Bank Open Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/>

and coordinate efforts. At the national level, similar multi-stakeholder forums or innovation advisory councils can help ensure that policy aligns with real needs on the ground.

Similarly, achieving SDGs through STI requires strong collaboration across government, academia, industry, and civil society³. Yet, as highlighted in the AfriLabs 2022 Needs Assessment report, engagement between innovation hubs and policymakers remains limited in several African countries⁴. **Too often, policies are reactive and not grounded in dialogue with innovation actors.**

Interestingly, the survey respondent's typology reflects this challenge: half of them is governing multiple stakeholders including civil society, investors, corporates & business organisation. Moreover, the survey also highlighted these challenges with 76% of the respondent considered collaboration and partnership issues as one of the biggest challenges in implementing innovation agenda (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Types of stakeholders governed by the public authorities and policy makers respondents to the survey (2025 Survey)



3.2.3 Capacity for evidence-based policy

Many African countries lack the capacity to generate, manage, and use data to inform STI policies and programs.⁵ Especially in emerging innovation ecosystems,

³ Science, Technology and Innovation for Achieving the SDGs in Africa: Key Priorities and Actions, 2023

⁴ AfriLabs Needs Assessment Report

⁵ Science, Technology and Innovation for Achieving the SDGs in Africa: Key Priorities and Actions, 2023

policy-makers may need capacity building to effectively use data and evidence from research and pilot programs when formulating policy. This includes understanding new technology trends (e.g. AI, biotech), evaluating what works in incubator programs or tech hubs, and institutionalizing learning from past initiatives. The AU-EU Innovation Agenda process itself incorporated public consultations and stakeholder feedback to ground the policy in real needs⁶.

The issue of capacity and knowledge valorisation also emerged as a key concern in the survey, **identified by policymakers and public authorities as the third most significant challenge to overcome** (see graph 2). This broad issue covers interrelated difficulties such as: brain drain, a lack of technical and managerial skills, insufficient training opportunities, and limited collaboration between public authorities and innovators or researchers. **These gaps hinder the effective use and scaling of knowledge generated through research and innovation.**

Finally, as highlighted by several researchers interviewed during this phase of the project, a lack of mutual understanding and trust between researchers and public authorities continues to hinder the development of evidence-based policymaking and the institutionalisation collaboration.

3.2.4 Enabling infrastructure and incentives

Public authorities also control many of the resources critical to innovation, such as digital infrastructure (e.g., broadband, electricity), intellectual property (IP) regimes, and financial incentives. However, national STI ecosystems remain insufficiently developed in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa⁷. Ensuring widespread connectivity and access to research infrastructure is therefore vital, particularly in regions where significant gaps persist. **Governments also play a key role in encouraging innovation through mechanisms such as R&I tax credits, start-up grants, or innovation challenge funds.**

Aligning these incentives with broader socio-economic objectives can generate tangible impact on the ground: a goal strongly emphasised by AU-EU ministers. In Europe, policymakers are encouraged to create favourable conditions for innovation by engaging citizens, accepting investment risk, and reducing regulatory burdens.

One of the main challenges for both continents, however, remains financial and resource constraints. This issue was cited by 75% of survey respondents as the primary obstacle to implementing the AU-EU Innovation Agenda (see graph 2). These constraints limit the capacity of public authorities to develop enabling infrastructure or implement effective innovation policies.⁸

⁶ research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu

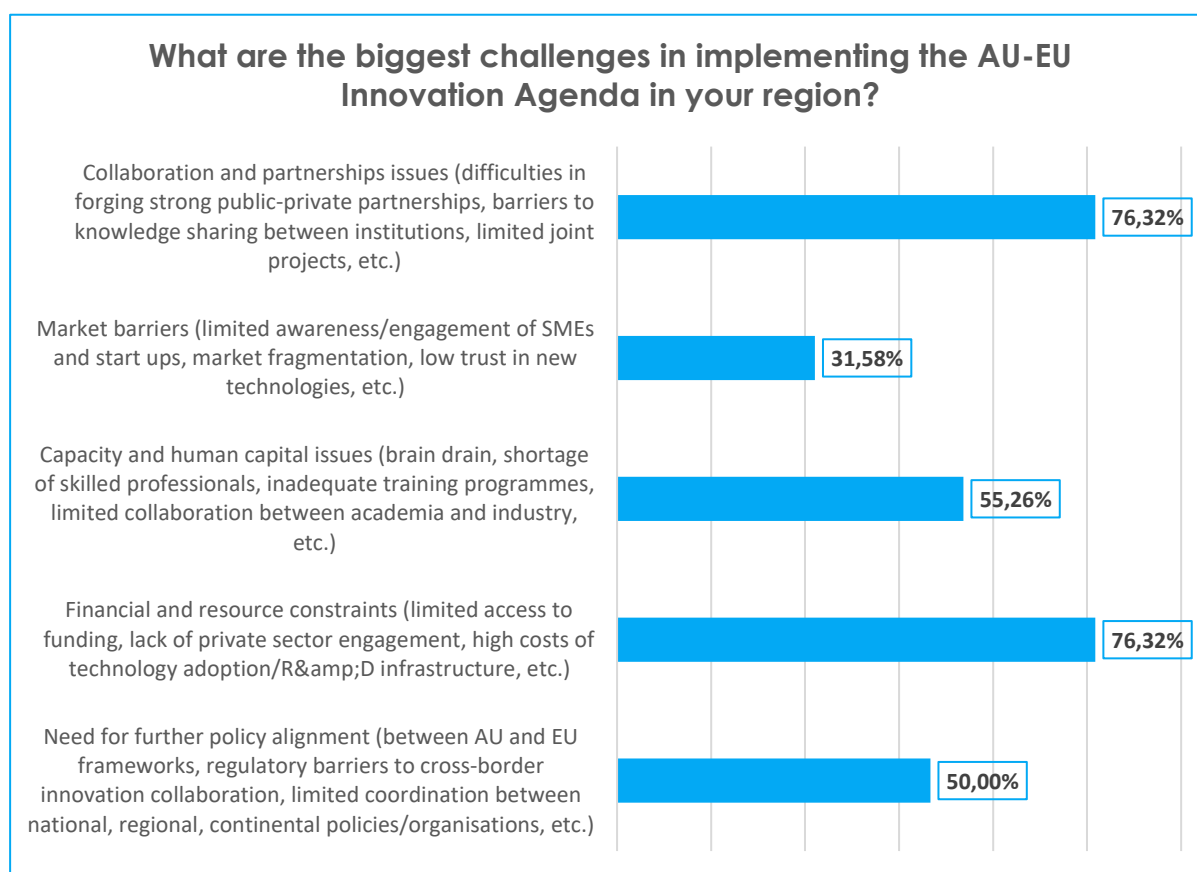
⁷ horizon-europe.gouv.fr

⁸ Science, Technology and Innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Harnessing the Potential Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

3.2.5 Need for Greater Policy Alignment

One of the key challenges identified by public authorities is the **lack of alignment between AU and EU frameworks**, as well as limited coordination between national, regional, and continental policies. Half of the policymakers who responded to the survey highlighted this issue as a major barrier to innovation. Fragmented regulatory environments hinder the development of cross-border collaboration and slow down the implementation of joint programmes. For instance, differences in IP regimes, data governance, or funding eligibility criteria can complicate cooperation between African and European actors. Better alignment of STI policies, through harmonised standards, mutual recognition mechanisms, and stronger institutional coordination, is essential to facilitate joint innovation efforts and ensure the effectiveness of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda⁹.

Figure 3 Biggest challenges in implementing the AU-EU Innovation Agenda in your region (2025 Survey)



⁹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/ec_rtd_au-eu-innovation-agenda-final-version.pdf

Regional bodies and continental organisations also need to play a stronger role in bridging national strategies and building a coherent innovation ecosystem¹⁰. This need was also highlighted by respondents to the survey, with 50% identifying it as one of the main challenges they face (see Figure 3).

3.2.6 Main expectations of policy makers & public authorities regarding the Platform

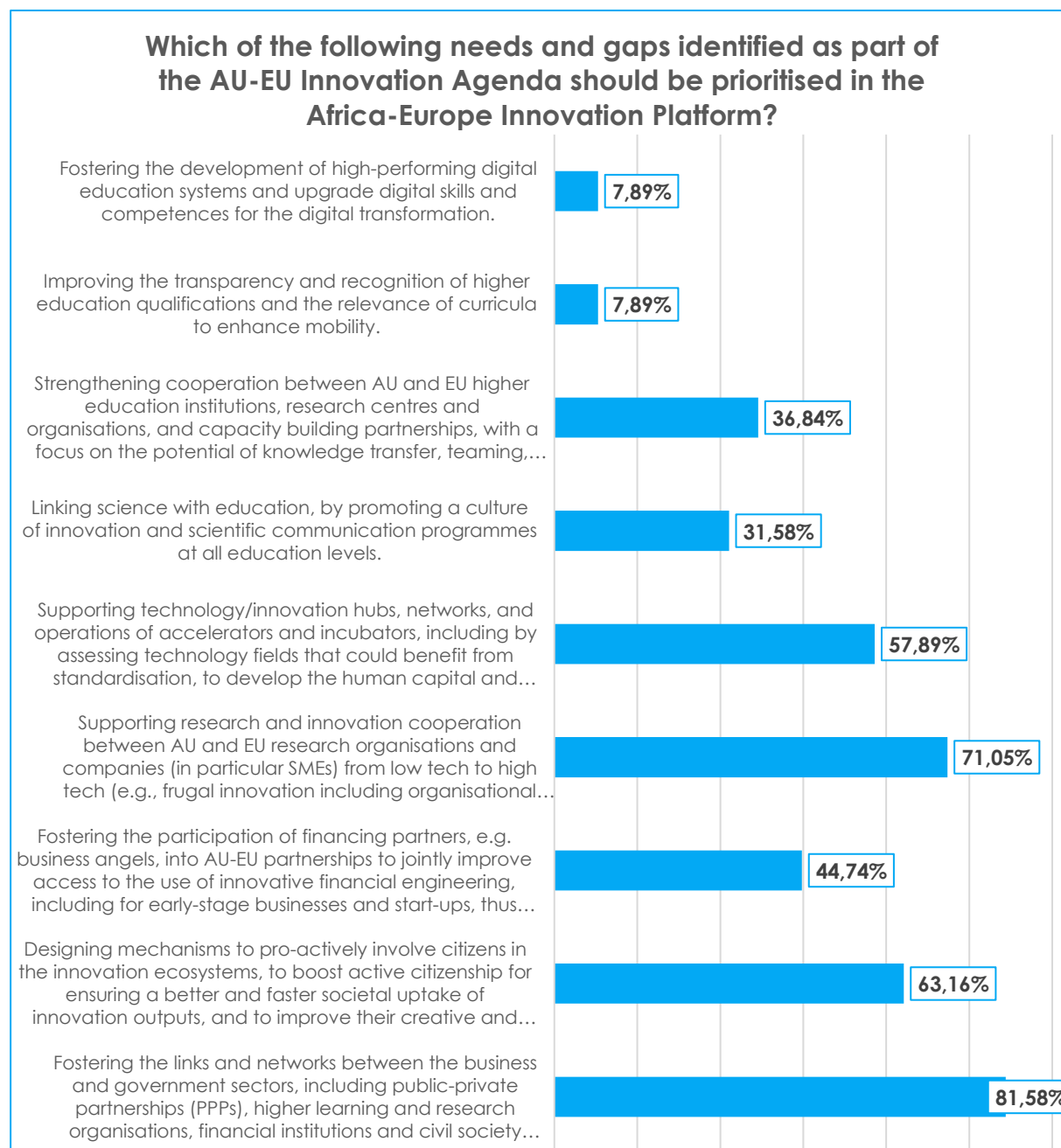
As Figure 4 shows, the expectations policy makers hold towards the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform are aligned with the needs identified above.

- **Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Identified as the highest priority by policymakers, enhancing public-private partnerships stands out as a key expectation for the Platform. This need aligns with challenges faced by several African countries in attracting investment and facilitating the transfer of technology and skills within innovation ecosystems. It also underscores the importance of integrated efforts and stronger collaboration between public institutions and private actors to drive inclusive and sustainable innovation.
- **Strengthening Cooperation:** The second highest priority identified by 71.05% of respondents, is the need to strengthen cooperation between AU and EU research organizations and companies. This highlights a strong appetite for collaborative efforts that leverage the unique strengths of both continents and facilitate coordinated research initiatives and joint innovation projects. It also reflects the need for more cross-sector collaboration involving actors from different geographical, institutional and functional ecosystems. This priority underscores the importance of breaking down silos between companies, policymakers, and researchers at all levels of the innovation value chain.
- **Involve citizens and civil society in the innovation ecosystem:** Designing mechanisms to proactively involve citizens in the innovation ecosystems is also a high priority regarding expectations for the Platform, with 63.16%. This reflects the importance of inclusive strategies that ensure broader participation and engagement in innovation processes. Moreover, it highlights the need for locally rooted innovation, solutions that are not only technically viable but also socially accepted and responsive to the needs and realities of local populations.
- **Other main expectations:** Policymakers and public authorities identified four other main gaps to address: supporting innovation networks; fostering better engagement among stakeholders within the ecosystem; bridge the gap between science and education and strengthening collaboration between researchers.
- **Areas not considered as extremely important by the majority of respondent:** Developing high-performing digital education and skills or improving the relevance of higher education and updating curricula have not been identified as urgent.

¹⁰ Domiciliation Study Report – November 2024



Figure 4 Main area of prioritization for the Innovation Platform (2025 Survey)



In summary, the survey results and the desk review underscore several major challenges, notably the need for greater policy alignment between AU and EU frameworks, enhanced public-private partnerships, and capacity building for evidence-based policymaking. Addressing these challenges requires stronger institutional coordination and increased financial commitment. Expectations regarding the Platform are high, and key features essential to policy makers and public authorities are already emerging.



3.3 Specific needs of researchers and academia

Universities, public and private research institutes, and researchers constitute the knowledge foundation of the innovation ecosystem. Academia produces the scientific discoveries and skilled talent that fuel innovation in society. In Europe, academic institutions are generally well-established and benefit from dedicated public funding. EU programs such as Horizon Europe, which provides €95.5 billion for research and innovation from 2021 to 2027, with a strong focus on academia, are examples of existing supports¹¹.

However, researchers and academia still face pressure to increase the translation of research into tangible outputs (turning papers and patents into start-ups, products, or policy solutions). This challenge is addressed through initiatives like the EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform, aiming to bridge the gap between science and societal impact¹².

In Africa, universities and research centres are growing in number and capacity, supported by frameworks such as the African Union's STISA-2024 strategy¹³. Nevertheless, they often struggle with limited and unstable funding, infrastructure deficits, and the persistent “brain drain” of researchers leaving for better conditions abroad. According to UNESCO, Africa accounts for only 1.1% of global R&I expenditure and has just 2.4% of the world's researchers, despite comprising around 15% of the global population¹⁴. This highlights the structural challenges facing the continent's research ecosystems.

*The results of the survey supporting this needs assessment should be interpreted with caution, as they primarily reflect the needs of African institutions. Of the 56 responses collected from researchers and academia, **only 7% came from European respondents.***

The key needs and priorities for researchers and academia identified at this stage include:

3.3.1 Research funding and infrastructure

Both African and European researchers need adequate funding to conduct world-class research. In Africa, domestic R&I investment is generally low, making researchers heavily reliant on foreign grants.¹⁵ This underscores the need for increased domestic

¹¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

¹² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform_en#:~:text=The%20Knowledge%20Valorisation%20Platform%20connects,progress%20or%20improved%20policy%20making.

¹³ <https://asric.africa/sites/default/files/2024-01/STISA-Final.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.unesco.org/reports/science/2021/en/download-report>

¹⁵ World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/11/innovative-approaches-for-unlocking-research-and-development-funding-in-africa/>

funding and blended financing (combining national funds with international support) to build research labs, centres of excellence, and equipment. Improving infrastructure (from reliable power and internet for universities to advanced laboratories) is critical to enable researchers to perform and collaborate on equal footing with global peers.

In addition, there is also the need for dedicated funding for patenting and prototyping. Most of Institutions, especially in Africa, face the lack of funding for patent filing, maintenance, and technology prototyping.¹⁶ The survey also highlighted this critical issue, with over 84% of respondents identifying funding as the key challenge within the innovation value chain. It is therefore seen as the most pressing issue to address to foster innovation.

3.3.2 Capacity building and talent retention

Developing and retaining scientific talent is another challenge. The scarcity of local opportunities has led many of Africa's brightest minds to seek better prospects abroad. **According to Quartz Africa, approximately 30% of African scientists leave the continent each year.**¹⁷ African researchers need opportunities for growth in their home institutions to curb brain drain.

The survey also corroborates with this finding with 56% of respondent considering the lack of knowledge about opportunity as one of the main issues in the innovation value chain. This issue related to **opportunity awareness** was identified as the fourth main challenge by the researchers and academics who responded to the survey. It can be addressed by building institutional capacity, for example, through initiatives like the African Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence (ARISE) (an AU-EU programme supporting African research leaders) or partnerships that offer joint PhDs and exchange programs.

In Europe, while brain drain is less common, there is an ongoing need to attract global talent and encourage interdisciplinary skills (combining technical knowledge with entrepreneurship or policy understanding).¹⁸

3.3.3 Knowledge exchange and collaboration

Academia thrives when connected – both internally (across disciplines) and externally (with industry, government, and international peers). Knowledge exchange, including technology transfer, has been identified as a core gap area to address. Universities need strong technology transfer offices or innovation centres that can help turn research findings into innovations, whether through patent licensing or spin-off companies¹⁹. This would help address the need for increased commercialisation of public research outputs. Moreover, collaboration mechanisms such as joint research

¹⁶ Second South African National IP & Technology Transfer Survey, May 2021

¹⁷ <https://www.yarafrica.org/get-to-know-us>

¹⁸ European Commission. (2022, April 27). Communication on "Attracting skills and talent to the EU" (COM (2022) 436). EUR-Lex https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0436&utm_source

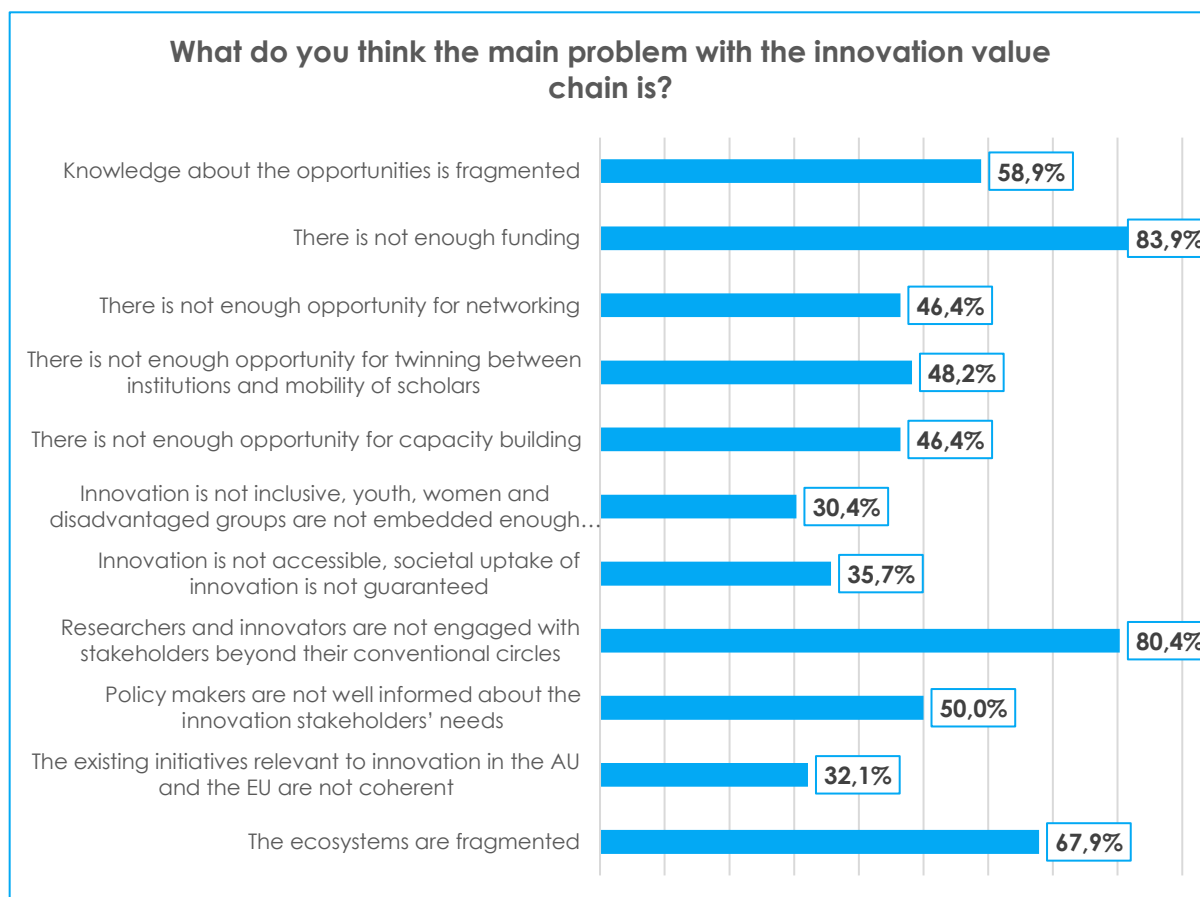
¹⁹ Second South African National IP & Technology Transfer Survey

projects, co-creation labs, and innovation hubs that link university researchers with companies and start-ups are key.

The AU-EU cooperation frameworks put emphasis on **mutually beneficial higher education and research partnerships** between institutions of both continents. These partnerships not only improve research outputs but also ensure that curricula and training are relevant to current industry and societal needs²⁰.

This necessity to better connect key stakeholders across the ecosystem is shared by 80% of the researchers and academics who responded to the survey. According to them, the limited engagement of researchers beyond their conventional circles is the second most important issue to address to boost innovation.

Figure 5 Main issues in the innovation value chain – Academia (2025 Survey)



²⁰ The Roadmap for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/ec_rtd_au-eu-innovation-agenda-final-version.pdf?



3.3.4 Autonomy and supportive policy environment

Academic institutions require autonomy and continuous support to innovate. This includes academic freedom, but also supportive policies on issues like recognition of qualifications (to ease mobility of students and faculty), and evaluation systems that reward not just publications but also innovation impact (e.g. collaborations with industry or community projects).

Additionally, fair research partnership practices are needed to empower African institutions. As noted by the African Academy of Sciences, African researchers often participate in projects but rarely lead them due to complex procedures and funder requirements²¹.

3.3.5 Strong links with private sector or industry

Several sources²² underline the need for better links of research groups with business development support institutions and industries²³. Still, there is limited interaction between universities, research institutions, and industry, which reduces the potential for research commercialisation²⁴. Existing collaborations are often limited to internships or ad hoc joint projects, with insufficient integration in core R&I and commercialisation strategies.

3.3.6 Main expectations of policy makers & public authorities regarding the Platform

- **Funding opportunity notification:** According to the survey, 85.7% of academia and researchers identified access funding opportunity notifications as a top expectation for the Platform. A centralised Platform could bridge the gap in accessing information, by acting as a hub for funding alerts, increasing participation and success in research and innovation initiatives.
- **Capacity building: 69,6% of academia and researchers who responded to the survey considered it as a major expectation.** Respondents expressed a clear need for targeted training and knowledge exchange. The Platform could facilitate such capacity-building initiatives and play key role in strengthening research capabilities.
- **Mobility and exchange program:** 66.1% of academia and researchers who participated in the survey, considered it as key expectation regarding the Platform. Facilitating the movement of researchers, innovators, and students between Africa and Europe is seen as essential to fostering joint research. Supporting mobility schemes would thus be highly valued by the academic and research community.
- **Other main expectations areas:** Academia and researchers agreed in majority on three other main gaps to address: facilitating partner matching, strengthening

²¹ UNECA / African Academy of Sciences (2022), Strengthening Research and Innovation Systems for Africa's Development.

