

**Report on Feedback and Input from the Public Consultation on the  
Working Document of the Joint  
“African Union (AU) – European Union (EU)  
Innovation Agenda”**



Prepared by the Task Force of the Ad-hoc Innovation Agenda Working Group  
of the Bureau of the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science,  
Technology and Innovation (STI)

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## Executive Summary

The African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Innovation Agenda is a brand-new and in the making-initiative aiming to foster the translation of Research & Innovation (R&I) endeavours into tangible positive impact on the ground. It is the outcome of the first Ministerial meeting of AU and EU Ministers of R&I of July 2020, during which it was agreed that more needs to be done to enable R&I projects to turn into products, businesses, services and jobs, in Africa and Europe. Following its drafting throughout the year 2021, the Bureau of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) launched an online public consultation (from 14 February to 30 June 2022) on the working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, for both private citizens and organisations aiming to obtain feedback on the proposed document, and input on potential additional and/or alternative objectives, actions, main beneficiaries, and work streams.

On the whole, 303 participations were recorded; 54% of which provided by individuals (private citizens) and 46% by organisations. The majority of contributions (62.4%) were recorded from Africa, followed by those from Europe (32.7%), both Africa and Europe (1.3%), North America (1.3%), Africa and North America (1%); South America (1%); Africa and Oceania (1%); and Africa, Asia and Europe (1%). Half the number of contributions (50%), came from Public Higher Education Institutions, followed by those from Non-profit or Civil Society Organisations (15%), governmental entities (10%), business enterprises (8.5%) and start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs (5.6%).

Overall, the feedback received from the consultation very much welcomed the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and endorsed the objectives and actions that it proposes. Respondents highlighted the need to build on the good results that have already been achieved in joint AU-EU Research & Innovation (R&I) cooperation, but also the importance of collaborating inclusively across sectors from the conception throughout the implementation phases (i.e. in the short-, medium- and long-term).

The need to enhance capacity in terms of infrastructure, training (staff and students' exchanges included) and funding was highly mentioned. Moreover, respondents emphasised the importance of monitoring and evaluating results to ensure the successful implementation of the Agenda. While researchers and research institutions were deemed as key beneficiaries of the work of the Agenda, the importance of involving other groups was widely acknowledged, going beyond Higher Education Institutions and involving schools, local communities (in urban and rural areas), leveraging and protecting indigenous know-how, empowering youth, women and vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities included) and engaging the African diaspora.

Potential additional routes of action were also suggested, especially in the short-term and medium-term. The possibility of including a short-term and a medium-term action explicitly focusing on agriculture, food security and water as well as medium-term on infrastructure and manufacturing capacity, were also raised. Further initiatives planned for the coming weeks as part of the continued stakeholder dialogue on the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, will build on the findings from this consultation. The AU-EU HLPD Bureau and its Working Group on the Innovation Agenda will ensure these recommendations will be well-reflected in the final version of AU-EU Innovation Agenda, to be presented for adoption during the first quarter of 2023.

## 1. Background: the AU-EU Innovation Agenda

The **African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Innovation Agenda** is a brand-new and in the making-initiative aiming to foster the translation of Research & Innovation (R&I) endeavours into tangible positive impact on the ground.

It is the outcome of the first ever **Ministerial meeting of AU and EU Ministers of R&I of July 2020**, organised under the aegis of the **AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)**, during which it was agreed that more needs to be done to enable R&I projects to turn into **products, businesses, services and jobs, in Africa and Europe**.

With this ambition, a preliminary, working version of the Innovation Agenda was drafted in 2021 by the AU and the EU Commissions, together with AU and EU Member States and AUDA–NEPAD. The draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda outlines **4 objectives** and **short-, medium- and long-term actions** according to the four priority areas of the AU-EU cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, namely (i) **Public Health**, (ii) **Green Transition**, (iii) **Innovation and Technology**, and (iv) **Capacities for Science**. In addition, the Agenda foresees also actions for an additional area of (v) **Cross-cutting** issues, spanning across the different priority areas.

The working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda can be accessed at the hyperlink [here](#).

Following a very **positive reception by Senior Officials of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation in January 2022**, the draft Innovation Agenda was acknowledged by the **Declaration of the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-AU Summit 2022 of Heads of State and Government of February 2022** as a means to step up scientific cooperation, to develop knowledge jointly and share technology and expertise.

The year 2022 is dedicated to a **stakeholder consultation process**, which aims to gather feedback and input from citizens and organisations on the working document of AU-EU Innovation Agenda, to ensure this will be as **pertinent as possible to societal needs**. Indeed, the draft, working version of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda is considered a **“living document”** as it is expected to be possibly updated in the months to come, based on the feedback and input received from stakeholders, citizens and their organisations. In particular, stakeholders’ inputs and views are gathered by the means of **two main initiatives** throughout the year namely (i) an **online public consultation** (whose outcome is presented in this report) and (ii) a **Stakeholder Event**, to take place on 23 and 24 November 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya (and online, according to a “hybrid” format).

The final version of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda will then be presented for adoption at the **second AU-EU Research & Innovation Ministerial meeting**, in the **first quarter of 2023**.

## 2. Public consultation: rationale, design and analysis

The online public consultation on the **working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda** was conceived with the dual goal to benefit from stakeholders' (i) **feedback** on the proposed document and (ii) **input** on potential additional and/or alternative objectives, actions, main beneficiaries and work streams.

To do so, an online survey was designed encompassing a total number of 15 questions, seven of which of **Multiple Choice** type and eight of which (i.e. Questions #5, #6, #9, #11, #12 'Other', #13, #14 and #15) being **Open**. Only two out of eight open questions (i.e. Questions #13 and #14) were mandatory to be answered, for the survey to be finalised.

In addition to the 15 survey question and an introductory paragraph, the survey webpage also bore PDF files of the working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, in English as well as translated in French, Portuguese and Arabic. In the introductory section, survey takers were indeed invited to read the draft of the Agenda before answering the questions.

The online public consultation was launched on Monday, 14 February 2022, during the opening day of the EU-Africa Week (during which the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-AU Summit took place). Initially planned to be closed at the end of Friday, 13 May 2022, the consultation was eventually kept open until the end of Thursday, 30 June 2022, so to gather more feedback and input from as many stakeholders as possible.

The survey was published and administrated using the EUSurvey web portal (on the url: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/IAPublicConsultation>, no longer active).

The public consultation was open to contributions by either private citizens or organisations. All respondents were provided with the opportunity to express their willingness to keep their names as anonymous and unpublished.

The feedback and input gathered through this public consultation was analysed by a dedicated "Task Force" of the "Ad-hoc Innovation Agenda Working Group of the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)" comprising 10 public sector and academic professionals of both the AU and the EU, of different educational backgrounds, spanning social and natural sciences (see Acknowledgements Section for more details).

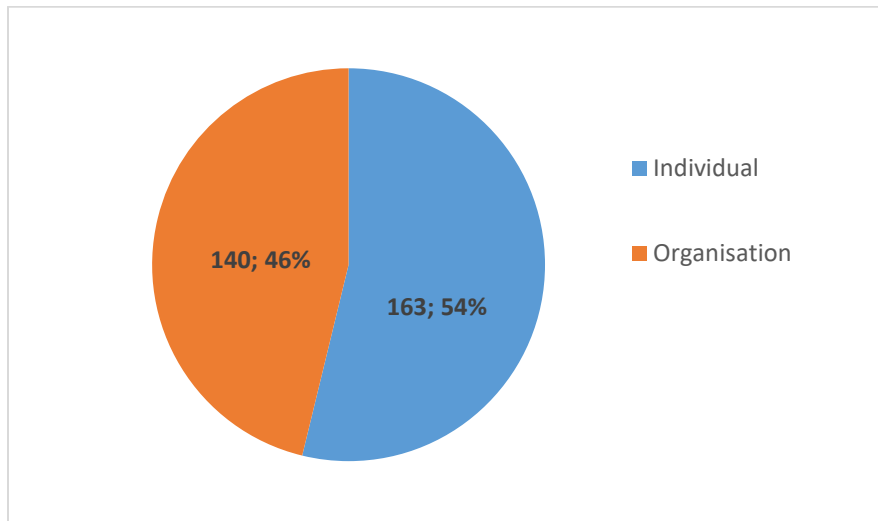
### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Participation

##### 3.1.1 Overview and Geographical Provenance

On the whole, a total number of 303 participations were recorded (average of approximately 2.2 contributions/day). Of these, **54% (n=163)** were provided by **individuals** (private citizens) and **46% (n=140)** by **organisations** (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Breakdown of overall contributions (n=303) by individuals and organisations



In terms of geographical provenance, the majority of contributions (62.4%; n=189) were recorded from **Africa**, followed by those from **Europe** (32.7%; n=99). A much more limited number of participations had different provenances such as both **Africa and Europe** (1.3%; n=5); **North America** (1.3%; n=5); **Africa and North America**; **UK and Africa**; **South America**; **Africa and Oceania**; and **Africa, Asia and Europe** (0.3%; n=1 for each of them) (Figures 2 and 3). Please note that, for the sake of this assessment, the wording of Africa and Europe were employed instead of the African Union and European Union, so to include all countries comprised within their respective physical boundaries of such geographical entities (e.g. UK, Switzerland and Norway in the case of Europe).



Outcome of the Public Consultation on the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda, Oct. 2022

Figure 2 – Provenance of contributions according to continents (percentages).