²² FNSSA Mapping Phase 3 – Quantitative Analysis & Project Ranking

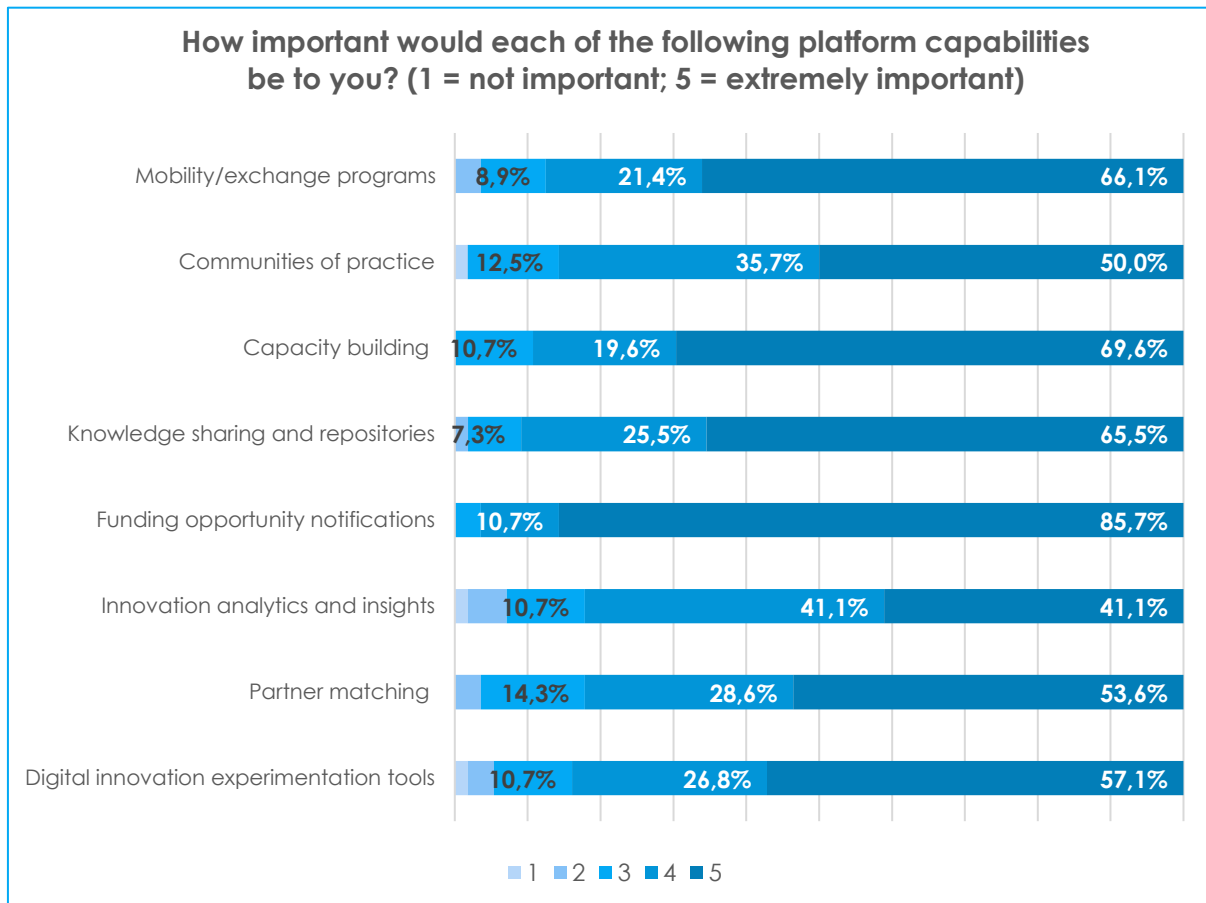
²³ [Innovation for Transformation – Kenya Innovation Outlook 2023](#)

²⁴ The African Innovation Outlook, 2024

digital innovation and experimentation tools, and creating communities of practices.

- **Areas not considered as extremely important by the majority of respondent:** On the other hand, developing innovation analytics and insights was not considered as a priority expectation for the Platform by researchers and academia.

Figure 6 Main expectations regarding the Platform – Academia (2025 Survey)



By strengthening universities and research centres through funding, capacity building, and greater integration into the innovation ecosystem, both continents can ensure a strong pipeline of knowledge and talent. Academia's can become an engine for discovery and a critical partner to industry and government in innovation efforts.



3.4 Specific needs of business support organisations

Business support organisations (BSOs) such as incubators, accelerators, technology hubs, and innovation centres play central role in the innovation ecosystem as intermediaries. They work in close collaboration with start-ups and entrepreneurs to refine business models, build skills, and connect to resources like mentors or investors.

In Africa, the past decade has seen a boom in tech hubs and incubators with over 600 tech hubs across the continent, reflecting the dynamism of the sector.²⁵ However, many of these hubs face sustainability challenges, expertise gaps, and inconsistent networks.²⁶ Europe, on the other hand, has more mature incubation but still seeks to continuously innovate their support services and extend their reach internationally.

Several initiatives underscore the needs BSOs have expressed for greater connectivity and resource-sharing across borders. For example, the EU-funded ENRICH in Africa (EiA) project established a new EiA Centre in Cape Town as a pan-African European hub to support incubators and accelerators, offering a digital Platform for collaboration and "state-of-the-art services" like open innovation challenges and soft-landing programmes for entrepreneurs²⁷.

*The results of the survey supporting the BSOs' needs assessment reflect **relatively balanced feedback from both European and African players**. Of the 34 responses collected from BSOs, 44% came from European respondents.*

The key needs and priorities for BSOs identified at this stage include:

3.4.1 Sustainable funding and infrastructure

Many business support organisations, rely on donor grants or corporate sponsorships and struggle to find sustainable business models. In the 2022 Afrilabs needs assessment report, many African hubs indicated that access to funding remains a significant barrier to growth²⁸. There is a pressing need to develop sustainable business models that generate internal revenue streams, reduce dependence on grants, and enable long-term ecosystem development²⁹. Policymakers and funders need to acknowledge this need and consider long-term support mechanisms, such as multiyear grants tied to performance, or encouraging public-private partnerships to co-invest in local hubs.

²⁵ The Africa report, "Tech hubs across Africa to incubate the next generation" 2020, <https://www.theafricareport.com/23434/tech-hubs-across-africa-to-incubate-the-next-generation/>

²⁶ International Trade Centre, « Sustaining the impact of Africa's tech hubs" 2019, <https://www.intracen.org/news-and-events/news/sustaining-the-impact-of-africas-tech-hubs>

²⁷ cordis.europa.eu

²⁸ Afrilabs Needs Assessment Report, 2022

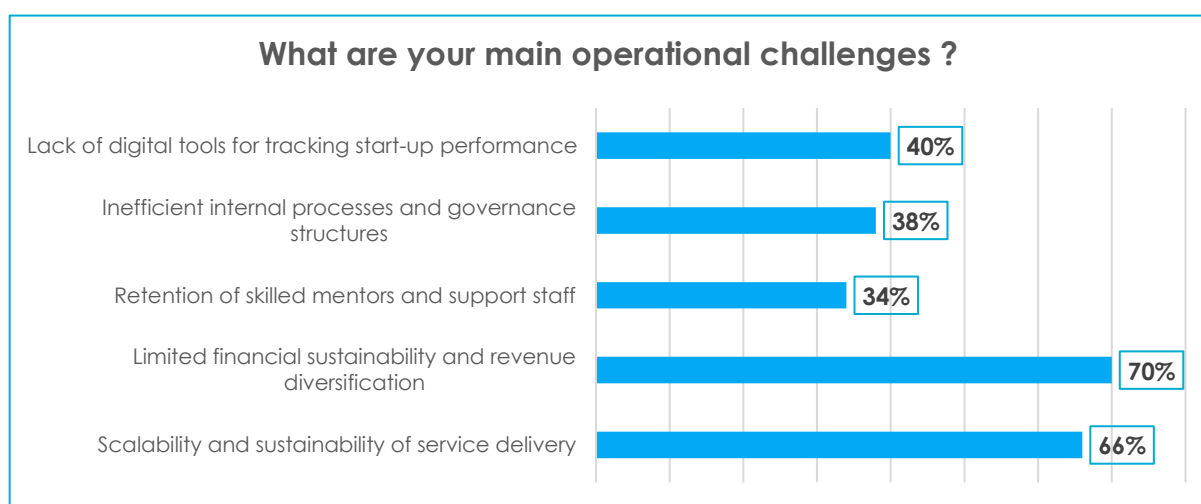
²⁹ Afrilabs – Bolstering innovators in Africa (2021), <https://afrilabs.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/AfrilabsReportFinalFMOEUNLGV.pdf>



Additionally, Basic infrastructure issues such as inconsistent power supply and unreliable internet continue to hamper productivity and access. Ensuring BSOs can maintain and upgrade these facilities is an ongoing need.

It is important to underscore that this challenge does only concern African BSOs, but also European players. As illustrated by the survey, 55% of European respondents considered the lack of funding as one of the main problems in the innovation value chain. Unsurprisingly, this figure is significantly higher among African players (95%), but it nevertheless highlights the transregional nature of this issue. Moreover, it was identified by 70% of respond as their main operational challenges.

Figure 7 Main operational challenges – BSOs (2025 Survey)



3.4.2 Enabling policy and recognition

Another key challenge faced by BSOs is the need for a more enabling policy environment, as well as a better understanding of innovation scheme among policymakers. Governments can support them by formally recognising incubators and accelerators as critical innovation infrastructure and including them in innovation policy strategies. They can also reinforce the involvement of innovation key players in policy design to better target gaps in innovation ecosystems. **AfriLabs initiated research projects and published reports to gather actionable insights that can guide policy and strategic planning for innovation in Africa.** BIC Africa has organised policy workshops for AU and EU government institutions to facilitate dialogue between policymakers and incubator networks. Such dialogue can highlight on-the-ground hurdles that policymakers can then address.

According to the survey respondents, the lack of awareness of policy makers regarding innovation stakeholders' needs is the second highest problem in the innovation value chain (76,5% of BSO respondents).

3.4.3 The lack of centralised information about opportunities

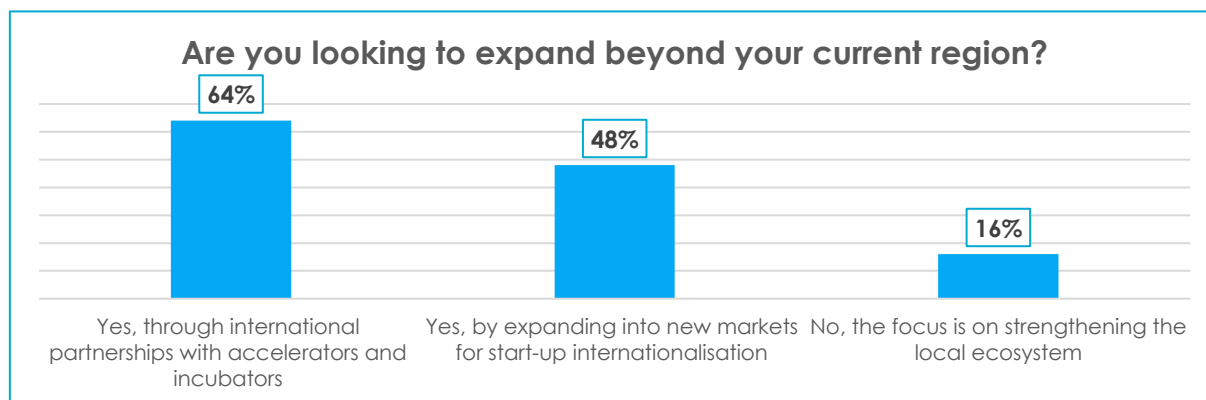
The difficulty to access information on opportunities remains a major bottleneck for BSOs, with 70% of them identifying it as one of the main problems in the innovation value chain, according to the survey. The current landscape is fragmented, with funding calls, partnership offers, training programmes, and innovation events dispersed across numerous uncoordinated sources.

As highlighted by the OECD 2023 “Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook³⁰”, fragmented information flows are a barrier to innovation, especially for smaller actors with limited capacity to track opportunities. This situation is even more pronounced for African BSOs, which often lack access to global networks. It is interesting to note that 74% of European respondents also considered it as one of the main problems in the innovation value chain.

3.4.4 Networking and partnerships

The value BSOs offer start-ups often comes from the **networks they can leverage**. BSOs need robust connections to mentors, corporate partners, academic experts, and investor circles³¹. Initiatives like AU-EU twinning programs (pairing African incubators with experienced EU incubators) help transfer knowledge and open networks. Likewise, regional and continental networks (e.g. AfriLabs in Africa or EBN in Europe) provide Platforms for collaboration among BSOs.

Figure 8 Expansion ambition – BSOs (2025 Survey)



Moreover, as highlighted in Figure 8, 84% of CBO respondents to the survey are looking to expand beyond their current region: a dynamic that underscores the importance of strengthening networks and partnerships to support this ambition for geographic expansion.

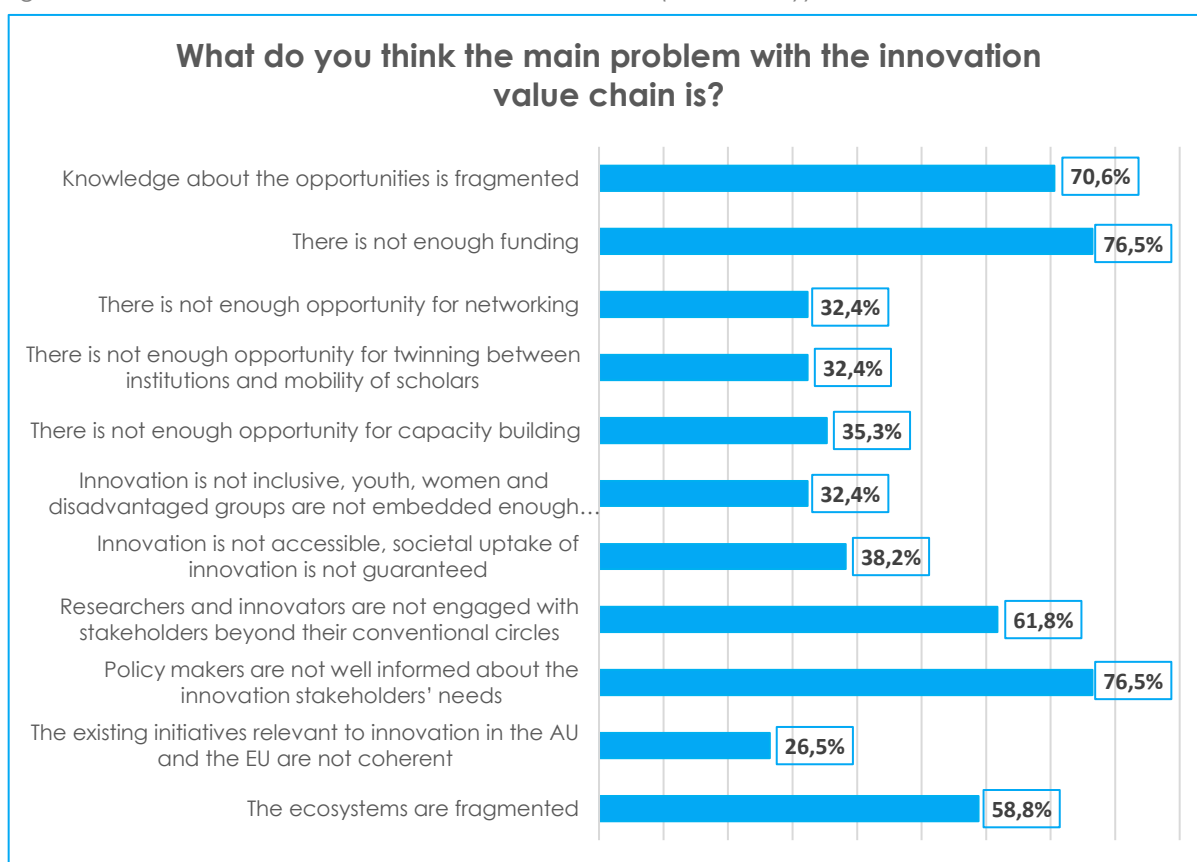
³⁰ OECD (2023), *OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2023: Enabling Transitions in Times of Disruption*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/0b55736e-en>

³¹ Ibid

3.4.5 Capacity building and skills development

Finally, many incubators and accelerators, especially in emerging ecosystems, need training to enhance their own capacity to support founders. This ranges from improving program design (so that accelerator services truly match founders' needs) to learning how to help start-ups with specialised challenges. BSOs require professional development for their staff, for instance, in mentorship techniques, technology scouting, or impact measurement. Capacity building is needed for hub managers, especially in financial management, sustainability planning, and impact measurement³².

Figure 9 Main issues in the innovation value chain – BSOs (2025 Survey)



While this challenge did not appear as central in the survey (only 35% of respondents identified it as a key issue, 42% of African respondents, and 26% for Europeans ones), it nevertheless stood out prominently in most of the studies on innovation ecosystems reviewed in the desk research.

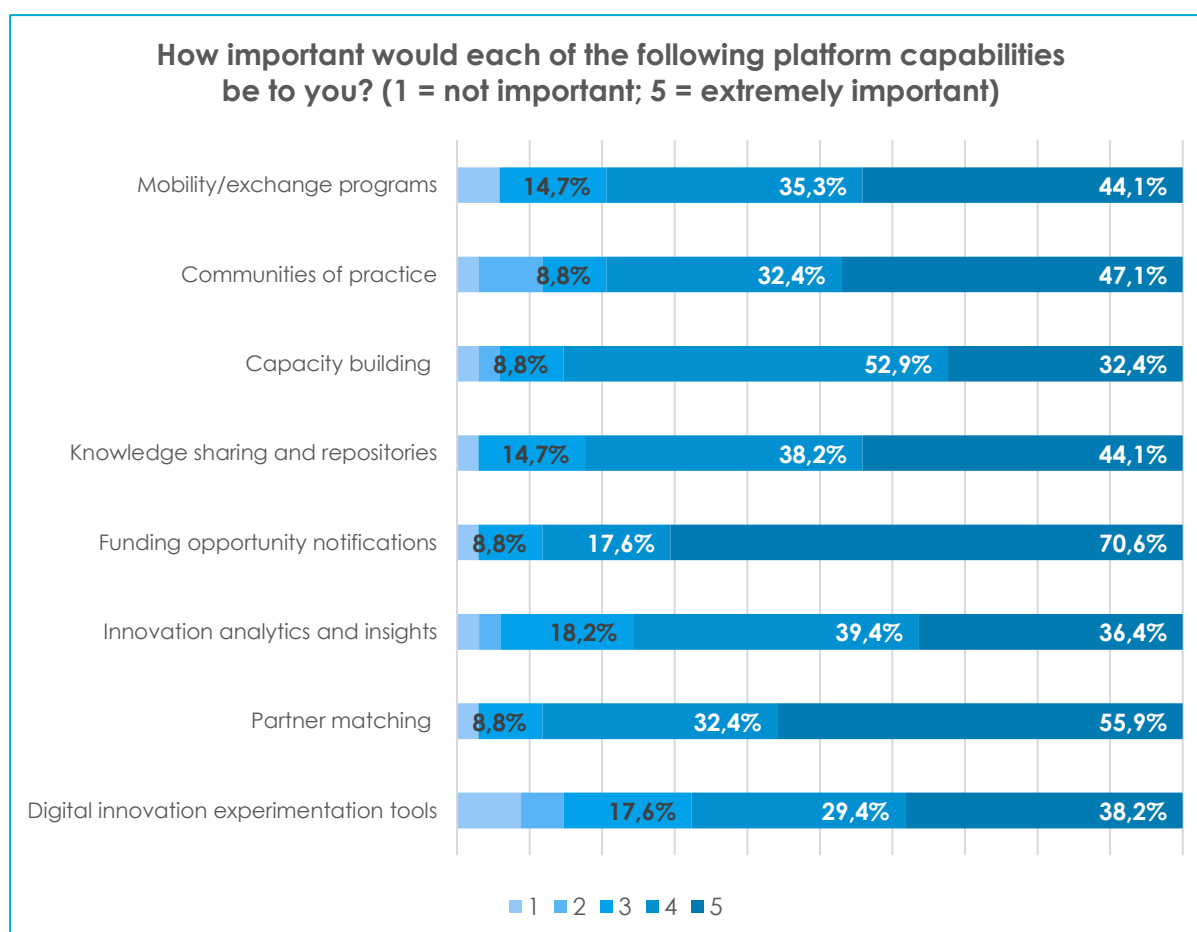
³² Afrilabs Needs Assessment Report, 2022



3.4.6 Main expectations of BSOs regarding the Platform

- **Funding opportunity notification:** According to the survey, 70,6% of CBOs identified access funding opportunity notifications as a top expectation for the Platform. This reflects a strong need among CBOs to stay informed about available financing sources, grants, and support programs — a key factor for sustaining their activities and supporting innovators. This expectation is particularly strong when it comes to African CBOS (85% of them considering this capability for the Platform as extremely important in the survey).
- **Partner Matching:** 55,9% of CBOs who responded to the survey considered it as a major expectation. This highlights the importance CBOs place on finding the right partners to develop joint projects, access new markets, and build complementary expertise. Given the fragmented nature of innovation ecosystems, especially across the AU-EU space, facilitating connections between organisations is seen as a key driver of impactful collaboration.

Figure 10 Main expectations regarding the Platform – BSOs (2025 Survey)





These two capabilities are the only ones with 50% or more of respondents considering them as extremely important. Nevertheless, other areas, **such as capacity building, mobility/exchange programs, and communities of practice**, are still considered very important or more by a large majority of respondents. The needs assessment therefore focuses on the most pressing needs, but it remains important to acknowledge expectations regarding these additional capabilities. Finally, digital innovation and experimentation tools appear to be the lowest-priority capabilities for the Platform according to BSOs.

In conclusion, business support organisations act as the catalysts of the start-up ecosystem. By empowering these organisations through training, networks, funding, and supportive policies, Europe and Africa can multiply the impact of entrepreneurship on jobs and innovation.

3.5 Specific needs of start-ups, SMEs and entrepreneurs

Innovative businesses, from nimble tech start-ups to growing SMEs and established corporate R&I departments, are direct engines that convert ideas into marketable solutions and economic value. In both Europe and Africa, start-ups and SMEs often struggle with accessing the resources they need to survive and scale³³.

The AU-EU Innovation Agenda's underlying analysis identified access to finance and innovation management capacity as key gaps for translating R&I into businesses³⁴. Moreover, stakeholders on both continents have highlighted the need for a **more risk-tolerant culture and fewer barriers**, noting that Europe “needs to provide an excellent environment to foster innovation through better citizen engagement, increased openness to investment risk and reduced regulatory burden.”³⁵ These challenges can also be found in Africa, where entrepreneurs often navigate regulatory uncertainty and scarce venture funding.

*The results of the survey informing the needs assessment for start-ups, SMEs, and entrepreneurs do not cover corporates well, as **99% of respondents were either start-ups or SMEs**. We therefore chose to focus primarily on these players, as no significant data on corporates emerged to complement the desk review. It is also important to note that 86% of the responding SMEs and start-ups were based in Africa - this regional bias should be considered while interpreting the findings.*

The key needs and priorities for start-ups and SMEs identified at this stage include:

³³ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/growth/items/47893/en>

³⁴ AU-EU Innovation Agenda final version 2023, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/ec_rtd_au-eu-innovation-agenda-final-version.pdf

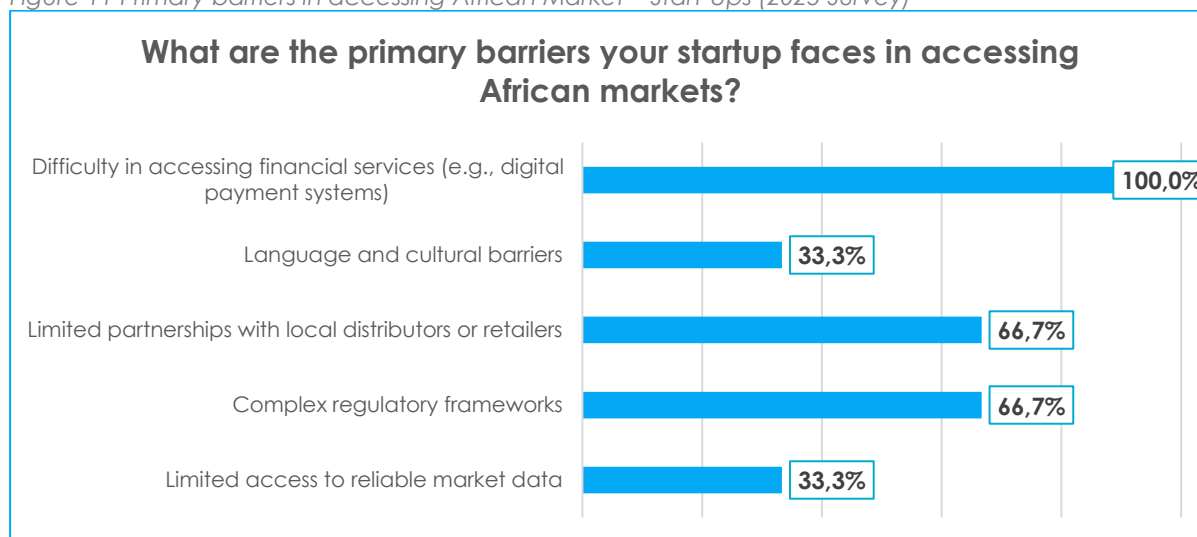
³⁵ European Commission, “A robust Innovation Ecosystem for the Future of Europe_Conference Report”, 2020 horizon-europe.gouv.fr

3.5.1 Access to finance at all stages

Many early-stage entrepreneurs, especially in Africa, rely on grants or angel investors, and there is often a “valley of death” after initial funding. Thus, improving access to finance is essential. This can involve **encouraging banks to develop startup-friendly products**. It can also be supported by **government-backed seed funds or guarantees** such as the EU’s European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) or by **connecting local start-ups to international investors**. For instance, initiatives like Boost Africa (a joint EIB-AfDB program) and AfricInvest funds are promoting African start-ups access to finance with support from development institutions.

Results from the survey indicate that start-ups and SMEs are primarily seeking basic financing mechanisms, such as access to debt or grants. These were the top financing options selected by respondents. The funding issue is critical: as shown in Figure 11, it is considered the main barrier to accessing African markets by 100% of respondents, ahead of challenges related to regulatory frameworks and limited connections with local partners.

Figure 11 Primary barriers in accessing African Market – Start-Ups (2025 Survey)



3.5.2 Skills, mentorship and capacity building

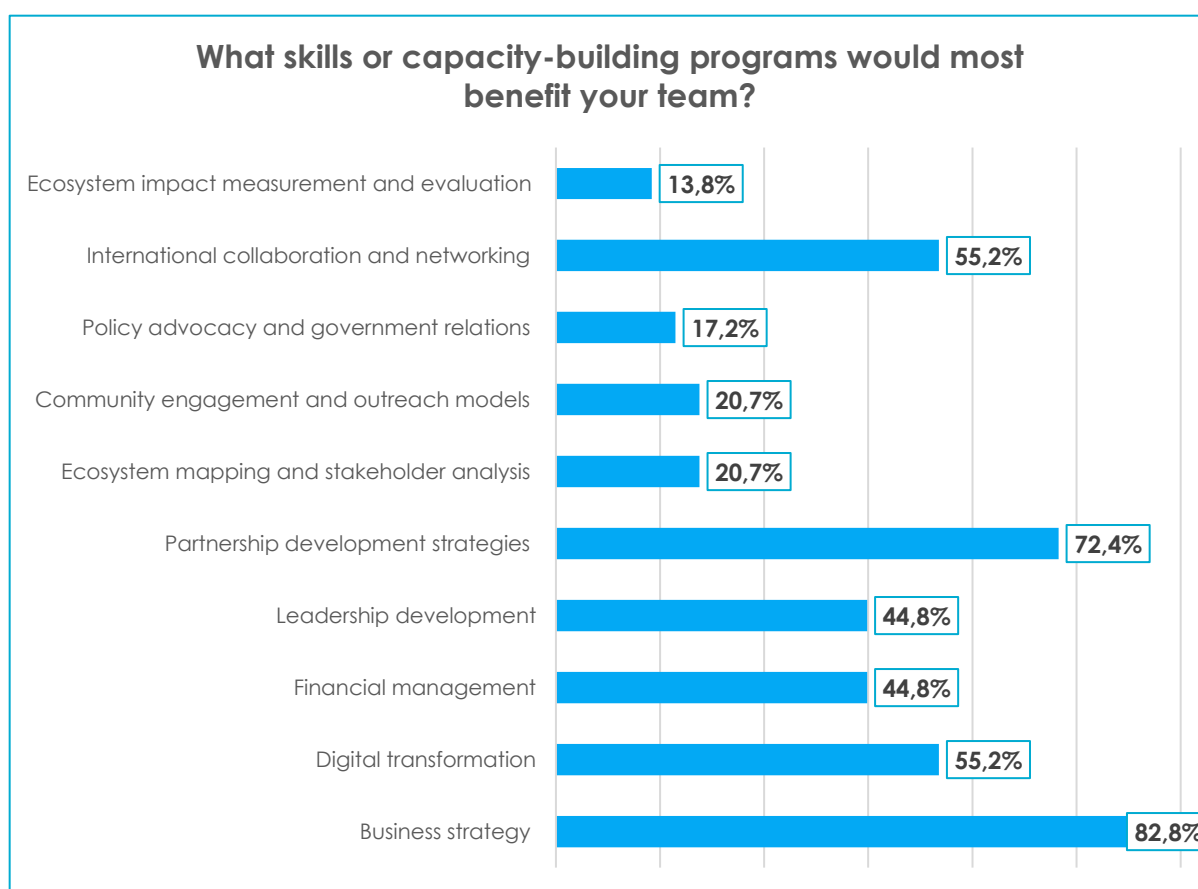
Access to **quality mentorship and training** is also a critical need for SMEs and start-ups. There is a need to educate early-stage founders about legal structures, IP protections, and international expansion strategies.³⁶ The AfriLabs AI Start-ups Mapping in Africa (2024) report highlighted the need for targeted capacity building and gender-

³⁶ Ibid

inclusive AI programs to address skills gaps and gender imbalances.³⁷ Additionally, programs that foster peer learning among entrepreneurs (e.g. start-up bootcamps, industry meetups) are essential to fill this gap.

The results from the survey highlight three main needs in terms of capacity building and skills development: 1. business strategy (selected by 82% of respondents); 2. partnership development strategy (selected by 72.4% of respondents); and 3. international collaboration and networking (selected by 55.2% of respondents).

Figure 12 Main areas of capacity building needs – Start-Ups and SMEs (2025 Survey)



3.5.3 Conducive regulatory environment

Cumbersome regulations can stifle young businesses. Common pain points include lengthy procedures to register a company, fragmented and outdated regulations, poor regulatory predictability and unclear rules³⁸. Policymakers are increasingly aware

³⁷ AFRILABS AI Startups Mapping in Africa, May 2024

³⁸ OECD (2021), *OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/97a5bbfe-en>

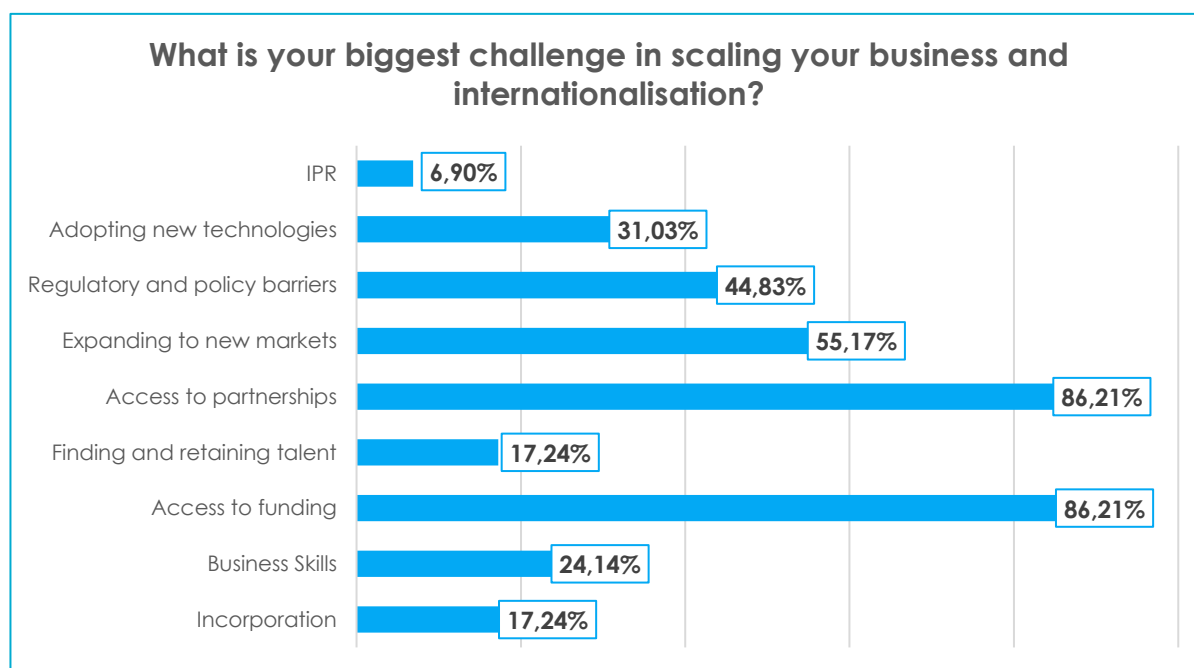
of these issues, some countries have introduced regulatory sandboxes for fintech to enhance their development such as the UK or the EU³⁹. They need to ensure regulations keep pace with innovation, protecting the public without blocking new solutions. For corporates and SMEs, consistent enforcement of regulations (like IP protection, contract law) is also important to build trust in partnerships and commerce.

As demonstrated in Figure 11 above, the second most critical issue for accessing the African market is the complex regulatory framework (selected by 66.7% of respondents), highlighting the significance of this challenge.

3.5.4 Market access and scaling opportunities

A startup's success often hinges on its ability to reach customers and scale beyond its initial geography. Both continents face internal market fragmentation: Europe has made strides with its single market, but differences in language, regulations, and business cultures remain among EU countries; Africa's 54 countries each have their own regulatory environments, and only recently the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has begun aiming to reduce barriers. Fragmented tax and regulatory regimes pose significant challenges to cross-border growth of African enterprises.⁴⁰

Figure 12 – Biggest challenges to scale and internationalise – Start-Ups and SMEs (2025 Survey)



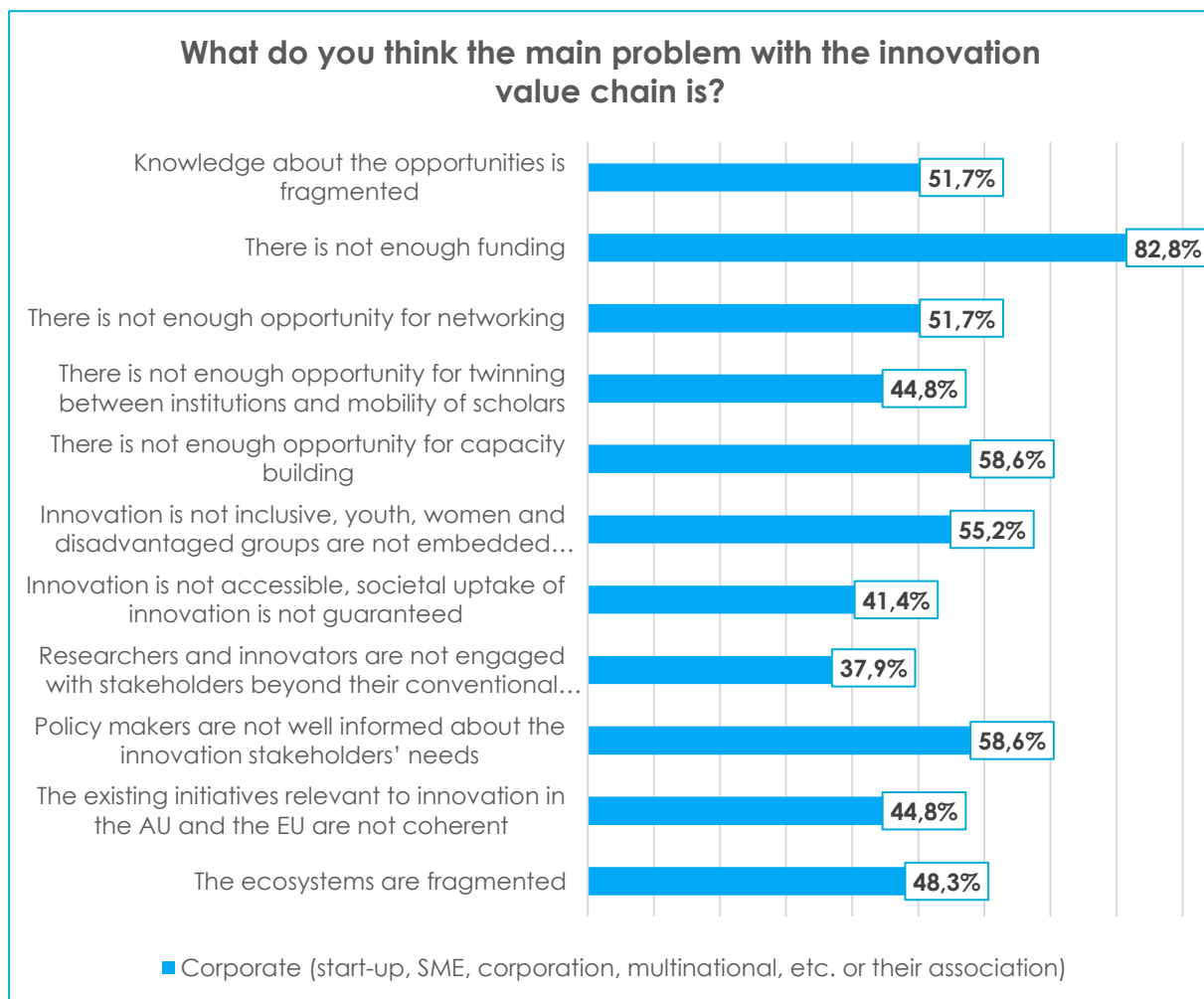
³⁹ <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/understanding-importance-regulatory-sandbox-environments-and-encouraging-their-adoption>

⁴⁰ Domiciliation Study Report – November 2024



Start-ups and SMEs need smoother pathways to expand to new regions. This challenge is particularly significant in a context where an increasing number of companies aim to access international markets. **In the survey, 93% of respondents expressed their willingness to internationalise their activities in the future.** Currently, according to survey respondents, **the main obstacles to scaling their businesses and pursuing internationalisation are access to partnerships and funding**, both cited by 68.2% of respondents. This need becomes even more pressing when considering that 55% of SMEs and start-ups who responded to the survey view expanding into new markets as the primary path to scaling their business.

Figure 13 Main issues in the innovation value chain – Start-Ups and SMEs (2025 Survey)



3.5.5 Reliable infrastructure

The desk review also underscored the critical need for reliable infrastructure, including power, internet, and other basic services, to support innovation ecosystems for African



start-ups. Persistent infrastructure gaps continue to hinder productivity, limit access to markets and networks, and slow the growth of entrepreneurial activity.⁴¹

3.5.6 Finally regarding, corporates

Corporates play a key role in innovation ecosystems, but need stronger linkages with start-ups, academia, and government, especially in Africa where such connections remain weak⁴². A major challenge is the limited number of large R&I-performing firms in Africa, underscoring the need to grow innovative corporates⁴³. In Europe, ensuring innovation adoption across traditional industries remains a priority⁴⁴.

3.5.7 Main expectations of start-ups and SMEs regarding the Platform

- **Funding opportunity notification:** According to the survey, 89,7% start-up and SMEs identified access funding opportunity notifications as a top expectation for the Platform. This highlights the critical need for centralised information on available grants, venture capital, and other financing options that can support early-stage growth and scaling efforts.
- **Partner Matching:** 79,3% of start-ups and SMEs who responded to the survey considered it as a major expectation. This underscores the importance of facilitating connections between start-ups, SMEs, corporates, investors, and research institutions to foster collaboration and growth. Effective partner matching can help overcome limited networks and resource gaps.
- **Mobility and exchange program:** 65,5% of start-ups and SMEs who participated in the survey, considered it as key expectation regarding the Platform. By enabling entrepreneurs to learn from different environments and networks, these exchanges can create partnerships and accelerate growth. Supporting mobility also helps bridge gaps between ecosystems in Africa and Europe, strengthening innovation links.
- **Capacity building:** 69% of start-ups and SMEs who participated in the survey, considered it an extremely important capacity for the Platform. As mentioned before there are strong expectations regarding business and partnership development strategies.
- **Other main expectations areas:** Start-ups and SMEs agreed in majority on three others gaps to address: developing communities of practices, knowledge sharing and repositories and strengthening digital innovation and experimentation tools.
- **Areas not considered as extremely important by the majority of respondents:** On the other hand, developing innovation analytics and insights was not considered as a priority expectation for the Platform.

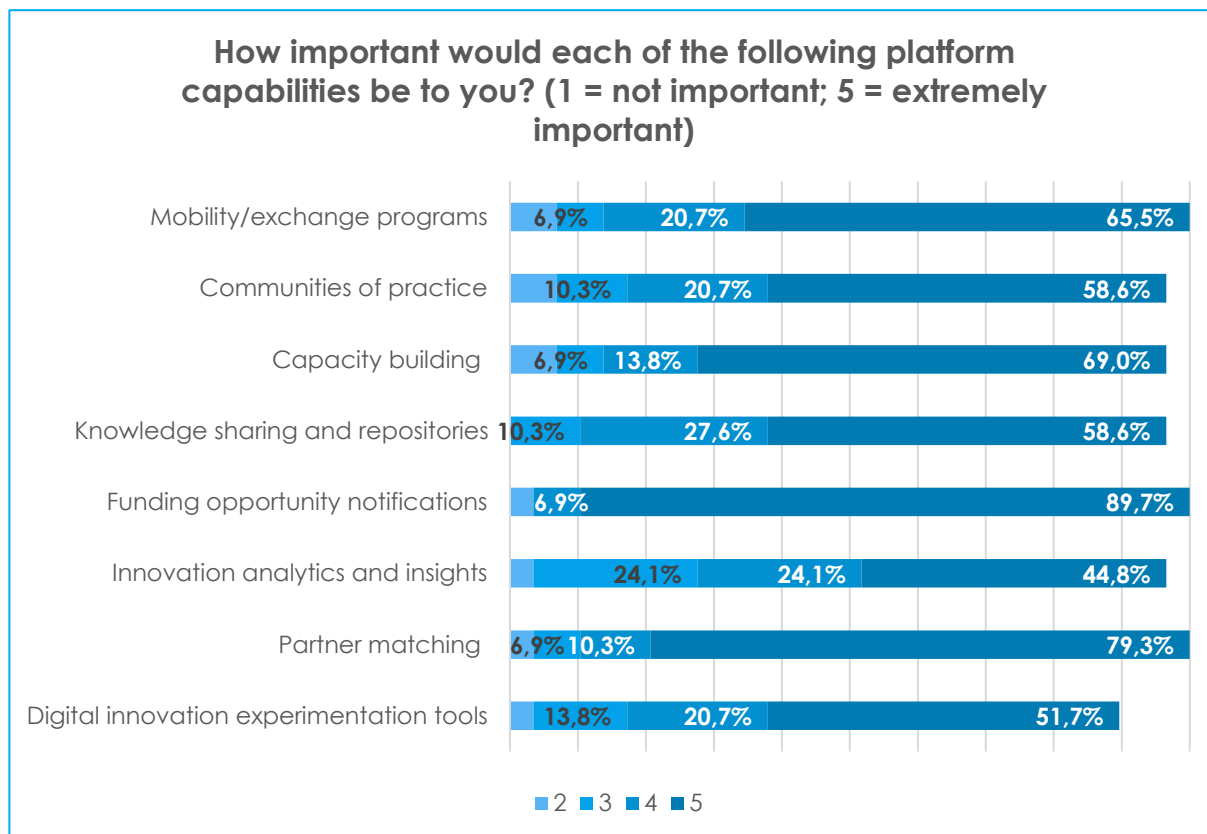
⁴¹ Afrilabs Needs Assessment Report, 2022

⁴² Comprehensive Analysis of the Start-up Ecosystem in Africa, June 2023

⁴³ https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/african_economic_outlook_aeo_2024_0.pdf

⁴⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard_en

Figure 14 Main expectations regarding the Platform capabilities – Start-Ups and SMEs (2025 Survey)



Across start-ups, SMEs, and corporates, a unifying theme is the importance of a **vibrant innovation ecosystem** where each can find their role. Start-ups need support to become the scale-ups and corporates of tomorrow; corporates need the dynamism of start-ups and breakthroughs from research to reinvent themselves.

Both continents have enormous growth potential in their innovation ecosystems. AU and EU ministers have noted the rapid expansion of these ecosystems and the opportunity this presents. By addressing the needs above (financing, market access, skills, and friendly regulation) AEIP can help these businesses innovate, grow, and create jobs, ultimately yielding the socio-economic dividends that innovation promises.

3.6 Specific needs of investors and funders

Investors and funders constitute the lifeblood that fuel innovation. This group includes private venture capital (VC firms), angel investors, impact investors, banks and microfinance institutions, as well as public and philanthropic funders (government innovation agencies, international donors, development finance institutions, etc.). Each of these players has a specific role in the ecosystem. VC firms and angels provide equity capital and mentorship in exchange for ownership stakes in start-ups. Banks provide loans or financial products to start-ups, SMEs and corporates. Public funders may offer grants or R&I subsidies. Development institutions often invest with longer-term impact objectives.

Despite growing interest, the innovation funding landscape in Africa at its early stage compared to Europe's, which itself trails the US in venture investment scale. Investors in both regions face challenges such as **finding high-quality, investment-ready ventures, assessing risk in new markets or technologies**⁴⁵, and (for private investors) **ensuring a return on investment in environments that may lack exit options**⁴⁶. The stakeholder consultations around the AU-EU Innovation Agenda recognised that boosting innovation requires improving access to finance and aligning financial instruments to innovators' needs⁴⁷.

*The survey results for investors and funders include **only 7 respondents** and therefore cannot be considered representative. Nevertheless, their responses are used in the analysis to illustrate some findings from the desk review and to identify key expectations regarding the Platform.*

The key needs and priorities for investors and funders identified at this stage include:

3.6.1 Robust deal pipeline and market information

Investors need **a steady pipeline of promising innovations to invest in**. In many African countries, investors report difficulty in finding opportunities for investment due to information gaps or ventures not yet mature for investment. The Bolstering Innovation in Africa report highlights a need for better documentation and analysis of the role hubs play in ecosystem development to inform funders.⁴⁸ Interviews with key players brought out **a need for better Platforms and forums to connect investors with start-ups/SMEs** (pitch events, investor databases, or innovation portals).

⁴⁵ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38122-doc-aio_3rd_edition_final_eng_repro.pdf

⁴⁶ Frie, N. G. A. C. (2024, 10 juillet). Stepping Up Venture Capital to Finance Innovation in Europe. IMF. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2024/07/10/Stepping-Up-Venture-Capital-to-Finance-Innovation-in-Europe-551411>

⁴⁷ [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/au-and-eu-host-successful-virtual-workshop-access-finance-innovation-2024-07-26_en#:~:text=The%20African%20Union%20\(AU\)%20and,Innovation%20Agenda%20short%2Dterm%20actions](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/au-and-eu-host-successful-virtual-workshop-access-finance-innovation-2024-07-26_en#:~:text=The%20African%20Union%20(AU)%20and,Innovation%20Agenda%20short%2Dterm%20actions)

⁴⁸ Bolstering Innovation in Africa, Oct 2021

The EU-Africa cooperation projects have started to address this by bringing African start-ups to European stages (e.g. events like VivaTech in Paris⁴⁹ or African investment summits⁵⁰) and vice versa. Additionally, improving transparency and data on market trends helps investors assess opportunities. For example, an angel investor considering a tech start-up in East Africa might benefit from market data on mobile penetration or consumer behaviour. Fundamentally, investors seek confidence that there is growth potential; thus, case studies (like those being collected by the SEADE project's call for AU-EU R&I success stories⁵¹) can inspire more investment by illustrating **paths to scale and exit** in these markets.

Among all types of respondents, 71% of the respondents in the investors stakeholder group highlighted fragmented knowledge about opportunities in the innovation value chain as the main challenge.

3.6.2 Risk mitigation and co-funding

Innovation investment is risky, particularly in emerging markets or with unproven technologies. Investors therefore need **mechanisms to mitigate risk**. This is where public funders and international financial institutions play a key role, through **blended finance models**. Instruments such as guarantees, first-loss capital, or co-investments by public funds can encourage private investors to step in. The EU's EFSD+, for example, extends guarantees to projects in Africa to stimulate private sector investment⁵².

Ensuring that local investors (African pension funds, for instance) are mobilised alongside international investors is a key challenge. Policy incentives or regulatory changes may be required to promote this kind of partnership. In Europe, where capital is more abundant, the issue is often the risk appetite. Therefore, EU programs (like the EIC Fund or InvestEU) are design to increase willingness to invest in cutting-edge or cross-border ventures through risk sharing mechanism.