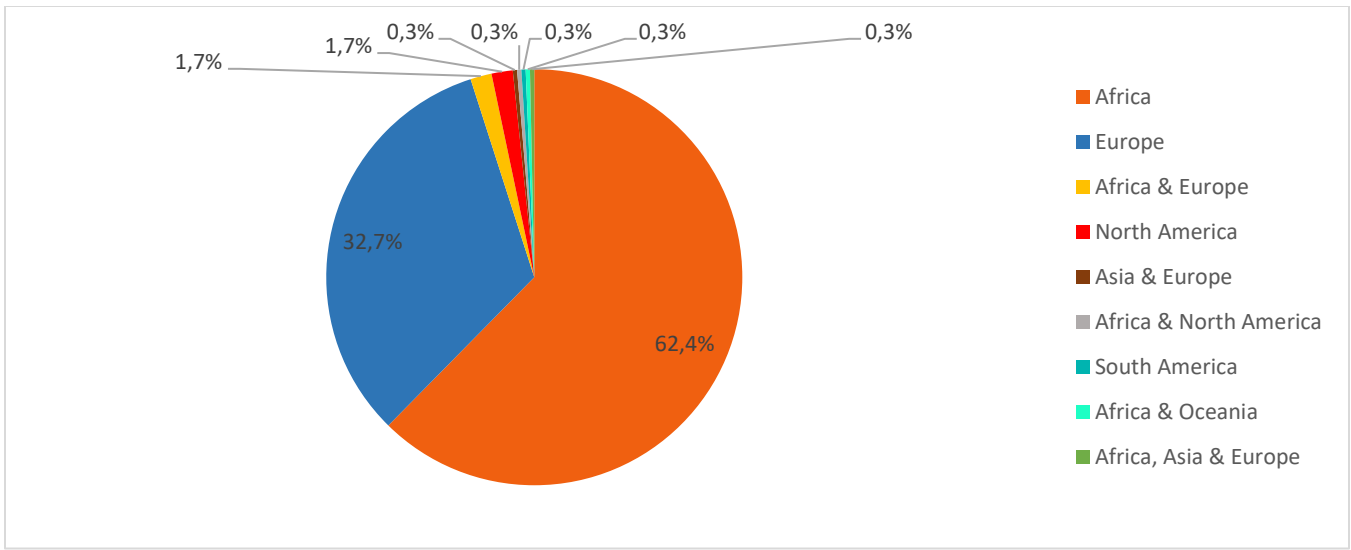
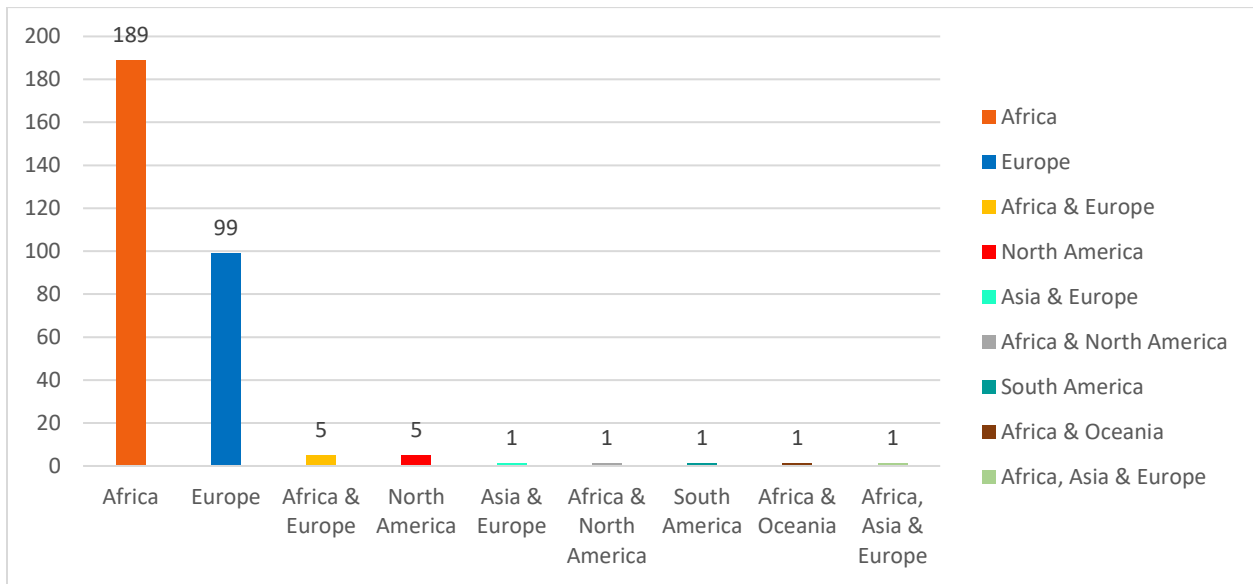
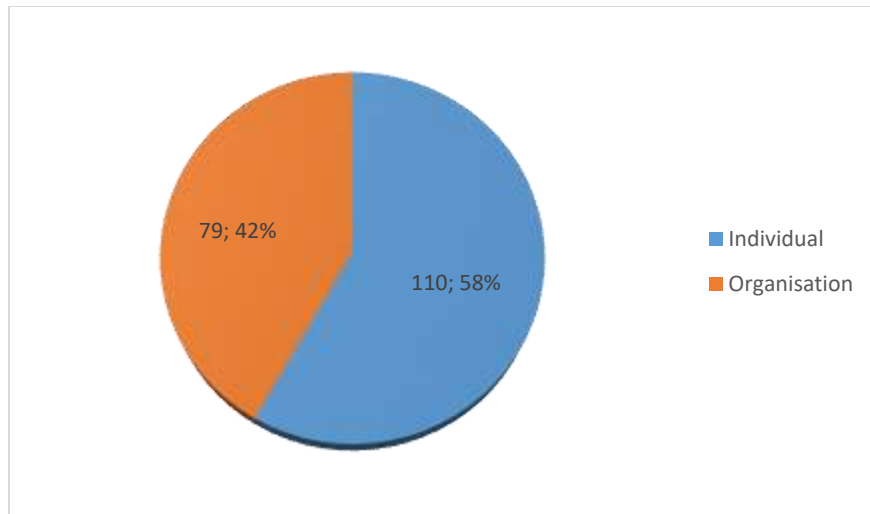


Figure 3 – Provenance of contributions according to continents (actual numbers)



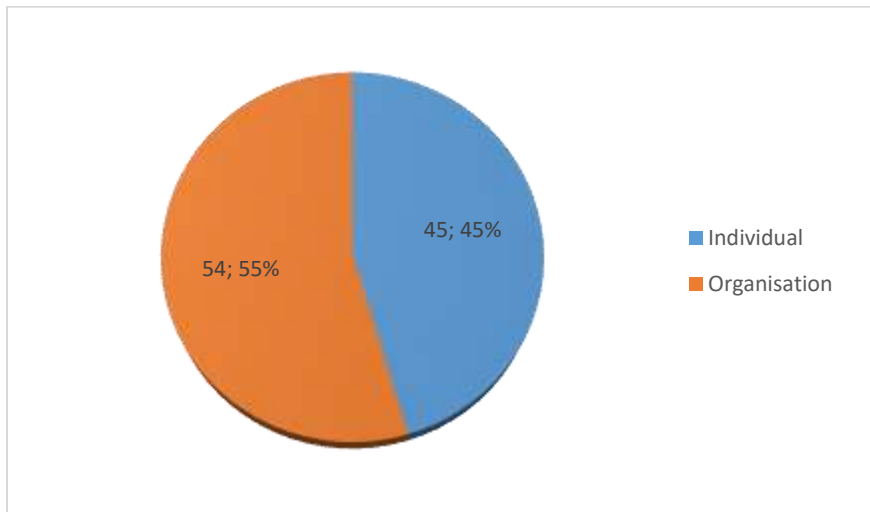
More than half of the total of contributions recorded from **Africa** (58%, n=111) came from individuals, while 42% of them (n=72) came from organisations (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4 – Breakdown of contributions from Africa by individuals and organisations.



In the case of Europe, slightly more than half of contributions (55% of the total from Europe) came from organisations, with 45% of them (n=45) coming from individuals (**Figure 5**).

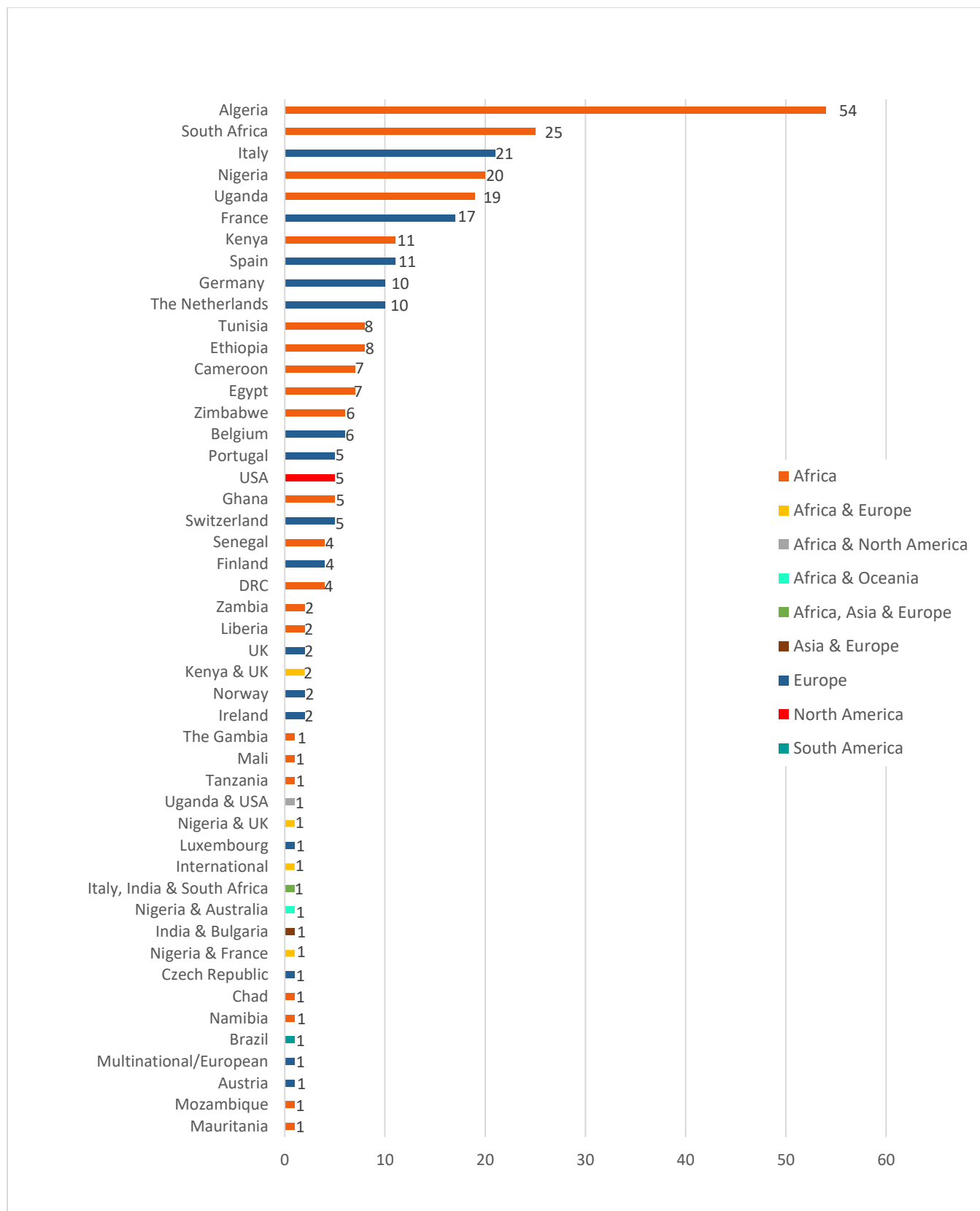
Figure 5 – Breakdown of contributions from Europe by individuals and organisations.



**Figure 6** and **Figure 7** provide an overview of participations according to countries, reflecting either the nationality of individual participants or the country of origin of contributing organisations. On the whole, participations were recorded from **41 countries**, 22 of which from Africa, 16 from Europe, 2 from Americas (i.e. USA and Brazil) and 1 from Oceania (i.e. Australia). Among the top 10 contributing countries, **five of them are from Africa** [i.e. **Algeria** (n=54; 18%), **South Africa** (n=25; 8%), **Nigeria** (n=20; 7%); **Uganda** (n=19; 6%) and **Kenya** (n=11; 5%)] and **five from Europe** [i.e. **Italy** (n=21; 7%), **France** (n=17; 6%), **Spain** (n=11; 5%), **The Netherlands** and **Germany** (n=10; 3% for both; in the case of Germany, including also a case of “African diaspora” as specified by the survey respondent)].