3.6.3 Exit opportunities and returns

For pure private-sector venture investors, one practical need is the prospect of exit, meaning ways to realise returns on their investment. In Africa, IPOs (initial public offering) of start-ups are extremely rare and even acquisitions are just starting to pick up (often by larger foreign firms)⁵³. Stakeholders interviewed have highlighted that **developing local capital markets and encouraging corporate acquisitions of start-ups** would improve this situation.

In Europe, while there are established stock exchanges and active mergers & acquisitions, there is an ongoing conversation about how to retain successful start-ups

⁴⁹ Vivatechnology. (s. d.). Strengthening the international Ecosystem. <https://vivatechnology.com/Ecosystem2024>

⁵⁰ Invest in Africa Summit 2025. (s. d.). <https://www.investinafricasummit.com/>

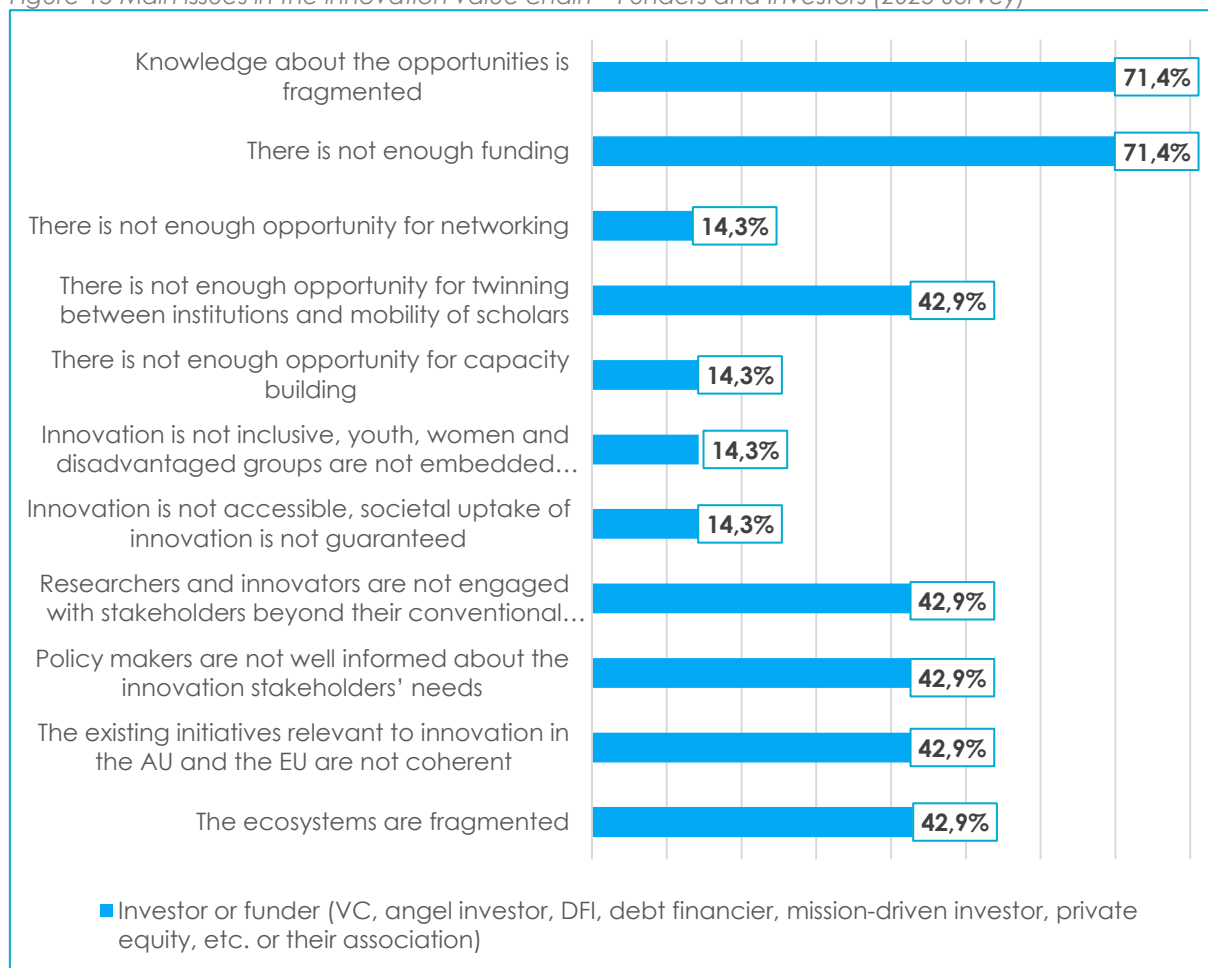
⁵¹ seade-project.eu

⁵² research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu

⁵³ Briter. (s. d.). Briter Resource Hub : reports, articles and company profiles from emerging markets. <https://www.briter.co/insights>

(scale-ups) in Europe. Policymakers can influence this by competition policies and by fostering thriving environments⁵⁴.

Figure 15 Main issues in the innovation value chain – Funders and Investors (2025 Survey)



3.6.4 Clear policies and investment climate

A **predictable and investor-friendly business climate** is critical. Investors, especially foreign ones, need assurance that contracts will be respected, that they can repatriate profits, and that regulatory changes won't undermine their investments. Improvements in ease of doing business, such as strong legal frameworks, dispute

⁵⁴ Choose Europe for your startup and scaleup. (2025, 28 mai). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/news-and-media/news/choose-europe-your-startup-and-scaleup-2025-05-28_en

resolution, and protection of minority investors benefit both domestic and international funders.

Many African countries have been reforming in this direction, but progress is uneven. At a continental level, African Union initiatives under Agenda 2063 call for enhancing the business environment to attract investment in innovation sectors⁵⁵. The EU's Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package also emphasises regulatory reforms to make investment in Africa more attractive⁵⁶. Furthermore, harmonising regulations across countries ease regional and continental investments.

3.6.5 Social and environmental impact alignment

A growing number of investors (impact investors, climate funders, etc.) seek not just financial return but also positive social or environmental impact. These funders need **pipelines of social innovations and inclusive businesses to support**⁵⁷. Notably, several EU-Africa innovation programs target areas like health and green transition explicitly, marrying innovation with impact (e.g. the EU's Africa Health Research programs, or joint initiatives on climate-smart agriculture R&I). Investors in these areas often collaborate with public programs (like grant + investment hybrids).

3.6.6 Main expectations of funders and investors regarding the Platform

- **Funding opportunity notification:** According to the survey, 85,6% of funders and investors identified access funding opportunity notifications as a top expectation for the Platform. For this kind of actors, access to information is crucial to identify prospects and investment opportunities in emerging sectors
- **Partner Matching:** 57,1% of funders and investors who responded to the survey considered it as a major expectation. This reflects the importance of building strong networks and partnerships to identify high-potential investment opportunities and co-investors. In fragmented and emerging innovation ecosystems, particularly in Africa, finding trustworthy local partners, scaling ventures across markets, and accessing sector-specific expertise are all critical to de-risking investments and enabling growth.
- **Knowledge sharing and repositories:** 57,1% of funders and investors who participated in the survey, considered it as key expectation regarding the Platform. This highlights the crucial role of access to reliable, structured information in supporting investment decisions. Investors often face fragmented or incomplete knowledge about emerging sectors, innovative companies, and local market dynamics — particularly in cross-continental contexts like AU-EU cooperation.

⁵⁵ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36204-doc-agenda2063_popular_version_fr.pdf

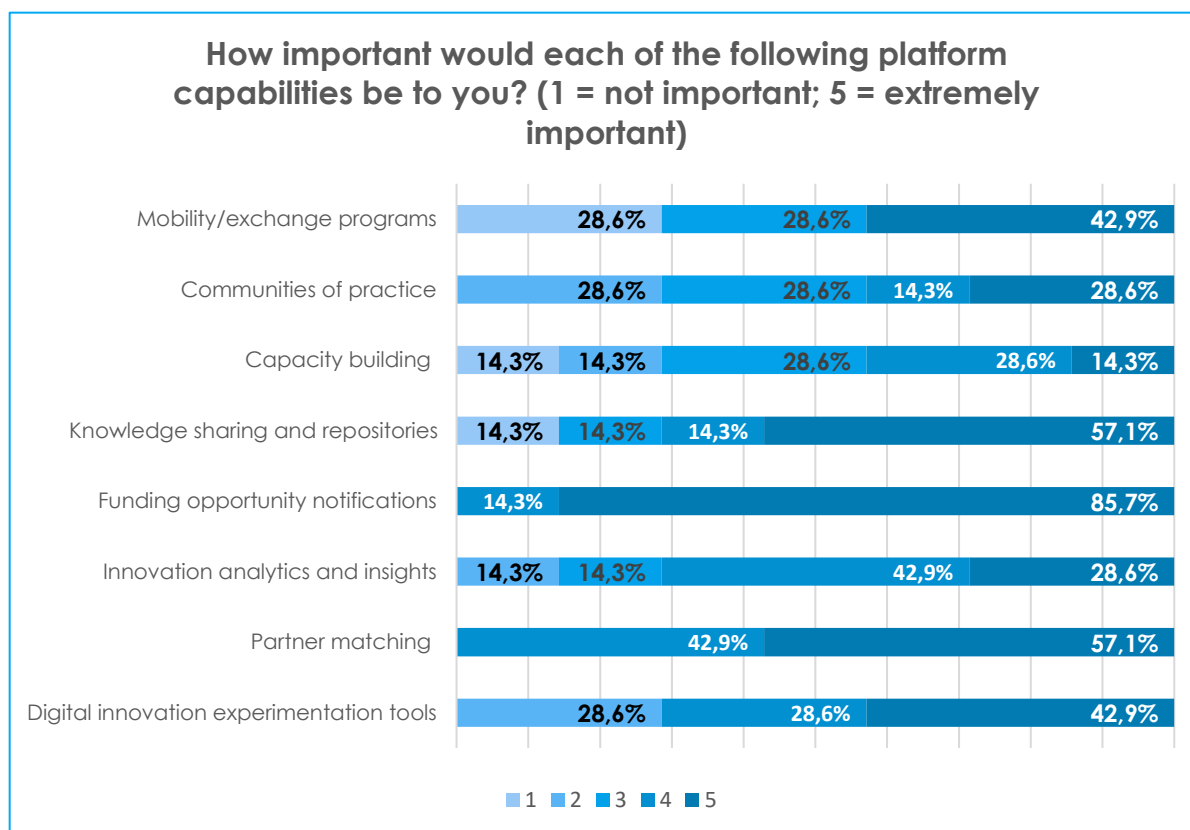
⁵⁶ research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu

⁵⁷ OECD (2025), *Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development 2025: Towards a More Resilient and Inclusive Architecture*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/753d5368-en>



- **Other areas of expectations:** While not ranked as top priorities, areas such as digital innovation and experimentation tools, mobility and exchange programmes, and innovation analytics and insights still hold potential value for funders and investors.
- **Areas not considered as extremely important by the majority of respondent:** On the other hand, community of practice and capacity building are not strong expectations of funders and investors regarding the Platform.

Figure 16 Main expectations regarding the Platform capabilities – Investors and Funders (2025 Survey)



In summary, investors and funders need **confidence and partnership** to deploy capital into innovation. By strengthening the support infrastructure (accelerators, fund guarantees, information Platforms) and improving the investment climate, policymakers can help unlock more financing for innovation. This, in turn, closes the loop with other stakeholders: with more smart money available, start-ups and researchers can accelerate development, and the whole ecosystem becomes more attractive and self-sustaining.

3.7 Specific needs of civil society

Civil society encompasses non-profit organizations, community groups, end-users, and the general public. It is an underappreciated stakeholder group in innovation ecosystems. **Its role is crucial in ensuring that innovation is inclusive, needs-driven, and widely adopted.** Civil society organizations (CSOs) often act as intermediaries between technology and communities, driving social innovation at the grassroots level (for example, an NGO developing a low-cost water purification tech for rural areas) or advocating for citizen interests (such as privacy defenders in tech deployment). Moreover, end-users themselves, whether they are farmers using a new app or patients benefiting from a medical innovation, **ultimately determine the real-world impact of innovation.**

Both Europe and Africa have embraced the concept of the “quadruple helix” of innovation, which explicitly includes civil society alongside government, industry, and academia as a pillar of the ecosystem. The AU-EU Innovation Agenda underscores empowering communities and involving citizens (e.g. through citizen science) as an objective to strengthen innovation’s societal impact.

*The results of the survey informing the needs assessment for civil society do not really cover Europe, as **93% of respondents are from African countries.** It is also important to note that all respondents are members of civil society organizations such as development institution (73%); community-based organization (11,5%); Charity and humanitarian organization (11,5%) and advocacy organization (3,8%).*

The key needs and priorities for civil society organizations identified at this stage include:

3.7.1 Inclusive participation in innovation processes

Civil society needs **formal avenues to contribute to innovation agendas and projects.** This means involving CSOs and community representatives in the design, implementation, and evaluation of R&I initiatives.⁵⁸ When policies and programs are crafted, including voices from civil society leads to more relevant solutions.

A recommendation from the Africa-Europe expert consultation is to support the participation of civil society in **co-designing R&I policies and programs**, ensuring the research agenda reflects on-the-ground needs. For example, in health innovation, patient groups can highlight unmet needs or practical constraints that researchers might overlook. In agricultural innovation, smallholder farmer associations can provide insight on what kind of innovation is fitted to field realities. Policymakers should facilitate such consultations regularly. Multi-stakeholder Platforms, such as the planned

⁵⁸ Updates & Next Steps on Mapping of Projects on AU-EU R&I Partnership in FNSSA

AU-EU Innovation Platform, can institutionalise dialogue between civil society and other actors.

Responses from the survey also highlight the **need for more inclusive policies and consultations**, with 59% of respondents considering both the lack of inclusiveness in innovation, particularly for disadvantaged groups such as youth and women, and the lack of understanding of the innovation landscape by policymakers as key issues.

3.7.2 Capacity and empowerment

Not all communities or NGOs are immediately ready to engage with high-tech innovation. There is **a need to build capacity so that civil society can be an effective partner**. This includes digital literacy programs for the general public, training for CSOs on understanding new technologies and resources for social entrepreneurs.

In Africa, where a large portion of the population is youth, empowering youth-led civil society initiatives and social enterprises is particularly crucial. The AU's focus on leveraging the demographic dividend by empowering youth in innovation speaks to this⁵⁹. As some interviewees emphasised on, practical support might include small grants for grassroots innovation projects, incubation programs for social enterprises, or recognition awards for innovations that come from community-driven efforts.

Europe likewise emphasises citizen engagement, for instance, through funding schemes for **citizen science**, where people participate in gathering data or co-creating solutions on issues ranging from environmental monitoring to public health⁶⁰. These efforts need to be scaled and supported. 59% of CSOs responding to the survey identified the lack of capacity building as one of the main pain points in the innovation value chain.

3.7.3 Ethical and social safeguards

Civil society also serves as a watchdog and conscience in the innovation ecosystem. Their needs include **mechanisms to ensure that innovations are developed and deployed ethically and equitably**. This could involve frameworks for community consent and input, especially when testing new solutions in vulnerable communities. It also means having recourse if innovations have negative side effects. The European discourse on Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)⁶¹ reinforce that the public's values and needs must guide innovation. Therefore, integrating social impact assessment and ethical reviews with civil society participation is important for building trust.

⁵⁹ African Union Commission. *African Youth Charter*. Adopted in 2006.

⁶⁰ European Commission, Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 — Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area.

⁶¹ Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in support of sustainability and governance, taking account of the international context, CORDIS, European Commission. https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/H2020_SwafS-23-2017

3.7.4 Last-mile deployment and adoption

A brilliant innovation has little value if it never reaches the people who need it. **Civil society groups are central actors in the “last mile” delivery and can be partners in scaling out innovations on the ground.** For instance, a tech solution for education may require NGOs to train teachers in remote areas; a new agricultural innovation might spread faster via farmer cooperatives and extension networks⁶².

However, for civil society to play this role, they need to be aware of new innovations and have the capacity to implement or educate others about them. Bridging the gap between labs/start-ups and communities is thus a need, that can be met by creating **stronger links between innovators and non-profits.** Funding streams that encourage such partnerships (e.g. innovation prizes that require a tech developer and an NGO team) could be expanded. The benefit is twofold: communities gain access to solutions, and innovators gain real-world validation.

This need for stronger collaboration between CSO and innovators is also underscored in the survey with 55% of CSOs respondent considering the lack of networking as key issue in the innovation value chain.

3.7.5 Addressing societal challenges through innovation

Civil society is directly concerned with pressing societal challenges such as poverty reduction, health, education, equality, climate resilience. They need the innovation ecosystem to focus on these **mission-driven challenges** and not just on commercial opportunity. There is sometimes a gap in market-driven innovation addressing issues that primarily affect low-income or marginalised groups.

Public and philanthropic funders have a role in steering innovation towards these areas (through challenge grants, etc.), but civil society also needs to continue advocating and partnering to ensure, for example, that innovation in agriculture benefits small farmers, or that fintech innovation includes products for the unbanked, etc. When the innovation stakeholders align with civil society goals, the impact can be powerful⁶³.

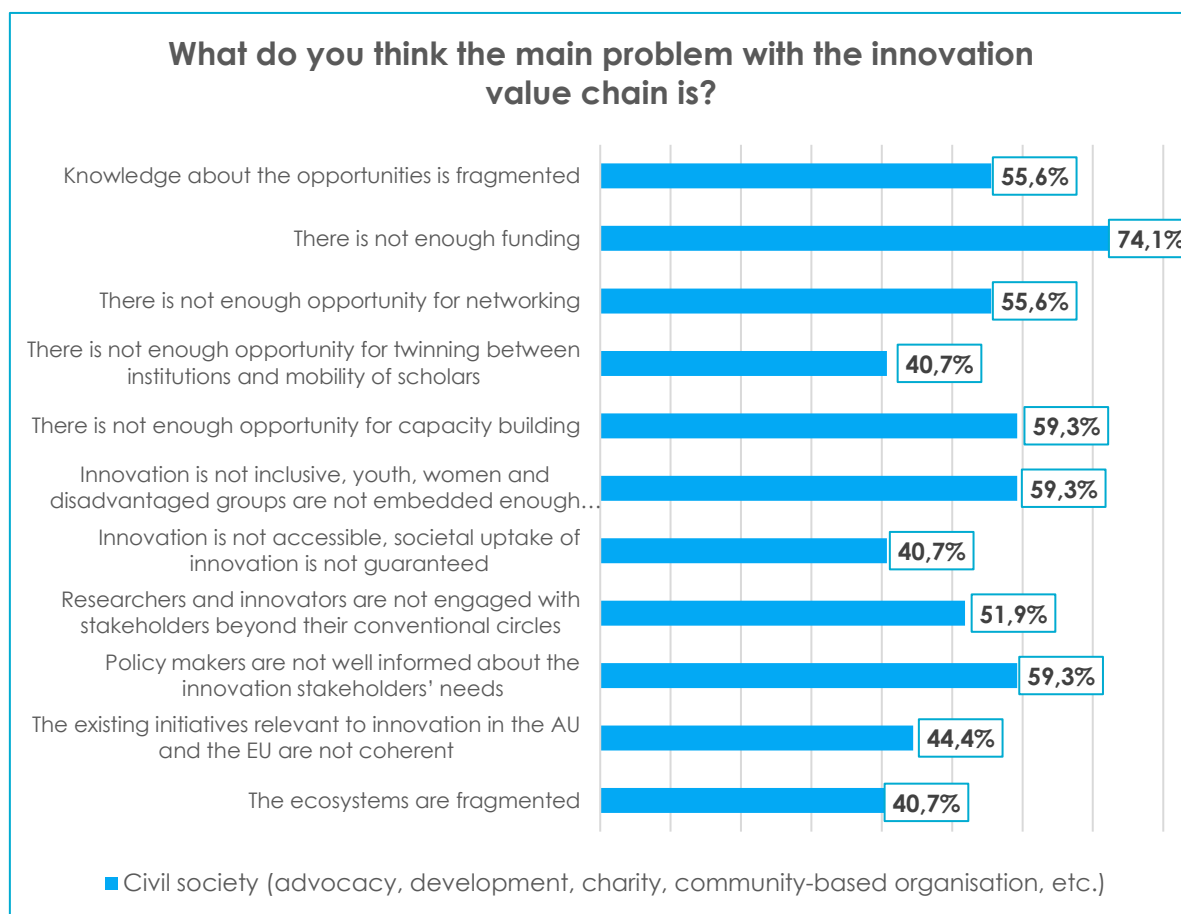
Developing this kind of collaborative initiative can enhance the response to social issues, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic when civil society innovation stepped up where needed: universities and maker communities produced masks and ventilators, start-ups developed contact-tracing apps, and NGOs helped with distribution⁶⁴.

⁶² United Nations. (2024, 13 mars). Human Development Report 2023-24. Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2023-24>

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ OECD (2021), The Role of Civil Society in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Figure 17 Main issues on the innovation value chain – CSOs (2025 Survey)



3.7.6 Main expectations of CSOs regarding the Platform

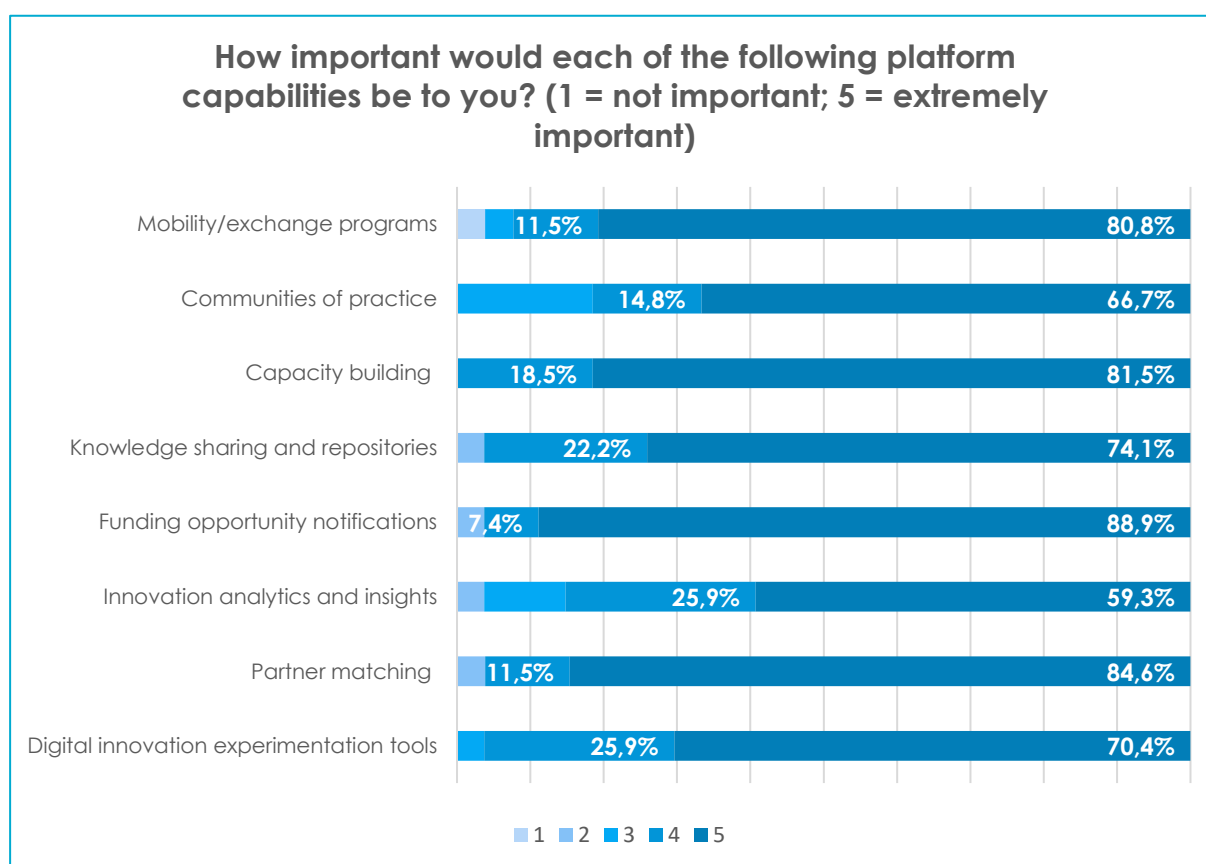
- **Funding opportunity notification:** According to the survey, 88,9% of CSOs identified access funding opportunity notifications as a top expectation for the Platform. This reflects the reality of many CSOs, which operates with limited financial reserves and heavily rely on external funding. Moreover, funding opportunities are often hard to identify, particularly for local CSOs, less connected to international networks.
- **Partner Matching:** 84,6% of CSOs who responded to the survey considered it as a major expectation. Many CSOs face challenges connecting with the right stakeholders which can limit their contribution to the innovation value chain. A Platform that facilitates partner matching can help overcome these barriers by connecting CSOs with right person.
- **Capacity building:** 81% of CSOs who participated in the survey considered it as extremely important. This underscores the critical need for continuous skill development and knowledge enhancement to enable civil society organizations to engage in innovation processes. According to the survey, the main area in



which CSOs request training are: how to respond to call for grants, project management and general knowledge about the innovation ecosystem.