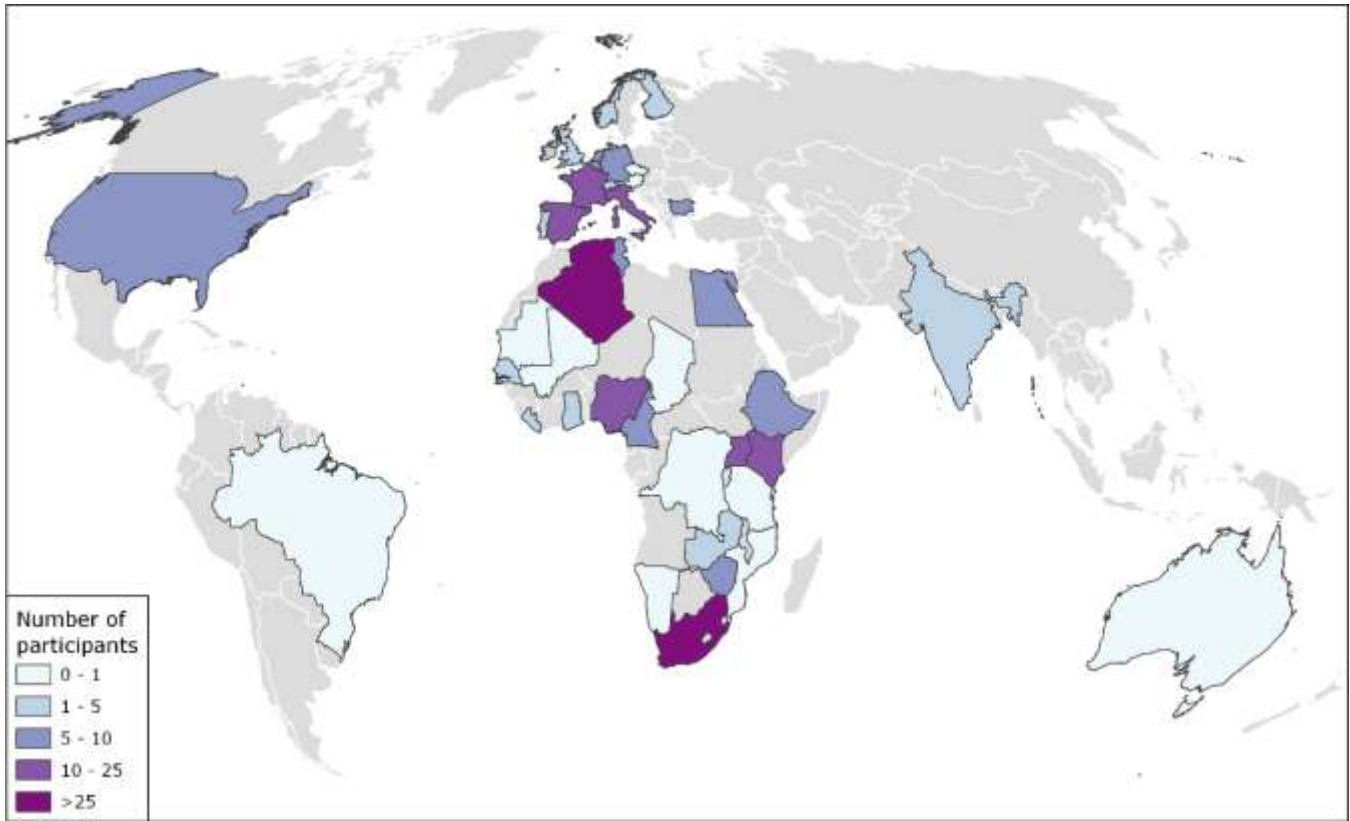
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Figure 6 – Overview of participations according to countries and continents.



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*Figure 7 – Map of provenance of participations*  
(showing either nationalities of individual stakeholders or countries of origin of participating organisations).  
For countries in darker colours participations in larger numbers were recorded than for countries in paler nuances.



Figures 8 and 9 provide the breakdown of “individual vs organisation” participations according to continents, grouped at continental level, for Africa (Figure 8) and Europe (Figure 9). Overall, a remarkable number of organisations from Algeria and France took part in the consultation.

Figure 8 – Overview of participations by individuals and organisations according to African countries.