- **Mobility and exchange programs:** 80,8% of CSOs who participated in the survey, considered it as key expectation regarding the Platform. Such initiatives enable CSOs to learn from best practices, adopt innovative approaches, and build networks. In transnational partnerships, especially between Africa and Europe, it can help help geographic and cultural gaps, enhancing mutual understanding.
- **Other areas of expectations:** More than 50% of CSOs considered all proposed Platform capabilities as extremely important, reflecting a broad and general need for comprehensive support and tools for this stakeholder group.

Figure 18 Main expectations regarding the Platform capabilities – CSOs (2025 Survey)



Civil society ensures that innovation ecosystems remain **human-focused and equitable**. Their inclusion and empowerment is a necessity for innovations to truly deliver sustainable development.



4 Conclusions

Through a comprehensive needs assessment, the AEIP Consortium strived to identify key challenges and opportunities faced by the main stakeholders of the innovation value chain in Africa and Europe.

The **lack of funding** emerged as a critical issue across all stakeholder groups, underscoring the necessity for increased investment and more tailored financial instruments. Additionally, there is a major need for **enhanced networking and collaboration mechanisms**. Stakeholders often operate in silos, which limits the potential for co-creation and the development of innovations that truly respond to community needs. On their side, policy makers need to develop **more supportive policy frameworks**, to align with the rapid pace of technological advancements.

Building local capacities and retaining talent also emerged as crucial for sustaining innovation ecosystems. This includes not only technical skills but also entrepreneurial and policy-related skills. **Reliable infrastructure** and better market access are essential for start-ups and SMEs to scale. This involves both physical infrastructure, such as reliable power and internet, and research infrastructure, such as regulatory frameworks that support business growth.

To address these challenges, the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform will focus its attention on **enhancing access to information** regarding funding opportunities and **strengthening networks and partnerships** through Platforms that facilitate connections between all stakeholder groups. Prioritising mobility and exchange programs, and partnerships that facilitate **knowledge transfer and skill development**, also emerged as major expectations regarding the Platform. The **involvement of policymakers in the Platform's activities** will be crucial in order to improve dialogue with stakeholders and ensure that policies are grounded in real-world needs.

The AEIP is set out to foster a collaborative environment where stakeholders can thrive. By continuously engaging with stakeholders and designing activities that answer their needs, the Platform can play a key role in supporting innovation. The efforts to build a dynamic and inclusive innovation ecosystem is ongoing, and the AEIP is committed to contribute.



5 Annexes

5.1 Bibliography

The desk review was based on the following openly available studies that have been exploited.

#	Title	Authors or Publisher	Date
1	A Maturity Model for Software Start-up Ecosystems	Daniel Cukier, Fabio Kon University of São Paulo	2018
2	Africa Tech Venture Capital Report	Partech	2023
3	AI for Inclusive Development in Africa	Deloitte	2024
4	AI Start-ups Mapping in Africa	AfriLabs	2024
5	AU-EU Innovation Agenda	AU-EU Partnership	2023
6	Bolstering Innovation in Africa	AfriLabs	2021
7	Comprehensive Analysis of the Start-up Ecosystem in Africa	Mozilla Corporation, AUDA-NEPAD	2023
8	Digitalisation and the Africa We Want: Introducing the GSMA Digital Africa Index	GSMA	2024
9	Digital Entrepreneurship in Africa	UNDP	2023
10	EIB Investment Report 2024/2025: Innovation, integration and simplification in Europe	EIB	2025
11	EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda 2022-2024	EIT Digital	2022
12	Ethical Horizons - AI Policy	AfriLabs	2024
13	EU-Africa PerMed Personalised Medicine Stakeholder Mapping Report	EU-Africa PerMed	2021
14	European SME Expertise in 5G and beyond	NetWorld2020 SME Working Group	2021
15	EU-AU R&I Partnership on FNSSA: investment strategies and measures identification	European Commission	2022
16	Gaps and needs of the innovation ecosystem in Africa	AEDIB NET	2022
17	Global Skills Report 2024	Coursera	2024
18	Google for Start-ups Black Founders Fund Report	Google	2024
19	Guide sur les Incubateurs et Accélérateurs au Service des Entrepreneurs en Côte d'Ivoire	GIZ	2021
20	Innovation for Transformation - Kenya Innovation Outlook 2023	Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA)	2023
21	Mapping and Research Instruments	ENHANCERIA Consortium	2024
22	Mapping of Relevant Stakeholders	BIC Africa	2023
23	Mapping of SEI Ecosystems at Enhance Universities	ENHANCERIA Consortium	2022
24	Mapping the Innovation Ecosystem in Kenya	UNDP	2022
25	Mapping Youth-led & Youth serving Organizations and Networks in Africa	The Youth Café	2024
26	Mapping Youth Climate Change Networks/ Organisation in Kenya	Ministry of Environment, Kenya	2023



27	Meet the Toshikas - South Africa Start-up Ecosystem Map	UNDP	2024
28	Needs Assessment Report	AfriLabs	2022
29	Private Financing of Innovation in the EU	European Parliamentary Research Service	2025
30	Recommendations on R&I for Sustainable Development in AU-EU Relations	European Commission	2022
31	Reimagining Economic Growth in Africa - Turning Diversity into Opportunity	McKinsey Global Institute	2023
32	Report of the Civil Society Forum - Engaging Civil Society in Accelerating Africa's Industrialization	AfDB	2018
33	Research and Innovation - Horizon Europe Policies	European Commission	2023
34	Science, Technology and Innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa: harnessing the potential towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals	JRC Technical Report	2024
35	Second National IP and TT Survey 2014-2018	SARIMA	2014
36	Second South African National IP & Technology Transfer Survey	NDP South Africa	2021
37	South Africa University Innovation Ecosystem Mapping Final Report	OXENTIA	2022
38	South African science, technology and innovation institutional landscape	NDP South Africa	2017
39	Stakeholder Mapping, the Case of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.	UNOPS	2022
40	Stakeholder Mapping in the AI Ecosystems of Nigeria	Paradigm Initiative	2021
41	Start-up Support in Africa	Digital Africa & Sendemo	2024
42	State of Tech in Africa Report 2025	Partech Africa	2025
43	State of Tech in Africa Report 2023	Partech Africa	2023
44	Study on Africa as a Jurisdiction for Domiciliation of Investment Vehicles	MEDA, Momentus Global, Samawati Capital Partners, Stafford Law	2024
45	Tech Hubs in Africa - Accelerating Start-ups for Resilient Growth (3rd Edition)	AfriLabs	2024
46	The African Innovation Outlook	AUDA-NEPAD	2024
47	The African Tech Start-ups Funding Report	Disrupt Africa	2023
48	The Future of European Competitiveness - A Competitiveness Strategy for Europe	European Commission	2024
49	The Mapping of Public and Business Support Organisations in Biotrade in South Africa	The ABS Initiative	2020
50	The Roadmap for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda	AU-EU Partnership	2023
51	The Role of Civil Society Organisations in European Responsible Research and Innovation	Petra Ahrweiler, Nigel Gilbert, Benjamin Schrempf, Barbara Grimpe, Marina Jirotko	2018
52	Timbuktoo Africa Start-up Revolution Report	UNDP Timbuktoo	2024
53	Updates & Next Steps on Mapping of Projects on AU-EU R&I Partnership in FNSSA	AU-EU FNSSA Partnership	2025
54	Youth-Organization's Ecosystem Strengthening for Regional Development	The Youth Café	2023



5.2 Additional data from the survey

5.2.1 Respondent to the survey characteristics

Figure 19 In which continent is your entity headquartered?

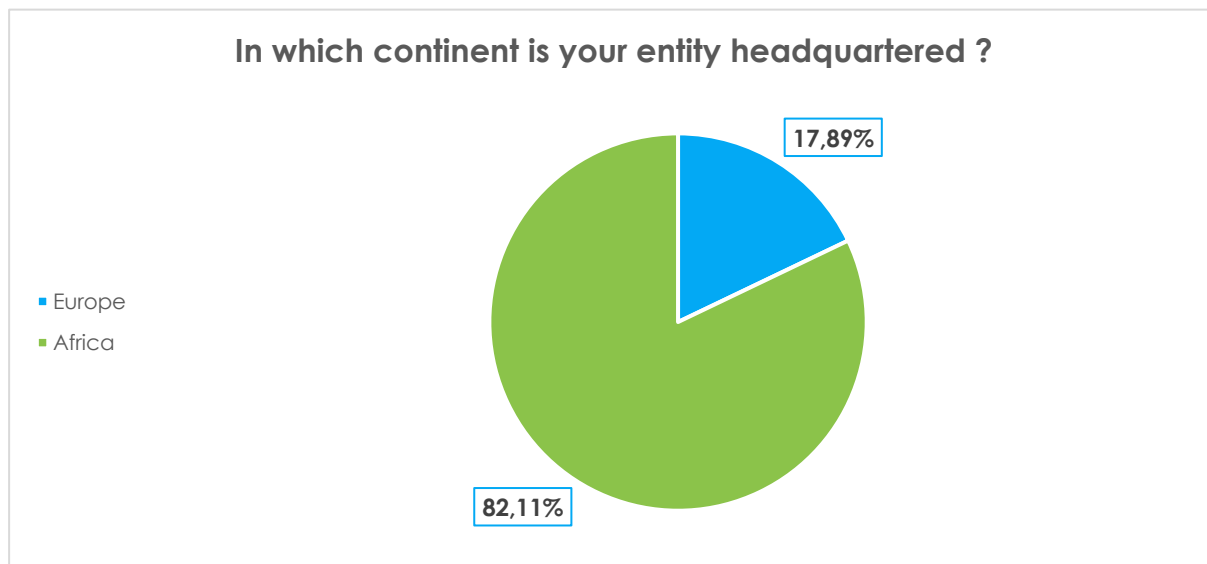


Figure 20 Which stakeholder group does your entity belong to?

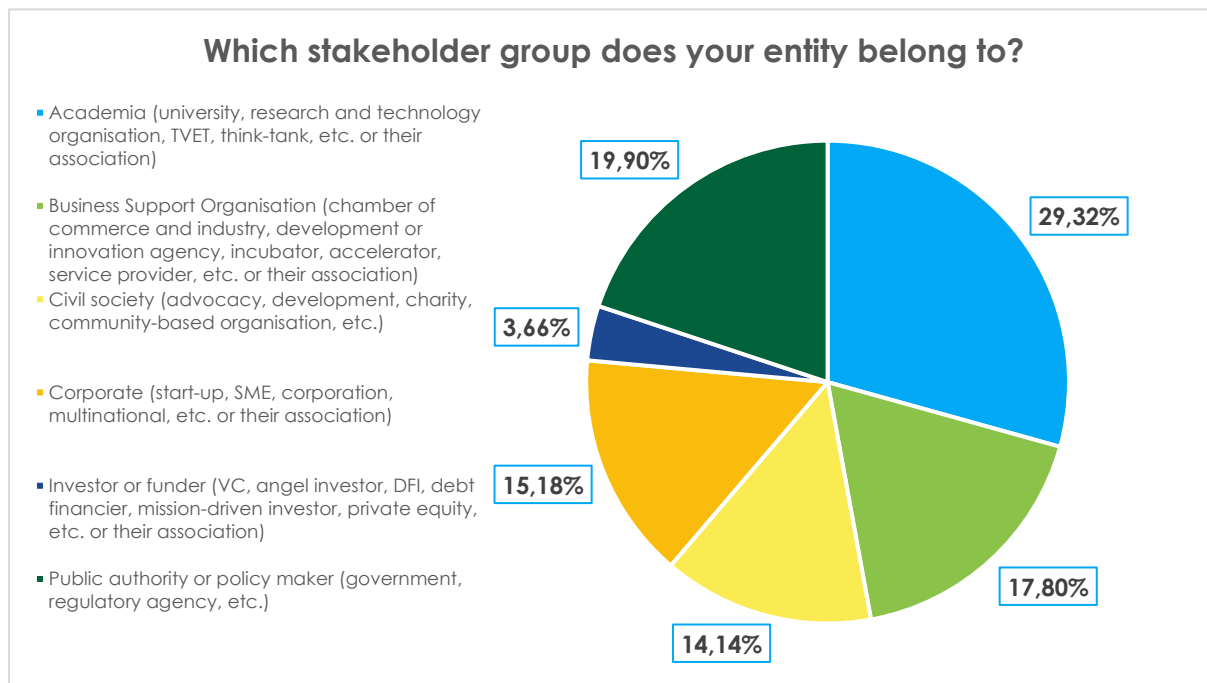
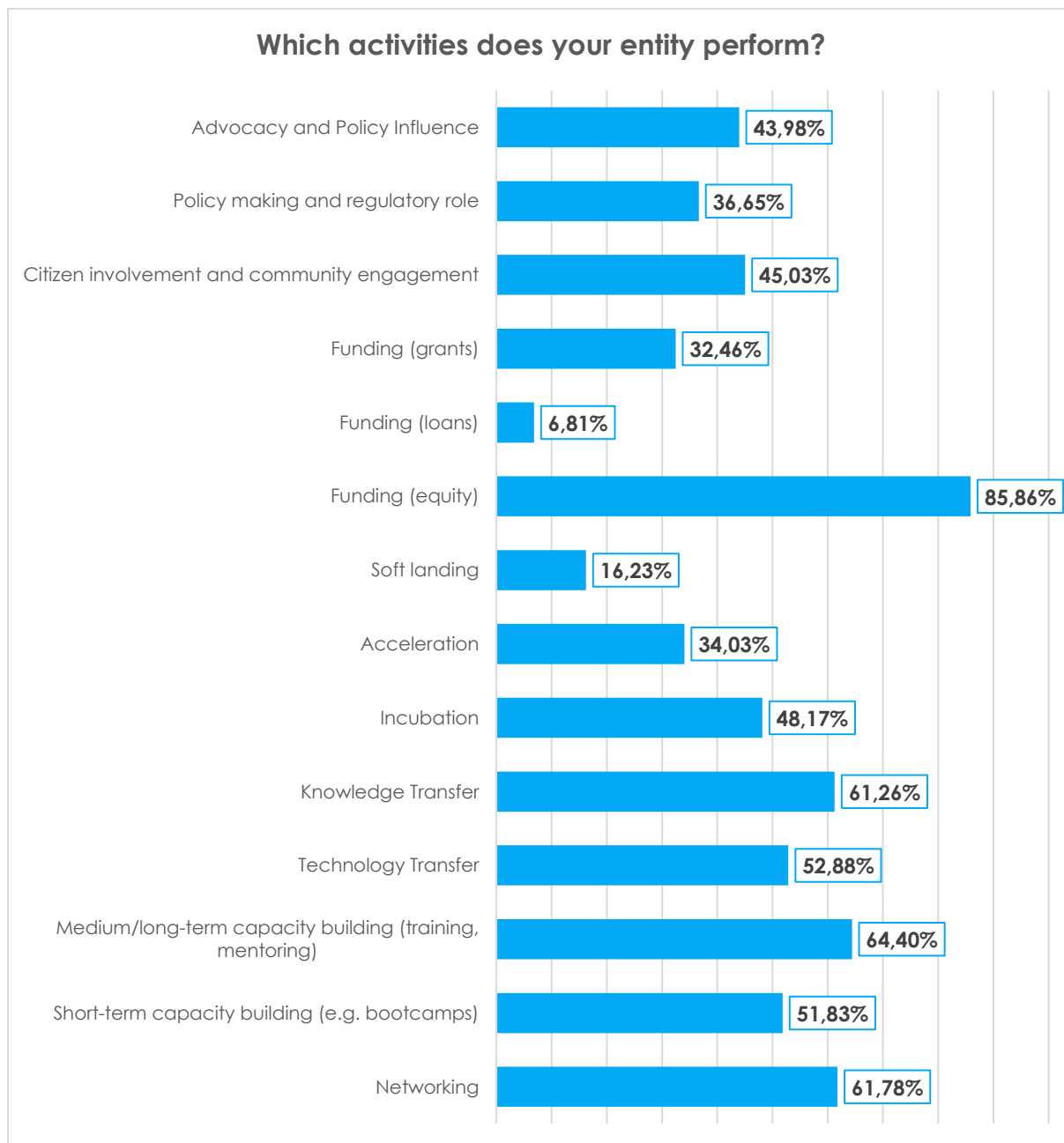




Figure 21 Which activities does your entity perform?





5.2.2 Stakeholder expectations regarding the Platform and complementary figures

Figure 22 Would you be interested in participating in the following activities?

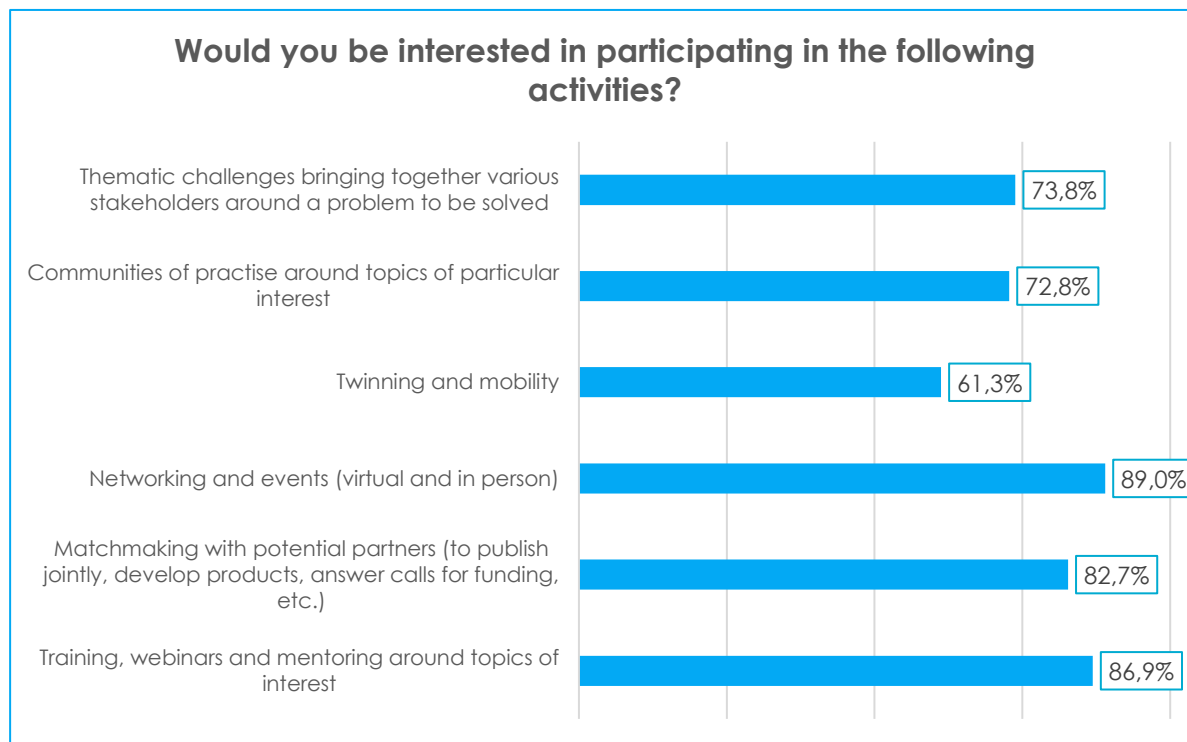


Figure 23 Which stakeholder groups would you like to have more engagement with?

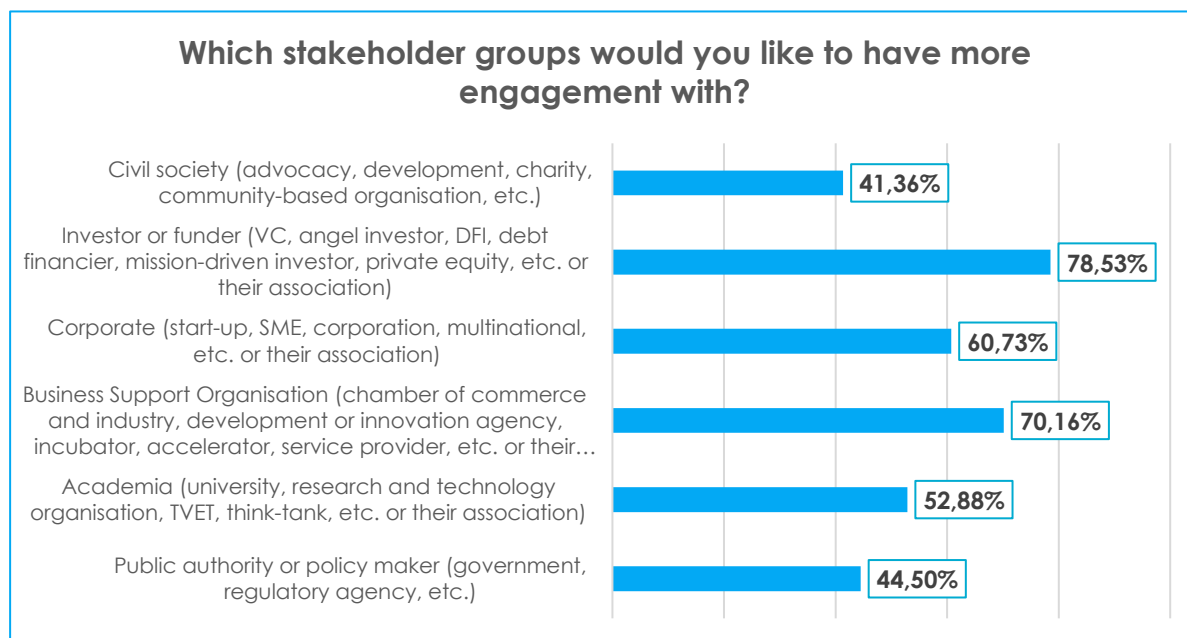




Figure 24 What training topics are you interested in?

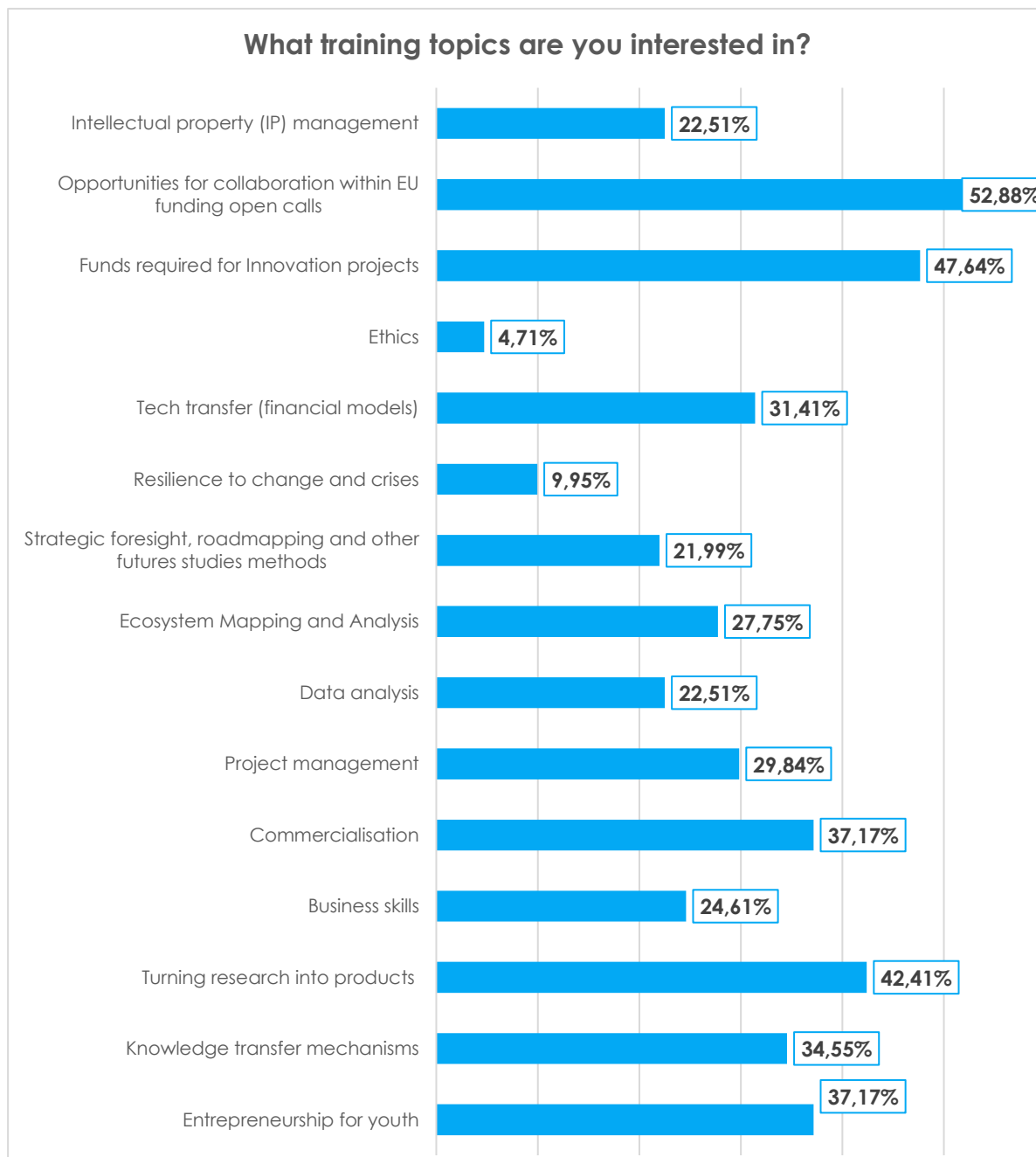




Figure 25 What R&I topics would you be interested in exploring in a Community of Practise?