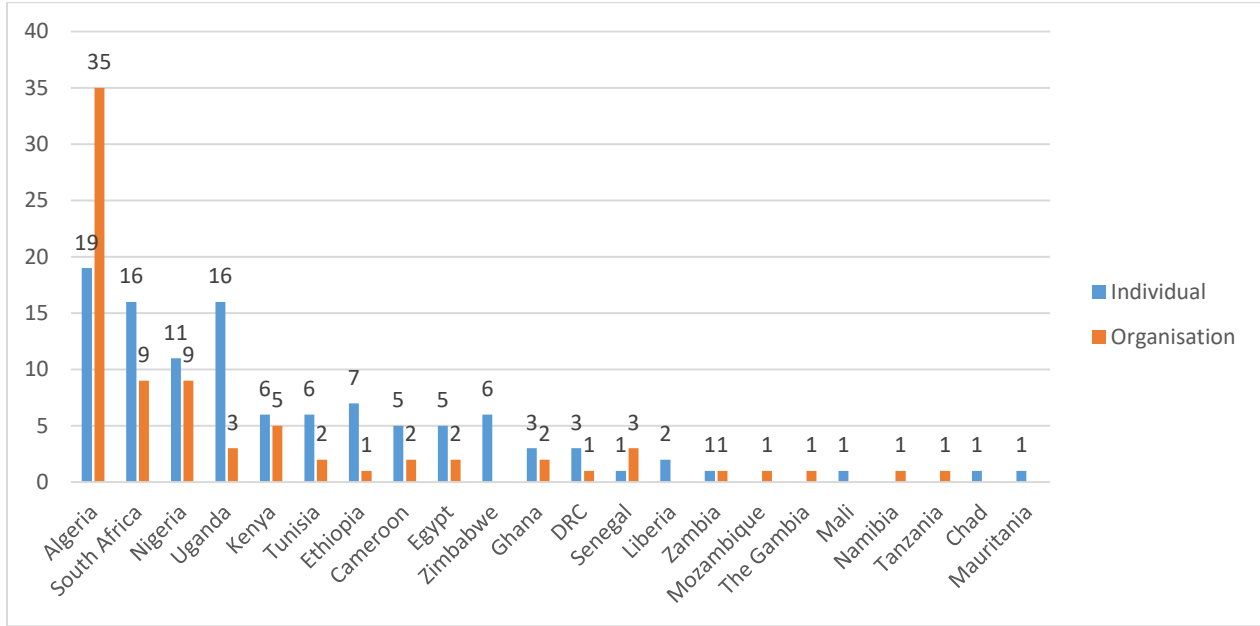
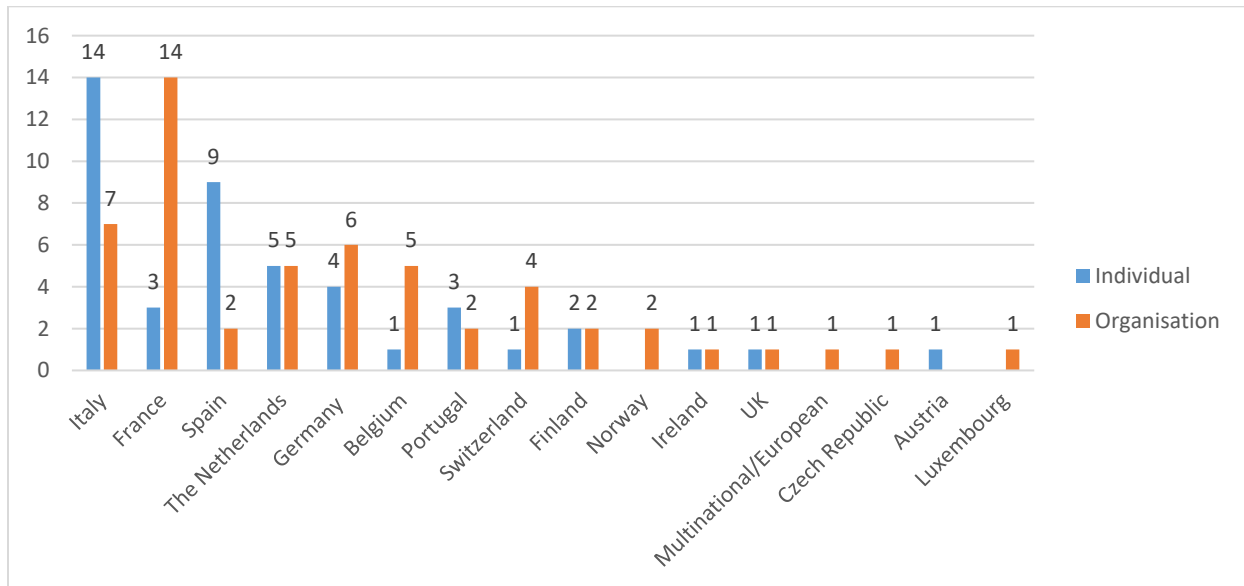


Figure 9 – Overview of participations by individuals and organisations according to European countries.



**Table 1** below illustrates the breakdown of participations from another provenance than either Africa or Europe. Interestingly, 4 out of 5 participations recorded from North America (all of them from the USA) originated from organisations.

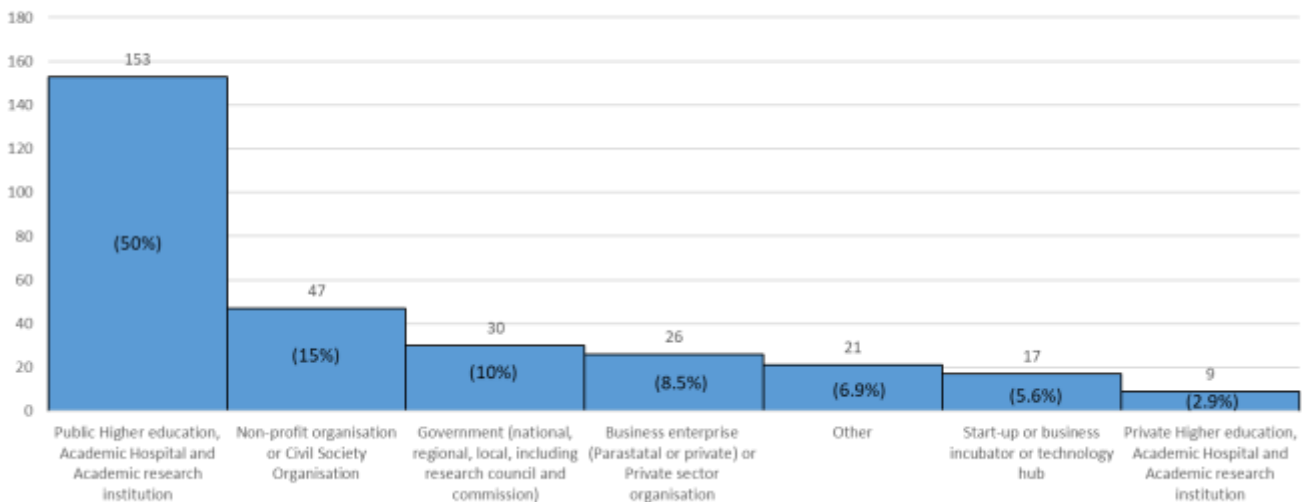
Table 1 – Participations by individuals and organisations according to continents other than Africa-only or Europe-only.

Other continents	Individuals	Organisations
Africa & Europe	4	1
North America	1	4
South America	1	-
African & North America	1	-
Africa & Oceania	1	-
Asia & Europe	-	1
Africa, Asia & Europe	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

### 3.1.2 Sectoral Background

As shown by **Figure 10**, on the whole, half the number of contributions (50%, n=153), from either individuals or organisations, came from **Public Higher Education**, followed by those from **Non-profit or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)** (15%, n=47), **governmental entities** (10%, n=30), **business enterprises** (8.5%, n=26) and **start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs** (5.6%, n=17). If considering business enterprises and start-ups all together, participations from the **private sector** amounted to 14% (n=43). Cases in which respondents chose the option of “other” included the cases of associations, university networks, scientific societies, product development partnerships (PDPs), Horizon 2020 projects, a promotional bank and innovation agency and a sub-contractor/member of an expert panel.

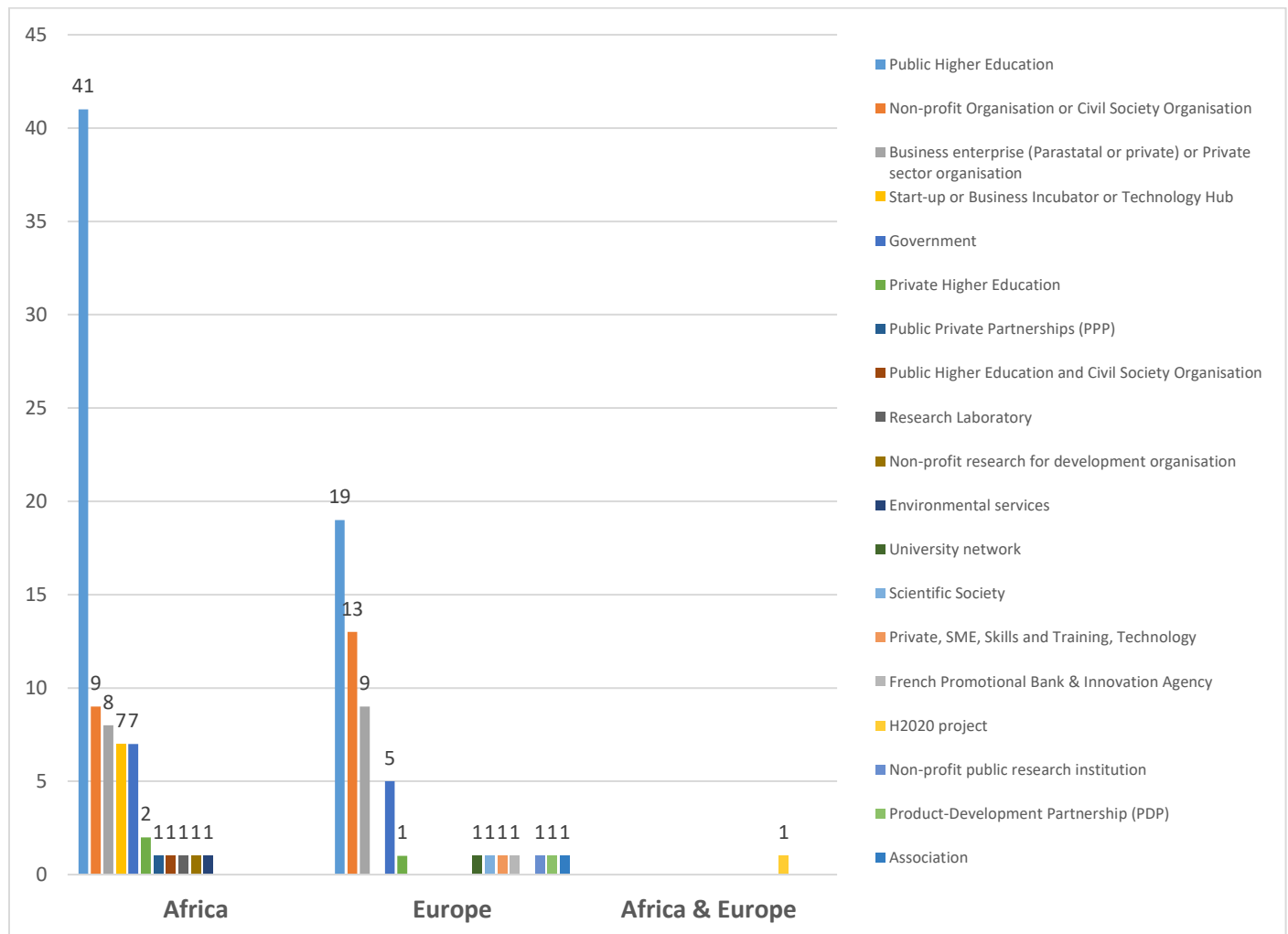
Figure 10 – Overview of participations (by both individuals and organisations) according to sectors.



As shown by **Figure 11**, the most represented backgrounds matched for both Africa and Europe, being, in decreasing order, those of (i) **Public Higher Education** (by far the most represented), (ii) **Non-profit or Civil Society Organisations**, (iii) **business enterprises**, and (v) **governmental organisations**. Interestingly, all **start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs** participating in the public consultation were from the African continent, for which they represented the 4<sup>th</sup> most frequent type of organisation participating in the survey, together with governmental entities. Moreover, 7 additional African stakeholders from start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs contributed to the survey as “individuals”. In the case of Europe, three stakeholders working in start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs still took part in the survey, although on their own behalf, as “individuals”.

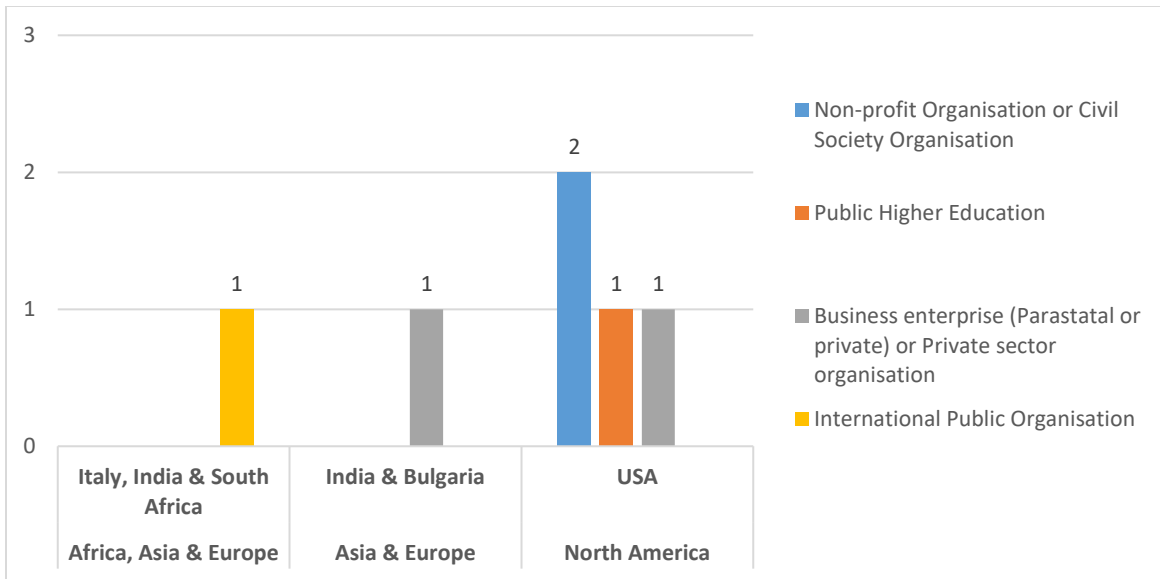
Only one “organisation” had a dual provenance from both Africa and Europe, being this a project funded under Horizon 2020, encompassing research groups in both continents.