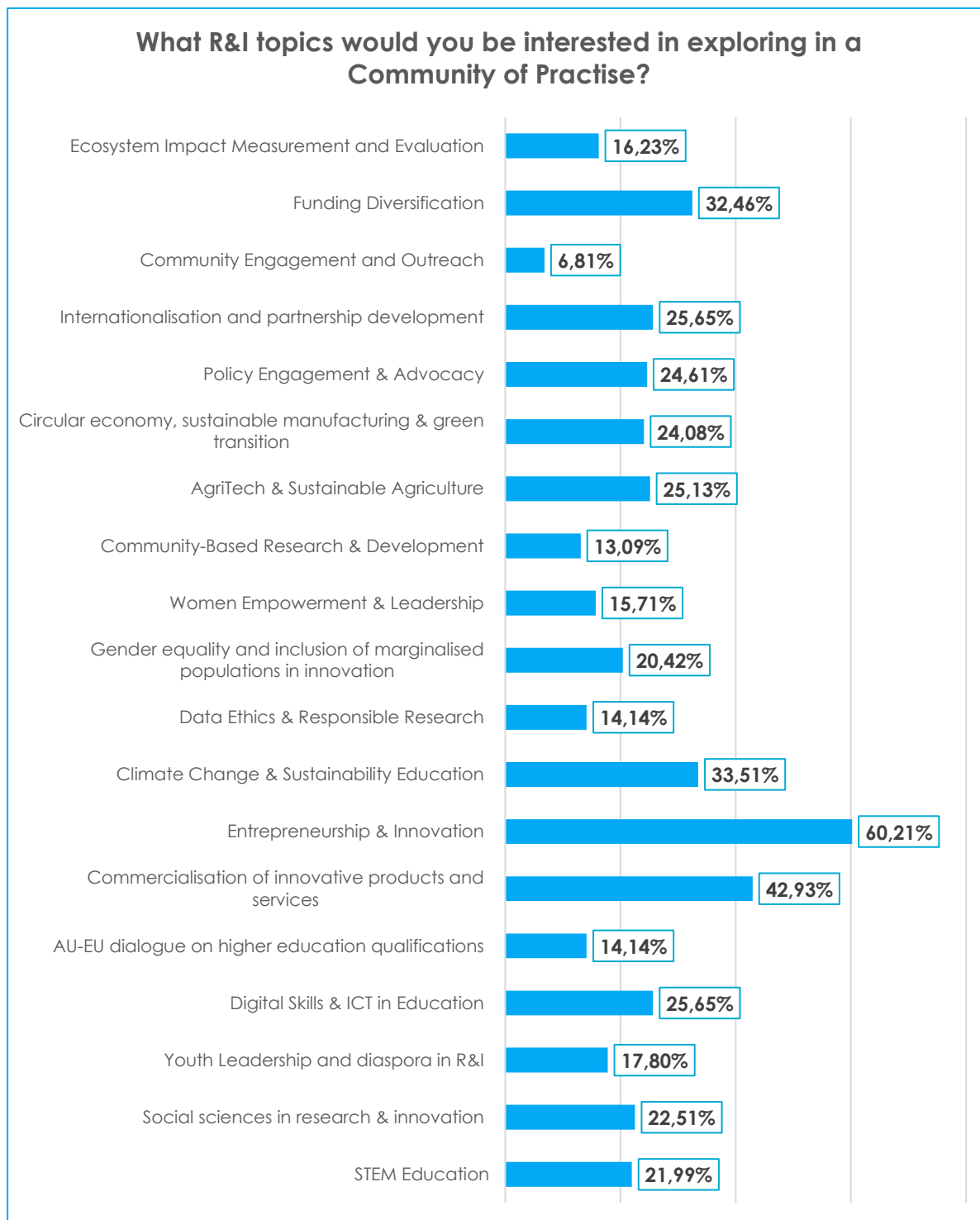




Figure 26 Do you have a good knowledge of existing AU or EU initiatives in the field of innovation?

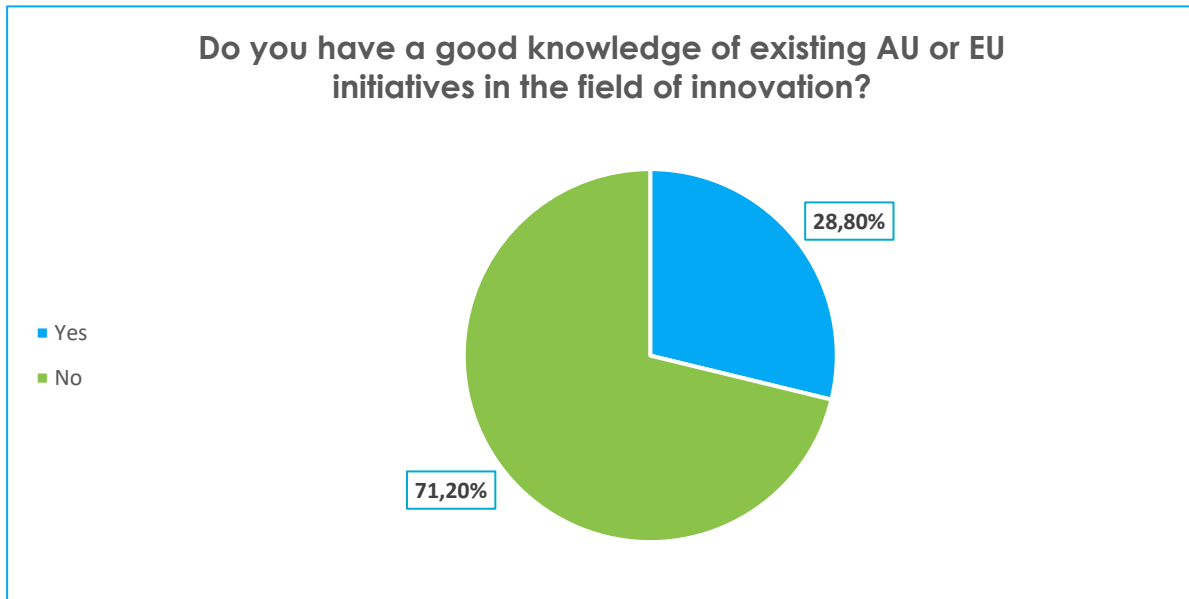


Figure 27 Main limitations of the existing Platforms

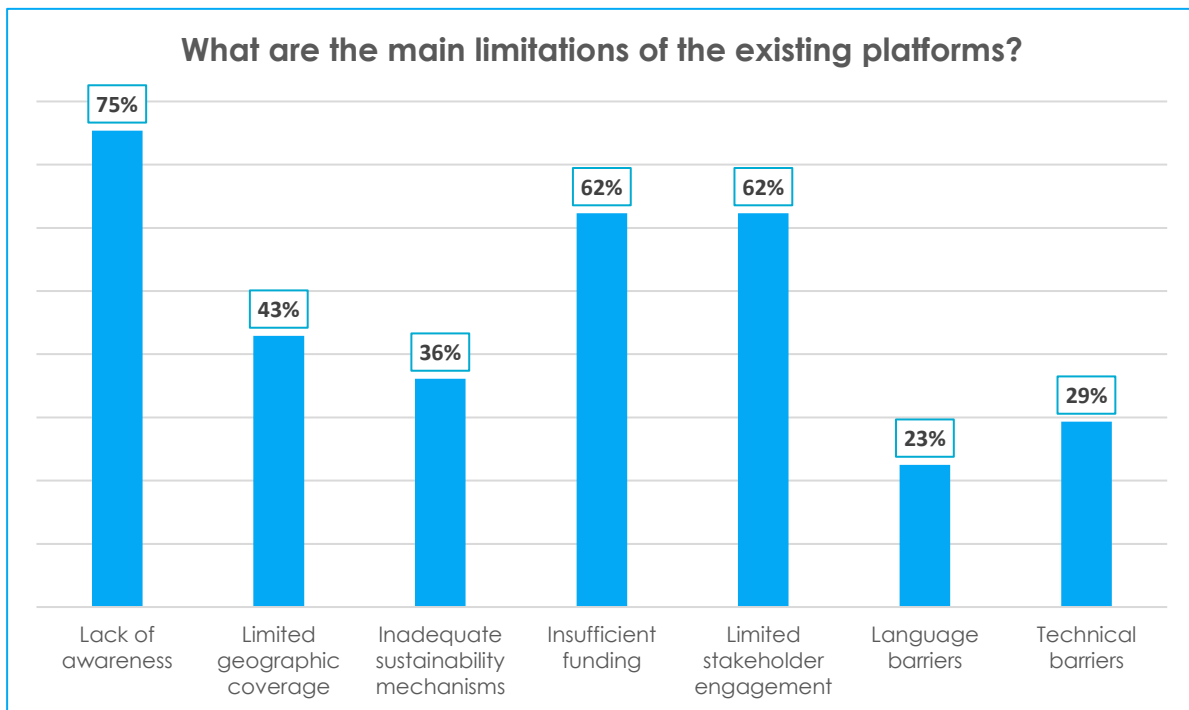




Figure 28 What are their positive features?

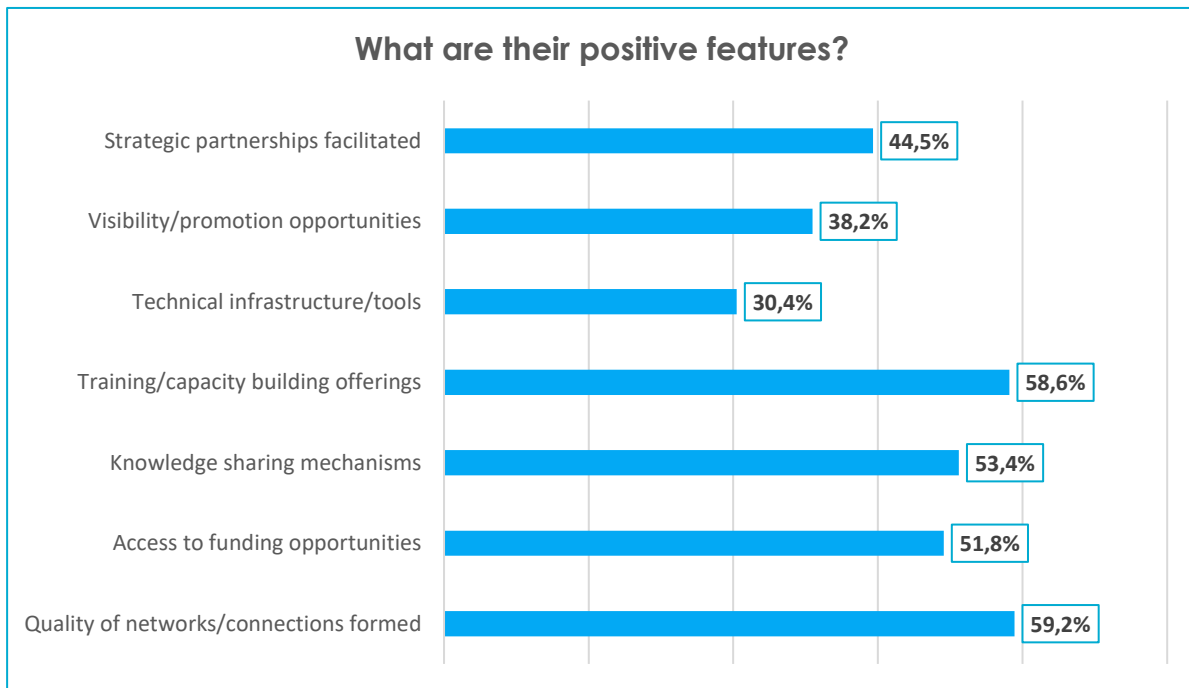


Figure 29 What functions would you like to see on our platform?

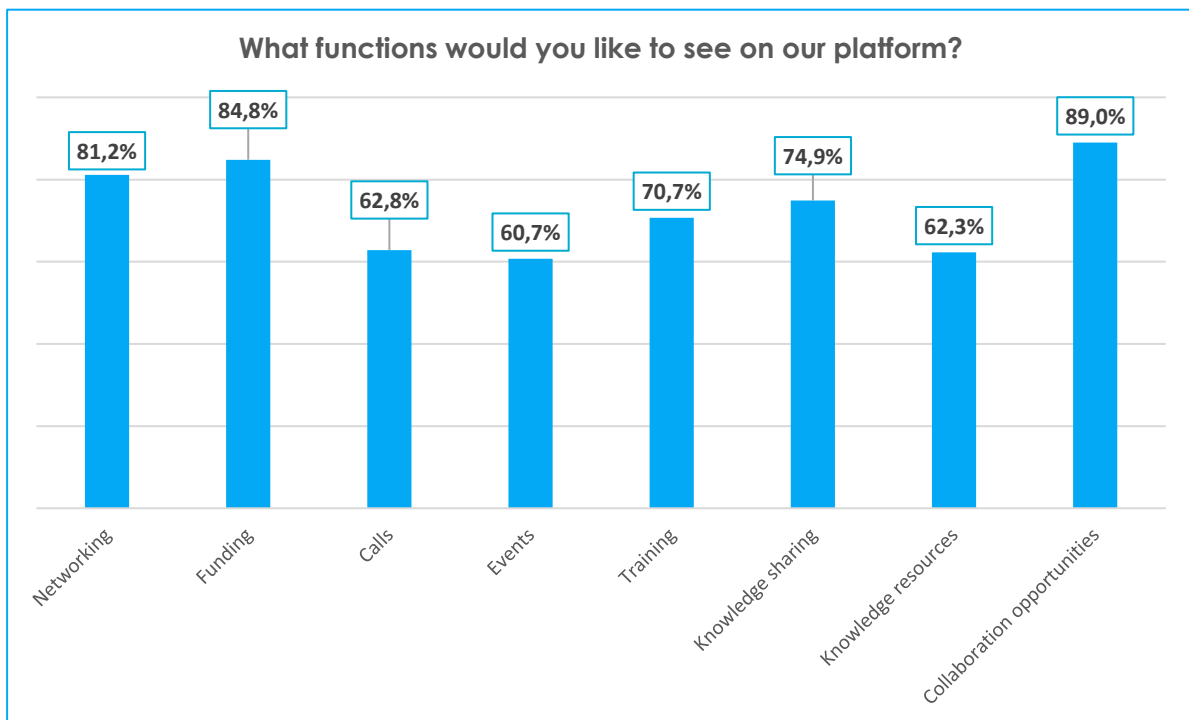




Figure 30 How would you prefer to engage with other stakeholders on the platform?

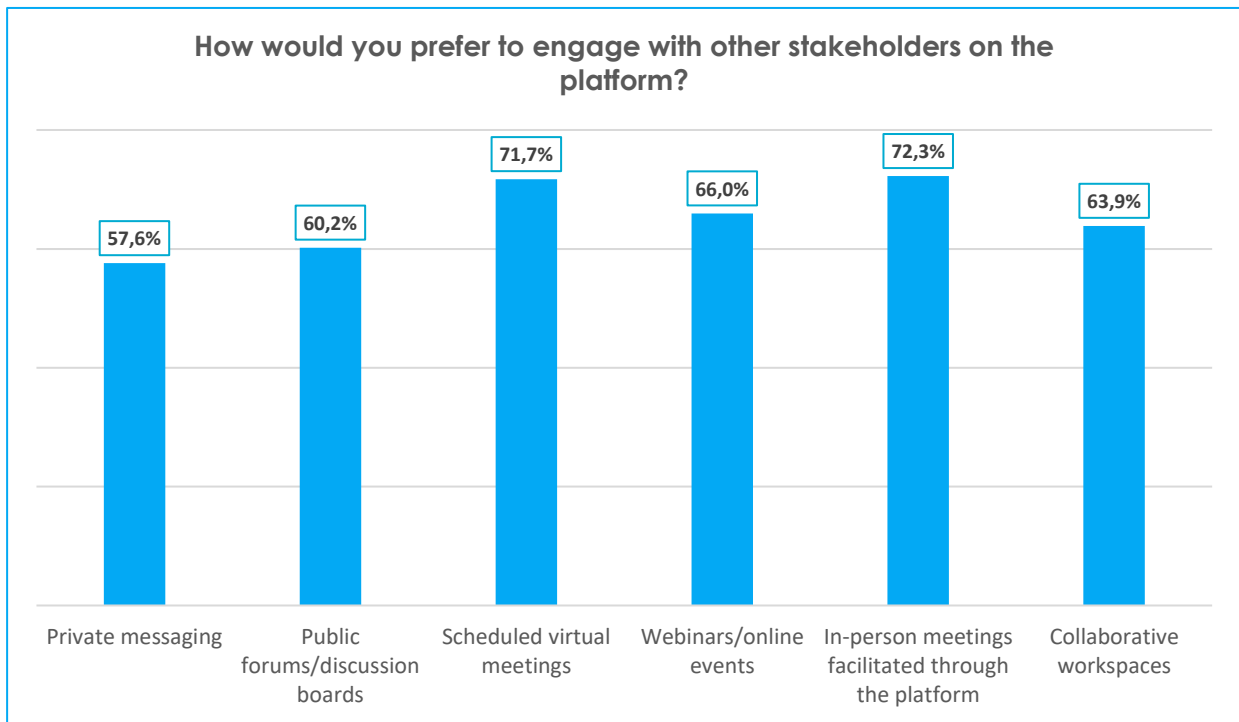


Figure 31 Would you prefer a Platform focused on specific sectors or a broader multi-sector approach?

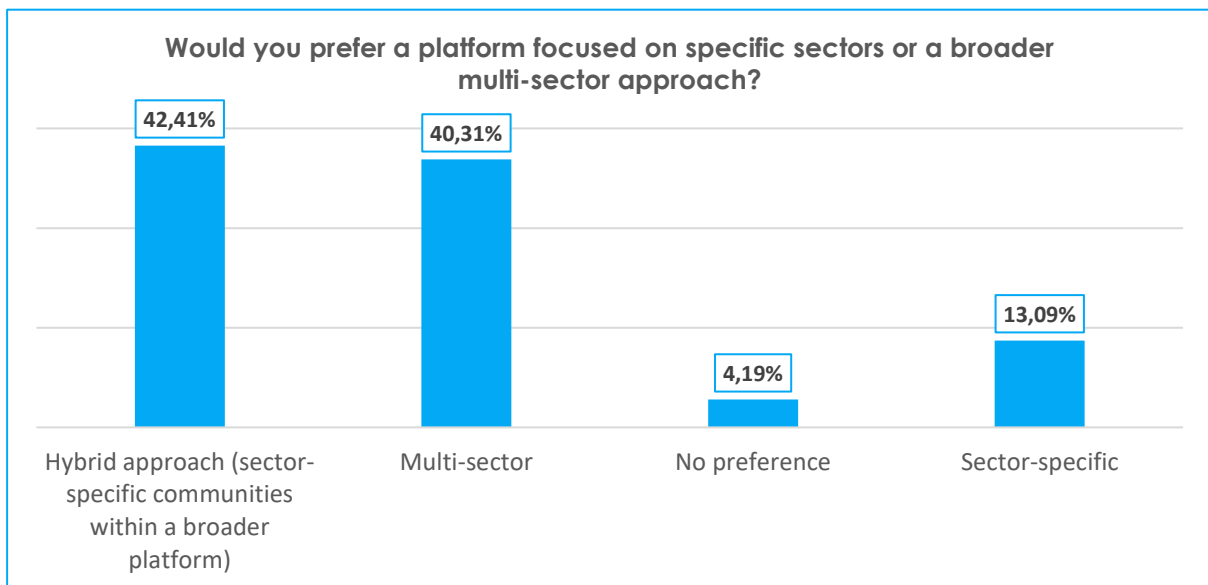




Figure 32 What language option should the Platform provide?

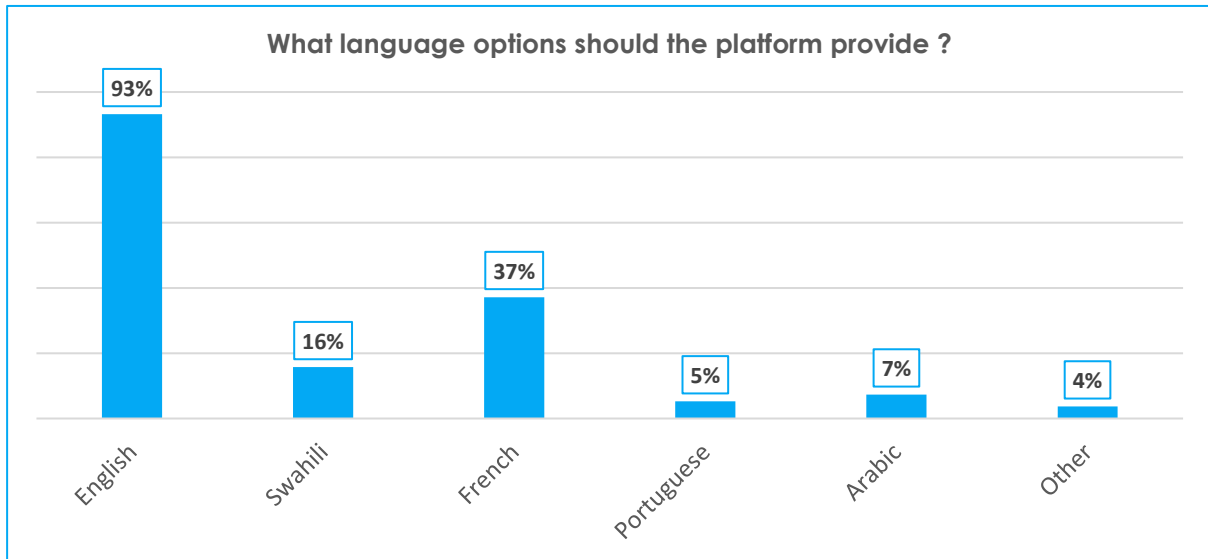


Figure 33 What incentives would motivate you to actively participate and contribute to an AU-EU innovation community?

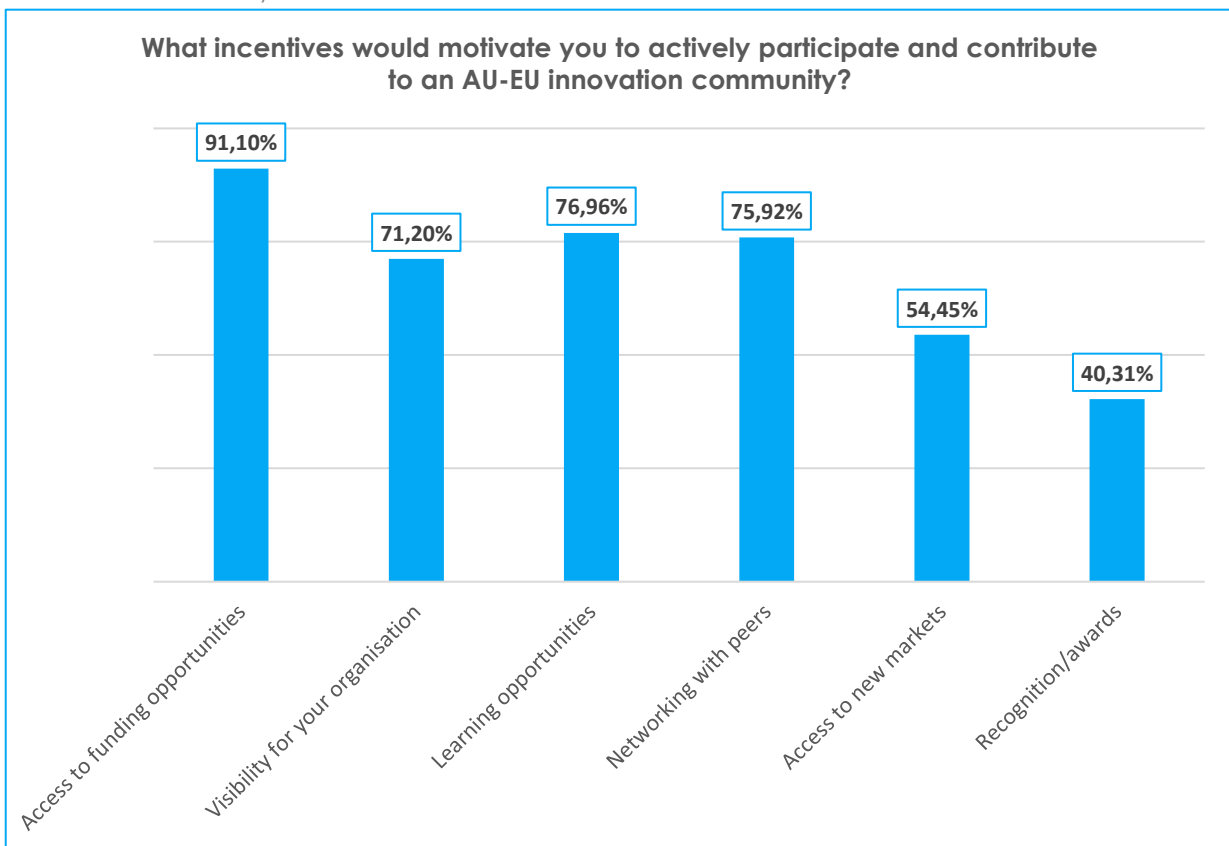
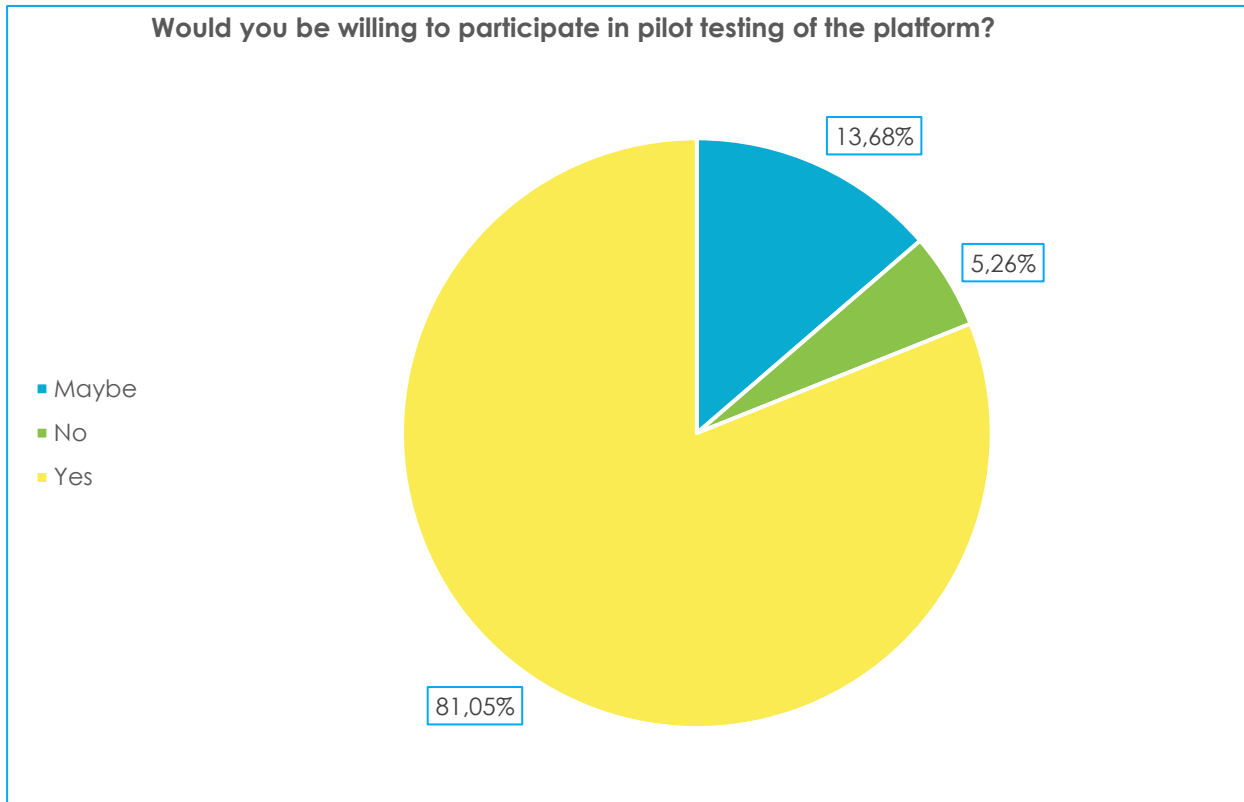




Figure 34 Would you be willing to participate in pilot testing of the platform?





5.3 Stakeholder survey

AFRICA-EUROPE INNOVATION PLATFORM

Connecting stakeholders of the innovation value chain

Dear Participant,

Launched early this year, the Horizon Europe initiative, the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform (AEIP), aims to create a “network of networks” that can serve as a catalyst for collaboration, bringing together all stakeholders of the innovation value chain across and between Africa and Europe. Thus, it will not only offer a **virtual Platform** of collaboration, but also different **activities** that will allow for the community to interact. Notably, we will offer trainings, matchmaking services, access to calls for proposals, opportunity to meet investors, participate to Communities of Practice, centralise existing knowledge and create curate new contents, etc. Most importantly, we will organise in-person events and launch Thematic Challenges that encourage all stakeholders to work together towards an innovative solution to a specific problem.

Who is the AEIP designed for? All stakeholders of the innovation value chain: Academia, Innovators, Start-ups and SMEs, Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and corporates, Development Finance institutions (DFIs) and private investors, civil society and policy makers. Our main goal is to leave no one behind, and to create synergies between existing networks and initiatives in the field of innovation. Members of the Consortium implementing the AEIP project, 15 entities both from the AU and the EU, will be the first to be offered access to the Platform. They will also propose the first activities according to their specific profile. Their list can be found on our website.

In order to better tailor the Platform's functionalities and activities to the ecosystem's needs, we are now conducting a survey that will help us identify the major challenges you encounter in your work and possible solutions we could offer. The questions are organised in 4 chapters, filling them should take you no more than 15 minutes.

Feel free to share the survey link in your network! It will be online till 25 April 2025.

Should you have any question, we remain available via e-mail at: andrea.stemler@technopolis-group.com.

For further information about our privacy policy, please refer to the [following website](#).

The AEIP team

<https://africaeuropeinnovation.net/>

There are 115 questions in this survey.



5.3.1 General questions

This chapter will allow us to better understand your entity's main profile and activities.

1. What is your entity's name? *

Please write your answer here: _____

2. In which country is your entity headquartered? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- List of countries

3. What is the scope within which your organisation operates? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Locally
- Nationally
- Regionally
- Internationally (within the continent)
- Internationally (worldwide)
- If Internationally (worldwide), which continents? *

4. If the answer was 'Internationally (worldwide)' at the previous question '

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Africa
- Europe
- Asia
- Americas
- Australia and Pacific

5. Which stakeholder group does your entity belong to? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Public authority or policy maker (government, regulatory agency, etc.)
- Academia (university, research and technology organisation, TVET, think-tank, etc. or their association)
- Business Support Organisation (chamber of commerce and industry, development or innovation agency, incubator, accelerator, service provider, etc. or their association)



- Corporate (start-up, SME, corporation, multinational, etc. or their association)
- Investor or funder (VC, angel investor, DFI, debt financier, mission-driven investor, private equity, etc. or their association)
- Civil society (advocacy, development, charity, community-based organisation, etc.)

6. Which activities does your entity perform? (several possible choices) *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Networking
- Short-term capacity building (e.g. bootcamps)
- Medium/long-term capacity building (training, mentoring)
- Technology Transfer
- Knowledge Transfer
- Incubation
- Acceleration
- Soft landing
- Funding (equity)
- Funding (loans)
- Funding (grants)
- Citizen involvement and community engagement
- Policy making and regulatory role
- Advocacy and Policy Influence

5.3.2 General needs

This chapter aims at collecting information on your needs pertaining to the innovation value chain in general.

7. What do you think the main problem with the innovation value chain is? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- The ecosystems are fragmented
- The existing initiatives relevant to innovation in the AU and the EU are not coherent
- Policy makers are not well informed about the innovation stakeholders' needs
- Researchers and innovators are not engaged with stakeholders beyond their conventional circles
- Innovation is not accessible, societal uptake of innovation is not guaranteed
- Innovation is not inclusive, youth, women and disadvantaged groups are not embedded enough in the innovation value chain
- There is not enough opportunity for capacity building



- There is not enough opportunity for twinning between institutions and mobility of scholars
- There is not enough opportunity for networking
- There is not enough funding
- Knowledge about the opportunities is fragmented

8. Do you have existing relationship with other stakeholder groups? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- No
- Yes, Public authority or policy maker (government, regulatory agency, etc.)
- Yes, Academia (university, research and technology organisation, TVET, think-tank, etc. or their association)
- Yes, Business Support Organisation (chamber of commerce and industry, development or innovation agency, incubator, accelerator, service provider, etc. or their association)
- Yes, Corporate (start-up, SME, corporation, multinational, etc. or their association)
- Yes, Investor or funder (VC, angel investor, DFI, debt financier, mission-driven investor, private equity, etc. or their association)
- Yes, Civil society (advocacy, development, charity, community-based organisation, etc.)

9. How do you currently discover potential innovation partners from the other continent?*

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Personal/professional networks
- Industry events/conferences
- Online Platforms
- Matchmaking events
- Through intermediary organizations
- EU or AU project partnerships
- Do not currently have a method
- Other:

10. Which stakeholder groups would you like to have more engagement with? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Public authority or policy maker (government, regulatory agency, etc.)



- Academia (university, research and technology organisation, TVET, think-tank, etc. or their association)
- Business Support Organisation (chamber of commerce and industry, development or innovation agency, incubator, accelerator, service provider, etc. or their association)
- Corporate (start-up, SME, corporation, multinational, etc. or their association)
- Investor or funder (VC, angel investor, DFI, debt financier, mission-driven investor, private equity, etc. or their association)
- Civil society (advocacy, development, charity, community-based organisation, etc.)

11. Would you be interested in participating to the following activities? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Training, webinars and mentoring around topics of interest
- Matchmaking with potential partners (to publish jointly, develop products, answer calls for funding, etc.)
- Networking and events (virtual and in person)
- Twinning and mobility
- Communities of practise around topics of particular interest
- Thematic challenges bringing together various stakeholders around a problem to be solved
- Other:

12. Would you be interested to contribute to the following activities? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Training, webinars and mentoring around topics of interest
- Matchmaking with investors, potential partners (to publish jointly, develop products, answer calls for funding, etc.)
- Networking and events (virtual and in person)
- Twinning and mobility
- Communities of practise around topics of particular interest
- Thematic challenges bringing together various stakeholders around a problem to be solved
- None of them
- Other:

13. What R&I topics would you be interested in exploring in a Community of Practise?

Communities of practice are groups of people who are interested in a specific topic and want to exchange on it. The Africa-Europe Innovation Platform will host multiple virtual Communities of Practise.*



Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- STEM Education
- Social sciences in research & innovation
- Youth Leadership and diaspora in R&I
- Digital Skills & ICT in Education
- AU-EU dialogue on higher education qualifications
- Commercialisation of innovative products and services
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Climate Change & Sustainability Education
- Data Ethics & Responsible Research
- Gender equality and inclusion of marginalised populations in innovation
- Women Empowerment & Leadership
- Community-Based Research & Development
- AgriTech & Sustainable Agriculture
- Circular economy, sustainable manufacturing & green transition
- Policy Engagement & Advocacy
- Internationalisation and partnership development
- Community Engagement and Outreach
- Funding Diversification
- Ecosystem Impact Measurement and Evaluation
- Other:

14. What training topics are you interested in? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Entrepreneurship for youth
- Knowledge transfer mechanisms
- Turning research into products
- Business skills
- Commercialisation
- Project management
- Data analysis
- Ecosystem Mapping and Analysis
- Strategic foresight, roadmapping and other futures studies methods
- Resilience to change and crises
- Tech transfer (financial models)
- Ethics
- Funds required for Innovation projects



- Opportunities for collaboration within EU funding open calls
- Intellectual property (IP) management

15. What are the most valuable aspects of attending a course on IP? *

Only if the answer to the previous question was IP management

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Better understanding IP elements and what they mean (copyright, patents, policies, laws, rights, concepts, terms)
- Better understanding IP Frameworks and how they work (governance, policy, application, registration, implementation, copyright issues, project management, practical aspects, project management, protection)
- Technology transfer: greater awareness of role of IP within TTO, tech transfer role in managing IP
- Assist in setting policies and managing them effectively
- Ability to effectively protect and use their IP thereby being able to form more effective partnerships and collaborations
- Ability to identify how to utilise IP commercially

16. Do you have a good knowledge of existing AU or EU initiatives in the field of innovation? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

17. Via which Platform?*

Only if the answer to the previous question was 'Yes'

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Via the Enrich in Africa Center
- Via Euraxess
- Via the AfriLabs Platform
- Via the VC4A Platform
- Via the AU-EU Innovation Interface
- Via the European Commission's tenders portal
- Other:

18. What are the main limitations of the existing Platforms? *

Select all that apply



Please choose **all** that apply:

- Lack of awareness
- Limited geographic coverage
- Inadequate sustainability mechanisms
- Insufficient funding
- Limited stakeholder engagement
- Language barriers
- Technical barriers
- Other:

19. What are their positive features? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Quality of networks/connections formed
- Access to funding opportunities
- Knowledge sharing mechanisms
- Training/capacity building offerings
- Technical infrastructure/tools
- Visibility/promotion opportunities
- Strategic partnerships facilitated
- Other:

20. How would you rate the effectiveness of existing Platforms in the ecosystem on promoting engagement, collaboration, access to opportunities and stakeholder matching on a scale of 1-10? (1 being least effective and 10 most effective)*

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Enrich in Africa Center					
Euraxess					
AfriLabs Platform					
VC4A Platform					
AU-EU Innovation Interface					
EC tender's Platform					



5.3.3 Specific needs of researchers and academia

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

21. Only to those who answered 'Academia' to question nr. 5

22.

23. Which category describes the best your entity? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Traditional and comprehensive universities (no specialisation)
- Universities of Research, Technology and Entrepreneurship
- Research and technology organisations
- Science & Technology Parks (offering connection between research and innovation ecosystems and often services)
- TVET institutions with activities related to innovation

24. Is your entity private or public? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Private
- Public

25. Does your entity do research? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

26. Do you do collaborative research with other universities? *

Only answer this question if the answer was 'Yes' to the previous question

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- With universities from the same country
- With universities from the same continent
- With universities from the other continent (Africa or Europe)
- No

27. Does your entity encourage innovation and entrepreneurship? *

Select all that apply



Please choose **all** that apply:

- Not yet
- We include STEM in our curricula
- We promote cross-disciplinary collaboration for impact
- We have student labs and inhouse incubators
- We teach entrepreneurship skills in our curricula
- We have a Technology Transfer Office (TTO)
- We have a Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
- We have mobility partnerships with other universities to exchange about innovative learning methods
- We have processes to continuously update curricula to include inquiry-based learning, case studies and project-based assignment models
- I don't know

28. What research and technological tools do you deploy in your research and innovation activities? *

Please write your answer here:

29. Has your entity started building a digital education ecosystem? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- No
- Yes, we have policy supporting digital education skills
- Yes, we teach digital literacy skills to our students
- Yes, we have blended learning approaches: We have virtual classes (via videoconferencing)
- Yes, we have blended learning approaches: We use learning management system (LMS) tools to co-create and co-design courses
- Yes, we have digital equipment for education and training
- Yes, our faculty are regularly participating to capacity building on emerging digital technologies

30. Do you participate to harmonisation of accreditation practises? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- No, we are not accredited by the national or regional higher education authorities
- No, not yet
- Yes, we have a centre for international education collaboration
- Yes, we subscribe to a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation scheme (i.e. ENQA or AFRIQAN)
- Yes, we participate to a harmonise credit transfer system (i.e. ACTS or ECTS)



- Yes, we participate in facilitated student or faculty mobility schemes
- Yes, we offer joint or dual degree programs with other universities from the same country
- Yes, we offer joint or dual degree programs with other universities from the same continent
- Yes, we offer joint or dual degree programs with other universities from the other continent (Africa or Europe)

5.3.4 Specific needs of Business Support Organisations

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

31. Only to those who answered 'BSOs' to question nr. 5

32. Which category describes the best your entity? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Development & Innovation Agency
- Business Incubator (must offer services)
- Accelerator
- Other BSOs and service providers

33. What are your current activities supporting start-ups ? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Strengthening mentoring and coaching networks
- Enhancing access to funding and investment readiness
- Building stronger corporate-start-up collaboration models
- Improving internationalisation and scaling support
- Expanding impact-driven and sustainability-focused incubation models
- Other:

34. What are your main operational challenges? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Scalability and sustainability of service delivery
- Limited financial sustainability and revenue diversification
- Retention of skilled mentors and support staff
- Inefficient internal processes and governance structures
- Lack of digital tools for tracking start-up performance
- Other:



35. How do you currently sustain your organisation? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Public grants and government funding
- Corporate sponsorships and industry partnerships
- Equity-based incubation or venture-building models
- Membership fees and consulting services
- Revenue from co-working or fablab services
- Other:

36. How do you support start-ups post-programme? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Dedicated alumni network and ongoing mentorship
- Follow-on investment and funding support
- Corporate pilot projects and procurement opportunities
- Access to international expansion and scaling resources
- No formal alumni support programme in place
- Other:

37. Are you looking to expand beyond your current region? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Yes, through international partnerships with accelerators and incubators
- Yes, by expanding into new markets for start-up internationalisation
- No, the focus is on strengthening the local ecosystem
- Other:

38. How do you currently assess the effectiveness of your programmes? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Start-up survival rates (3-5 years)
- Investment raised by supported start-ups
- Revenue growth and scaling metrics
- Market traction and customer acquisition
- Job creation and economic contribution
- Alumni engagement and follow-on support
- No formal impact measurement system in place
- Other:

39. Which areas require the most improvement in your programmes ? *



Select all that apply

Please select at most 3 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Limited access to funding and investor networks
- Lack of structured mentorship and coaching support
- Difficulty providing industry-specific expertise
- Limited access to international markets and partnerships
- Challenges in implementing impact measurement frameworks
- Difficulty in engaging corporate partners for start-up collaboration
- Other:

40. Which topics would be the most beneficial for a training or capacity-building of your staff? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Defining your mission, values, and strategic objectives
- Optimising business models for ESOs (incubators, accelerators, co-working, fablabs, etc.)
- Financial models and funding sustainability for ESOs
- Talent management and leadership development
- Internationalisation strategies and global expansion
- Impact measurement and continuous learning
- Understanding the start-up lifecycle and service value chain
- Designing and enhancing tailored programmes for start-ups at different stages (scouting, implementation, follow-up)
- Designing thematic/sectoral programmes (inclusive incubation, green transition, open innovation, deep tech)
- Developing effective mentorship and coaching programmes
- Measuring the impact of incubation/acceleration programmes
- Other:

41. What types of partnerships would most enhance your impact ? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 3 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Stronger ties with corporates and industry players
- Increased government collaboration and policy integration
- Cross-border partnerships with global innovation hubs
- Enhanced university engagement in start-up research commercialisation



- Expansion of venture capital and angel investment networks
- Other:

42. Which industries or verticals require stronger partnerships ? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- HealthTech / MedTech
- GreenTech / Sustainability
- AI & Data Science
- Deep Tech (e.g., SpaceTech, Quantum, Advanced Materials)
- FinTech & InsurTech
- Smart Cities & Mobility
- Human capital development
- Other:

43. What are the biggest barriers to effective collaboration? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Lack of alignment in goals between ecosystem players
- Limited corporate engagement in start-up support initiatives
- Low investor participation in early-stage ventures
- Difficulty in retaining high-quality start-ups within the ecosystem
- Regulatory and policy barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation
- Challenges in securing long-term funding and sustainability
- Other:

44. Which topics would be most beneficial for training or support to your members to improve their embeddedness in the ecosystem? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Business strategy
- Digital transformation
- Financial management
- Leadership development
- Partnership development strategies
- Ecosystem mapping and stakeholder analysis
- Community engagement and outreach models
- Policy advocacy and government relations
- International collaboration and networking
- Ecosystem impact measurement and evaluation



- Other:

5.3.5 Specific needs of innovators and companies

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

45. Only to those who answered 'Start-ups, SMEs and Entrepreneurs' to question nr. 5

46. Which category describes the best your entity?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Innovator/Start-up
- SME (established and registered business that has launched product)
- Corporate (not yet internationalised)
- Multinational

47. If you selected Innovator/Start-up, at what stage of your development are you? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- I have a concept/idea
- Start-up stage (a temporary organisation searching for a scalable business model)
- Growth stage (business viability is proven)
- Mature start-up (growth is dynamic)

48. How did you choose the country of the incorporation for your (holding) company? *

Only answer this question if the answer to the previous question was 'Multinational' at question '

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Your country of residence
- Dependant on the nature of your business
- Required by your investor
- Other

49. What type of innovation are you dealing with?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Manufacturing



- Professional
- Scientific and Technical
- Information and Communication

50. What are the most pressing social, economic, or environmental challenges your start-up is working to solve through innovation?*

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Climate resilience and environmental sustainability
- Financial inclusion and access to digital finance
- Agriculture and food security
- Healthcare delivery and telemedicine
- Gender equality and women empowerment
- Digital literacy and access to education
- Other:

51. What sector are you active in? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Agriculture, food and forestry
- Energy and mining
- Manufacturing
- Private services sectors
- Infrastructure, construction and related sectors
- Education and research
- Public service, utilities and health
- Maritime and transport

52. If you selected Agriculture, food and forestry: *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Agriculture, food and forestry' at question ' [G01Q39]' (What sector are

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Agriculture, plantations, other rural sectors
- Food, drink, tobacco
- Forestry, wood, pulp and paper

53. If you selected Energy and mining *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:



- Mining (coal, other mining)
- Oil and gas production, oil refining

54. If you selected Manufacturing: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Basic Metal Production
- Chemical industries
- Mechanical and electrical engineering
- Transport equipment manufacturing
- Textiles, clothing, leather, footwear

55. If you selected Private services sectors: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Commerce
- Financial services, professional services
- Hotels, tourism, catering
- Media, culture, graphical
- Postal and telecommunications services

56. If you selected Education and research: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education
- Research

57. If you selected Public service, utilities and health: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Health services
- Public service
- Utilities (water, gas, electricity)

58. If you selected Maritime and transport: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Shipping, ports, fisheries, inland waterways



- Transport (including civil aviation, railways, road transport)

59. Are you willing to internationalise?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- No
- Yes

60. If you answered yes, are you *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- An African company targeting Europe?
- A European company targeting Africa?

61. What are the primary barriers your start-up faces in accessing African markets? *

Only answer this question if the answer was 'A European company targeting Africa?' to the previous question '

Select all that apply

Please select at most 3 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Limited access to reliable market data
- Complex regulatory frameworks
- Limited partnerships with local distributors or retailers
- Language and cultural barriers
- Difficulty in accessing financial services (e.g., digital payment systems)
- Other:

62. What is your biggest challenge in scaling your business and internationalisation? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Incorporation
- Business Skills
- Access to funding
- Finding and retaining talent
- Access to partnerships
- Expanding to new markets
- Regulatory and policy barriers
- Adopting new technologies



- IPR
- Other:

63. What type of funding or investment support would be most valuable to your business? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Equity
- Debt, grants
- Venture capital
- Angel investment
- Other

64. What skills or capacity-building programs would most benefit your team? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Business strategy
- Digital transformation
- Financial management
- Leadership development
- Partnership development strategies
- Ecosystem mapping and stakeholder analysis
- Community engagement and outreach models
- Policy advocacy and government relations
- International collaboration and networking
- Ecosystem impact measurement and evaluation
- Other:

65. What types of mentorship or coaching programs would be most beneficial to your team? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 3 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Product development and prototyping
- Fundraising and investor readiness
- Market entry and expansion strategies
- Legal and intellectual property (IP) support
- Building inclusive and gender-sensitive business models
- Other:



66. What specific digital tools or Platforms do you require to improve your business operations? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems
- Financial management tools
- E-commerce Platforms for product sales
- Data analytics and business intelligence tools
- Collaboration and remote work tools
- Other:

67. What are the biggest knowledge gaps your team faces in leveraging emerging technologies (e.g., AI, IoT, blockchain) for business growth? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Understanding practical applications of emerging technologies
- Integrating AI/IoT/blockchain into existing business models
- Data management and security
- Building AI or data-driven products
- Other:

68. What collaboration models would best help your entity co-create solutions with other ecosystem players? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Joint product or solution development with corporates
- Cross-border partnerships with start-ups or SMEs
- Collaborative research with universities or research institutions
- Community-driven innovation with grassroots organizations
- Engagement with policy makers for regulatory innovation
- Other:

69. How does your entity currently engage with grassroots communities and marginalised groups? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- We do not
- Through partnerships with local NGOs or CSOs
- Hiring from marginalised communities
- Developing products/services tailored for underserved populations



- Conducting awareness and outreach campaigns
- Other:

5.3.6 Specific needs of funders and investors

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

70. Which category describes the best your entity? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Early-Stage investors, Angel investors, venture capitalists
- Public investors/funders (DFIs, Research Councils, etc.)
- Private investors (debt financiers)
- Impact & Mission-Driven Investors
- Later-Stage & Private Market Investors, Private Equity Firms

71. What sectors do you usually fund? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Climate tech
- Women led entities)
- Agritech
- Fintech
- Ed-tech
- Health-tech
- Mobility and logistics
- Deeptech and AI
- Other:

72. What is your average ticket size (in EUR)? *

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

73. Are you currently raising capital? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

74. Are you currently deploying capital? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:



- Yes
- No

75. What are the biggest challenges you face when investing in start-ups/SMEs before investing? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Sourcing
- Scouting
- Access to data
- Access to networks
- Due diligence
- Legal complexities
- Cultural differences
- Jurisdictions
- Negotiation
- Other:

76. What are the biggest challenges you face after investing? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Reliability
- Portfolio management
- Start-up support
- Exit strategy
- Other:

77. Do you require your portfolio companies to (re)incorporate in a certain country or jurisdiction? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- No
- Yes

78. If yes, what country or jurisdiction do you require your portfolio companies to (re)incorporate in? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- List of countries



5.3.7 Specific needs of civil society

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

79. Which category describes the best your entity? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Advocacy organisations (their main goal is to represent certain interests towards policy makers)
- Development Organisations (address social challenges issues relating to development, education, health, environment, etc.)
- Charity and Humanitarian Organisations (receive donations for the purpose of acting towards immediate poverty, hunger, disaster... relief)
- Community-Based Organizations (directly address the immediate concerns of their members)
- Consumer Organisations and Special Interest Groups

80. Please indicate the type of initiatives your organization is involved in (or has recently been involved in)*

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Governance, Values and Advocacy
- Education, ICT and Research
- Skills Investment and Training
- Agriculture, Agri-business
- Health and Wellbeing
- Entrepreneurship
- Employment and Social Inclusion
- Climate and Environmental Sustainability

81. Who are your target beneficiaries? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Youth
- Women
- Refugees
- People with disabilities
- People living in poverty
- Unemployed people
- Diaspora
- Innovators
- Entrepreneurs



- Other:

82. What is the estimated number of beneficiaries that your organization has served in the last one year? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- 0 – 100
- 100 – 1 000
- 1 000 – 5 000
- 5 000 – 10 000
- 10 000 – 50 000
- More

83. Your budget is financed by *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Membership dues
- Cash donations
- Subsidies
- Private company sponsorship
- Match grants and Grants
- Crowdfunding
- Investment income
- Self-funding
- We do not receive any funding

84. How do you access information related to donor funding? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Building partnerships
- Social networks, e.g. WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Personal and professional networks
- Donor Database
- Other:

85. What interest do you have in innovation?*

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Be informed about innovation
- Influence innovation outcomes
- Influence innovation policies



- Include your beneficiaries into innovation process and/or democratise science
- Find a solution to a community need
- Increase performance of the organisation
- Other:

86. Have you been involved in any activity related to innovation? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- As users / consumers
- Our members are innovators
- We represent innovator's interests towards government
- As Influencers
- Other:

87. How long have you been involved with the innovation ecosystem? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- 0-1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5+ years

88. What are your organisation's main challenges? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Funding
- Outreach
- Administrative
- Legal
- Partnerships
- Other:

89. What challenges have you identified related to innovation and entrepreneurship?*

Please write your answer here:

90. What trainings would you be interested in? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Project management
- How to respond to calls for grants



- Digital literacy
- Intellectual property rights
- Knowledge transfer
- Market research, communication and visibility
- Foresight and roadmapping
- Organisational development
- General knowledge about the innovation ecosystem

5.3.8 Specific needs of policy makers

This chapter will allow us to better tailor our activities to your specific needs.

91. Which category describes the best your entity? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- National policy makers (local and national government, regulatory bodies...)
- Sub-Regional policy makers (REC level organisations and authorities)
- Continental and Global policy makers (EU, AU, UN...)
- Thematic agencies (whose geographical coverage is not fit to the other categories)

92. What sector are you active in? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Agriculture, food and forestry
- Energy and mining
- Manufacturing
- Private services sectors
- Infrastructure, construction and related sectors
- Education and research
- Public service, utilities and health
- Maritime and transport

93. If you selected Maritime and transport: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Shipping, ports, fisheries, inland waterways
- Transport (including civil aviation, railways, road transport)

94. If you selected Public service, utilities and health: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:



- Health services
- Public service
- Utilities (water, gas, electricity)

95. If you selected Education and research: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education
- Research

96. If you selected Private services sectors: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Commerce
- Financial services, professional services
- Hotels, tourism, catering
- Media, culture, graphical
- Postal and telecommunications services

97. If you selected Manufacturing: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Basic Metal Production
- Chemical industries
- Mechanical and electrical engineering
- Transport equipment manufacturing
- Textiles, clothing, leather, footwear

98. If you selected Energy and mining *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Mining (coal, other mining)
- Oil and gas production, oil refining

99. If you selected Agriculture, food and forestry: *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Agriculture, plantations, other rural sectors



- Food, drink, tobacco
- Forestry, wood, pulp and paper

100. Please select the types of stakeholders you govern or assist *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Academia (university, research and technology organisation, TVET, think-tank, etc. or their association)
- Business Support Organisation (chamber of commerce and industry, development or innovation agency, incubator, accelerator, service provider, etc. or their association)
- Corporate (start-up, SME, corporation, multinational, etc. or their association)
- Investor or funder (VC, angel investor, DFI, debt financier, mission-driven investor, private equity, etc. or their association)
- Civil society (advocacy, development, charity, community-based organisation, etc.)

101. How do you see your engagement with these stakeholders of your continent? (1=weak; 5=strong) *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Public authorities or policy makers (government, regulatory agency, etc.)					
Academia					
Business Support Organisations					
Corporates					
Investors or funders					
Civil society					

102. How do you see your engagement with these stakeholders of the other continent (Africa or Europe)? (1=weak; 5=strong) *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:



	1	2	3	4	5
Public authorities or policy makers (government, regulatory agency, etc.)					
Academia					
Business Support Organisations					
Corporates					
Investors or funders					
Civil society					

103. Are you aware of the [AU-EU Innovation Agenda](#)? *

The AU-EU Innovation Agenda is a 10-year (2023-2033) cooperation strategy between the AU and the EU with aims to foster the translation of research and innovation (R&I) into tangible impact, namely products, services, businesses and jobs, in Africa and Europe. Its implementation is supported by initiatives and projects of Africa-Europe R&I cooperation that are listed on a Dashboard.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- No
- Yes, I heard about it but do not know its content
- Yes, I align my work with it
- Yes, I assisted to its creation and/or am part of its governance

104. How is your engagement towards implementation of the Innovation Agenda's different priority areas? (1 = low engagement; 5 = high engagement)*

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Cross-cutting					
Public Health					
Green Transition					
Innovation and Technology					

	1	2	3	4	5
Capacities for Science					

105. What are the biggest challenges in implementing the AU-EU Innovation Agenda in your region? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Need for further policy alignment (between AU and EU frameworks, regulatory barriers to cross-border innovation collaboration, limited coordination between national, regional, continental policies/organisations, etc.)
- Financial and resource constraints (limited access to funding, lack of private sector engagement, high costs of technology adoption/R&I infrastructure, etc.)
- Capacity and human capital issues (brain drain, shortage of skilled professionals, inadequate training programmes, limited collaboration between academia and industry, etc.)
- Market barriers (limited awareness/engagement of SMEs and start ups, market fragmentation, low trust in new technologies, etc.)
- Collaboration and partnerships issues (difficulties in forging strong public-private partnerships, barriers to knowledge sharing between institutions, limited joint projects, etc.)
- Other:

106. Which of the following needs and gaps identified as part of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda should be prioritised in the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform?*

Select all that apply

Please select at most 5 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Fostering the links and networks between the business and government sectors, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), higher learning and research organisations, financial institutions and civil society organisations, through the establishment of a dedicated consultative Platform under the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, enhancing the quality and the efficiency of measures improving innovation ecosystems.
- Designing mechanisms to pro-actively involve citizens in the innovation ecosystems, to boost active citizenship for ensuring a better and faster societal uptake of innovation outputs, and to improve their creative and collective intelligence, while making effective efforts to close the gender gap and to avoid any type of discrimination. In this process, include knowledge from social sciences and humanities.



- Fostering the participation of financing partners, e.g. business angels, into AU-EU partnerships to jointly improve access to the use of innovative financial engineering, including for early-stage businesses and start-ups, thus enhancing the uptake of new products and innovation services.
- Supporting research and innovation cooperation between AU and EU research organisations and companies (in particular SMEs) from low tech to high tech (e.g., frugal innovation including organisational innovation) by making smart use of local intelligence and adapted business-driven models, mobilising multi-actor approaches (innovation Platforms, living labs, etc.) in sectors like agro-food-nutrition, circular economy, sustainable manufacturing, One Health, raw materials, using digitalisation and artificial intelligence as transversal enablers.
- Supporting technology/innovation hubs, networks, and operations of accelerators and incubators, including by assessing technology fields that could benefit from standardisation, to develop the human capital and skills pool for effective technology transfer and to stimulate entrepreneurship, inter alia through thematic exchange programmes between start-ups, researchers and policymakers, including social innovation beyond technologies.
- Linking science with education, by promoting a culture of innovation and scientific communication programmes at all education levels.
- Strengthening cooperation between AU and EU higher education institutions, research centres and organisations, and capacity building partnerships, with a focus on the potential of knowledge transfer, teaming, twinning and learning mobility activities (e.g., by involving the European University Alliances, consortia from the Erasmus+ programme and the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme, and ARISE grantees), by reinforcing scientific and academic mobility opportunities (through notably the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), to support the co-construction and/or co-reinforcement of training programmes, and research and innovation projects in line with the socio-economic needs of the concerned countries/regions, both in the AU and in the EU.
- Improving the transparency and recognition of higher education qualifications and the relevance of curricula to enhance mobility.
- Fostering the development of high-performing digital education systems and upgrade digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.
- Other:

5.3.9 Engagement

This allows us to involve you further in our endeavours and welcome you in the AEIP family.

107. Are you interested in engaging more with the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform?*

Choose one of the following answers



Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

108. What functions would you like to see on our Platform? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Networking
- Funding
- Calls
- Events
- Training
- Knowledge sharing
- Knowledge resources
- Collaboration opportunities
- Other:

109. How important would each of the following Platform capabilities be to you? (1 = not important; 5 = extremely important)*

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Digital innovation experimentation tools					
Partner matching					
Innovation analytics and insights					
Funding opportunity notifications					
Knowledge sharing and repositories					
Capacity building					
Communities of practice					
Mobility/exchange programs					

110. Would you prefer a Platform focused on specific sectors or a broader multi-sector approach?*

Choose one of the following answers



Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Sector-specific
- Multi-sector
- Hybrid approach (sector-specific communities within a broader Platform)
- No preference

111. Which sectors would you like us to focus on? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Agriculture, food and forestry
- Energy and mining
- Manufacturing
- Private services sectors
- Infrastructure, construction and related sectors
- Public service, utilities and health
- Maritime and transport

112. What language options should the Platform provide? *

Select all that apply

Please select at most 3 answers

Please choose **all** that apply:

- English
- Swahili
- French
- Portuguese
- Arabic
- Other:

113. How would you prefer to engage with other stakeholders on the Platform? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Private messaging
- Public forums/discussion boards
- Scheduled virtual meetings
- Webinars/online events
- In-person meetings facilitated through the Platform
- Collaborative workspaces
- Other:

114. What incentives would motivate you to actively participate and contribute to an AU-EU innovation community? *



Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Access to funding opportunities
- Visibility for your organisation
- Learning opportunities
- Networking with peers
- Access to new markets
- Recognition/awards
- Other:

115. Would you be willing to participate in pilot testing of the Platform? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

116. If yes, in what capacity would you like to participate? *

Select all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Platform tester
- Content contributor
- Community moderator
- Feature reviewer
- Workshop/training participant
- Other:

117. Can we get in touch with you?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes, I allow AEIP to get in touch with me
- Rather not

118. If yes, what is your name and contact details? *

For further information about our privacy policy, please refer to the [following website](#).

Please write your answer(s) here:

- Mr/Ms
- Family name
- Given name
- E-mail address



- WhatsApp number (optional)

119. Would you like to subscribe to the newsletter? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Thank you for having filled out our survey!

We are looking forward to working with you in the future.

The AEIP team

<https://africaeuropeinnovation.net/>

Thank you for completing this survey.



5.4 Key stakeholder interview guide

1. Introduction of AEIP
2. Please introduce your initiative
3. Would you be interested in collaborating with AEIP?
4. What aspects would you be interested in?
 - 4.1. More visibility to my initiative/organisation
 - 4.2. Sourcing clients/stakeholders
 - 4.3. Connecting with other initiatives/stakeholders
 - 4.4. Be informed about what is going on in the ecosystem
 - 4.5. Influence policy
 - 4.6. Build partnerships for more funding
5. What features would you like to see on our Platform?
 - 5.1. Matchmaking Features
 - 5.2. AI-powered matchmaking
 - 5.3. Needs-based search
 - 5.4. Contact protection system
 - 5.5. Community of Practice
 - 5.6. Living lab concept
 - 5.7. Peer review system
 - 5.8. Discussion capabilities
 - 5.9. Events
 - 5.10. Opportunities
 - 5.11. For funding
 - 5.12. For collaboration
6. How would you be ready to contribute to the AEIP?
 - 6.1. By creating a user profile and making myself available for contact
 - 6.2. By publishing opportunities for funding
 - 6.3. By publishing opportunities for participating in capacity building
 - 6.4. By publishing opportunities for participating in events



- 6.5. Other
- 7. What would be the technical ways and means for plugging you in to AEIP?
 - 7.1. API
 - 7.2. Other
- 8. Next steps



5.5 Presentation of the AEIP Project

The Africa-Europe Innovation Platform (AEIP) is a Horizon Europe project running from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2027. Its main goal is to create a collaborative platform that connects stakeholders of the innovation value chain across Africa and Europe and create an inclusive and sustainable network of innovation stakeholders, ensuring all stakeholders – from policymakers to civil society – can participate and benefit equally.

Indeed, despite significant progress in Africa-Europe R&I collaboration, key challenges remain - including fragmented efforts, limited policy coordination, and insufficient coordination collaboration between institutions, innovators, the private sector, and citizens. The AEIP addresses these challenges by facilitating participation, strengthening links, building capacity, and encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration. It contributes vital connectivity and networking intelligence to the broader Africa-Europe innovation landscape. By integrating both digital and physical modes of interaction, it creates a dynamic environment that adds value and visibility to existing partnerships and fosters the development of new ones.

The AEIP follows a structured approach to build synergies and avoid duplication. As a meta-platform, it engages both consortium members and existing networks and initiatives to scale up impact and reach. A core focus is to catalyse bottom-up innovation, bringing together stakeholders across disciplines and sectors to co-create solutions for societal challenges. The Platform adopts a human-centric approach that actively involves civil society, women, and youth.

As it grows, the AEIP will evolve into a “network of networks” – a central hub that supports the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. Rather than duplicating existing efforts, it connects ongoing initiatives and existing stakeholder networks, promoting coordination and enhancing their visibility.

This strategic approach improves the transparency and navigability of the ecosystem, strengthens interconnections along the innovation value chain, and supports the long-term alignment of AU and EU priorities.

Led by a diverse consortium representing all target stakeholder groups both from Africa and Europe, the AEIP strengthens cooperation by engaging with all actors of the innovation value chain on both continents. It acts as a catalyst for existing activities by increasing their visibility and outreach, while also creating new, tailored activities that respond to the specific needs of these communities. These are implemented through a combination of virtual and in-person Stakeholder Meetings.



Members of the Consortium are:

5.5.1 African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)

ACTS is a founding member of **Africalics**, the African Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, Competence Building systems. The network promotes the development of research capacity in Africa with strong links to policy makers, private sector and communities. It has 314+ registered members and is active in 25 African countries, with four institutional spokes (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and South Africa).

- **PIN location (country):** Kenya
- **Website:** <https://acts-net.org/>

5.5.2 African Technology Innovation Hubs (Afrilabs)

AfriLabs is a network organisation specialised providing training and entrepreneurial support to innovators. It has multiple platforms (AfriLabs Connect, Academy, Catalytic Africa) and is rich of 400+ hub members, across **all African** countries. It focuses on areas such as women in entrepreneurship, capacity building, climate change/sustainability, among others. They also organise events, such as its Annual Gathering with public officials, investors, journalists, start-up innovators, and creatives. Previously they have been involved with the Long-Term EU-AU Partnership on Renewable Energy (LEAP-RE), the African European Digital Innovation Bridge (AEDIB | NET), and Greenovations.

- **PIN location (country):** Nigeria
- **Website:** <https://www.afrilabs.com/>

5.5.3 Association of African Universities (AAU)

AAU is a network of 446 universities in more than 46 African countries. It champions higher education, provides a platform for collaboration, and offers capacity building activities for its members, also engaging African diaspora. It has previously been involved with projects such as "Strengthening the Europe-Africa's digital ecosystem through increased R&I cooperation" (SEADE), HAQAA, and Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) Impact.

- **PIN location (country):** Ghana
- **Website:** <https://aau.org/>

5.5.4 ARCTIK

Arctik is a communication agency combining imagination and outside-the-box thinking with evidence-based approaches and a getting-things-done mindset. Arctiks work bridges strategy, content and delivery, also with experience in large events and



social media. Supported by in-house strategic, editorial, content, digital and design experts, Arctik delivers tailored communications for public institutions, NGOs and R&I actors.

- **PIN location (country):** Belgium
- **Website:** <https://www.arctik.eu/>

5.5.5 Digital Africa

Digital Africa fosters inclusive development in African digital innovations. Backed by AFD-Proparco, DA has funding of 130mil EUR to support African innovative entrepreneurs, focused on high-impact, scalable start-ups. Its network consists of 60+ partners, 6000+ entrepreneurs, with focal points in Paris, Dakar, and Johannesburg. DA was previously involved in AEDIB | NET.

- **PIN location (country):** France
- **Website:** <https://www.digital-africa.co/en>

5.5.6 ENRICH in Africa Center (EiAC)

ENRICH in Africa Center (EiA-C) is a pivotal platform in the EU-AU innovation landscape, functioning as a bridge between African and European innovation ecosystems. Established under the EU's Horizon 2020 program, EiA-C has cultivated a robust network of over 180+ Champions (incubators/accelerators/hubs, R&I actors), 40+ partners, and a network of experts. Through strategic partnerships, EiA-C facilitates sustainable business development and cross-continental collaboration.

- **PIN location (country):** South Africa
- **Website:** <https://www.enrichinafrica.com/>

5.5.7 European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN)

EBN is a pan-European network of Business Support Organisations with 171 members across more than 65 countries. It actively contributes to various AU-EU initiatives aimed at strengthening innovation ecosystems by empowering Business Support Organisations. This is achieved through a range of activities, including EU-funded projects such as SEADE, ENRICH in Africa, AEDIB | NET, and BIC Africa.

- **PIN location (country):** Belgium
- **Website:** www.ebn.eu



5.5.8 Institute for Qualifying Innovation Research and Consulting (IQIB)

IQIB is an innovative think and do tank for transformation, transfer and impact. As a subsidiary of the German Aerospace Center (DLR) it conducts research, assessments, trainings and consulting activities on technological developments and innovation ecosystems strategies, structures and processes. As part of this, it develops and tests new methods for analysis, strategic planning, and evaluation in complex social and technological systems. In its academy it offers trainings for decision makers and researchers in fields such as Smart City Concepts, Health and Strategic Foresight & Roadmapping. In African-European projects, it has worked with public stakeholders, research institutes and science parks on the establishment and improvement of critical knowledge & technology transfer processes.

- **PIN location (country):** Germany
- **Website:** <https://www.iqib.de/>

5.5.9 Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA)

SARIMA is a membership organisation that together research and innovation practitioners from across the Southern African Development Cooperation Region. It has 500+ members 10 African countries and a database of 2700+ stakeholders. It has implemented over 200 trainings and events around innovation, technology transfer, research management. SARIMA was involved in the Africa-Europe Innovation Partnership.

- **PIN location (country):** South Africa
- **Website:** <https://www.sarima.co.za/>

5.5.10 Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação Consultadoria Empresarial e Fomento da Inovação SA (SPI)

SPI is a consultancy focused on science, technology, and innovation. They have previously worked on projects such as Innowwide, Africa IP Helpdesk, BIC Africa, SEADE, Enrich in Africa, and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Angola.

- **PIN location (country):** Portugal
- **Website:** <https://www.spi.pt/en/>

5.5.11 Technopolis Group - Africa

Technopolis Africa, established in 2020, is a public policy consultancy that has quickly become a dynamic entity born from the vision of African empowerment and autonomy. It accompanies global shifts toward equitable partnerships and knowledge transitions to the South. and addresses key sectors: science, technology,



innovation, private sector development, entrepreneurship, higher education, youth, gender, health, SMEs, green growth, and global health
 Technopolis Africa is also part of the consortium supporting the AU-EU HPLD on STI.

- **PIN location (country):** Ivory Coast
- **Website:** <https://technopolis-group.com/>

5.5.12 Technopolis Group - Germany

Description: The German office of Technopolis Group TG DE is part of the consortium supporting the AU-EU HPLD on STI. It has also participated in the consortium implementing the AU-EU Innovation Partnership, also engaged with WAITRO. As a group specialised in STI, they are experts in the innovation ecosystem both in Europe and in Africa.

- **PIN location (country):** Germany
- **Website:** <https://technopolis-group.com/>

5.5.13 Technopolis Group - Netherlands

The Dutch office of Technopolis Group, TG NL, is part of the consortium supporting the AU-EU HPLD on STI. It has also participated in the consortium implementing the AU-EU Innovation Partnership, also engaged with WAITRO. As a company specialised in STI, they are experts in the innovation ecosystem both in Europe and in Africa.

- **PIN location (country):** the Netherlands
- **Website:** <https://technopolis-group.com/>

5.5.14 The Youth Café (TYC)

The Youth Café is a network activating African youth, engaging them through various activities such as Youth Informal Housing Challenge: Ideation and Innovation and Advancing Youth Online Civic Reasoning in Africa. With 900k+ organisational/individual members as part of their network, they are a CSO focused on African youth also with extensive experience in communications campaigns.

- **PIN location (country):** Kenya
- **Website:** <https://www.theyouthcafe.com/>

5.5.15 VC4A

VC4A strengthens Africa's start up community by connecting entrepreneurs with the knowledge, network, and funding to succeed. With a community of 250K+ members, including 28,000 active start-ups, and 1,400+ investment firms, they are also involved



the African-European innovation ecosystem through projects like develoPPP, Work in Progress! and Ventures Lifecycle Support Programmes.

- **PIN location (country):** the Netherlands
- **Website:** <https://vc4a.com/>