Figure 11 – Backgrounds of organisations from Africa and Europe joining the public consultation.



**Figure 12** provides an overview of background of organisations contributing to survey from other provenances.

Figure 12 – Backgrounds of other organisations joining the public consultation.

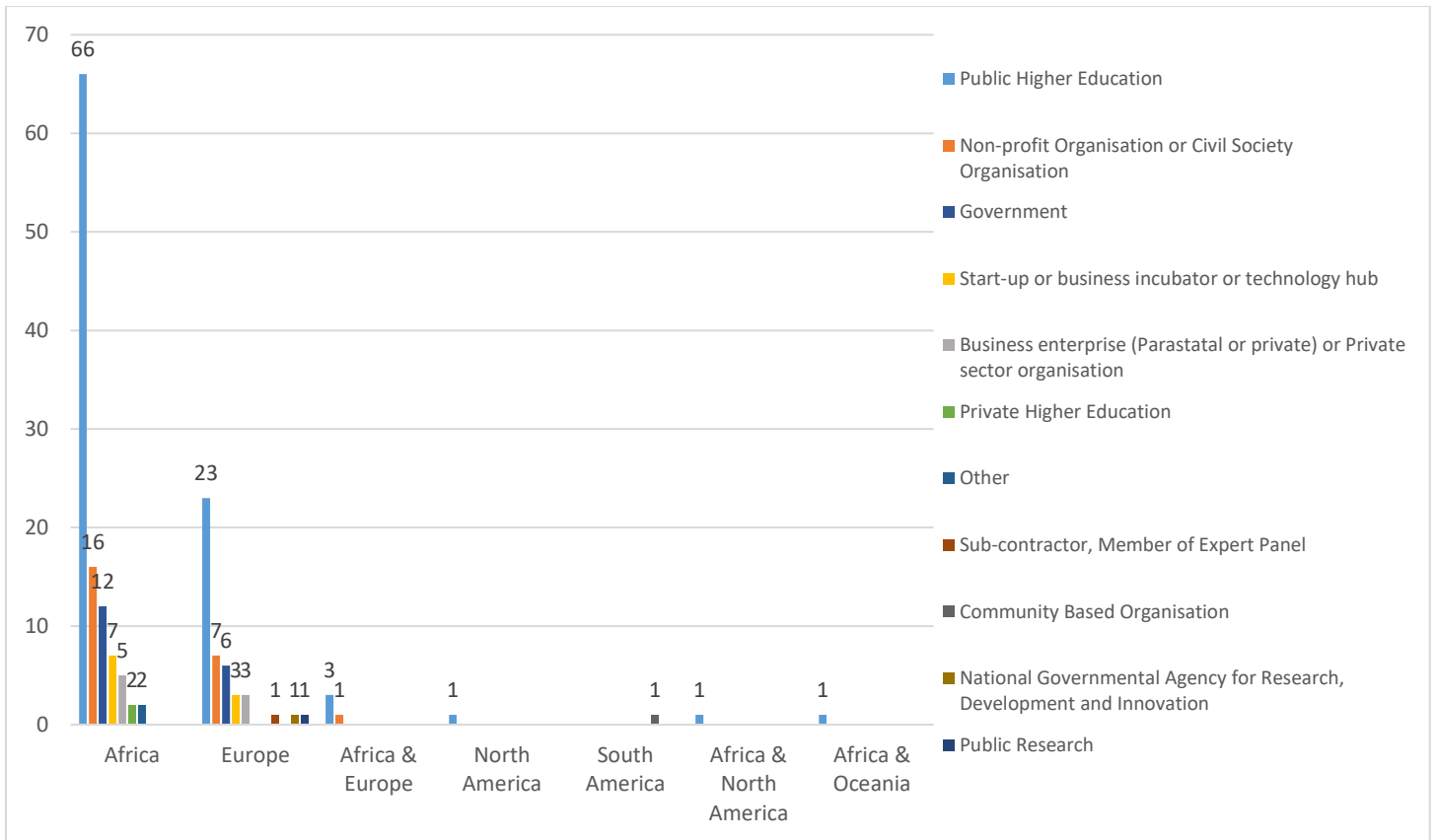


**Figure 13** illustrates backgrounds of individuals participating in the survey, according to different continents of origin. As for organisations, for both Africa and Europe the most frequent top four backgrounds were, in descending order, (i) **Public Higher Education**, (ii) **Non-profit Organisations or Civil Society Organisations**, (iii) **Government**, (iv) **Start-ups or business incubators or technology hubs** and (v) **business enterprises**.



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Figure 13 – Backgrounds of individuals from Africa and Europe joining the public consultation.



### 3.2 Multiple Choice Questions/Answers

#### 3.2.1 Analytical methodology

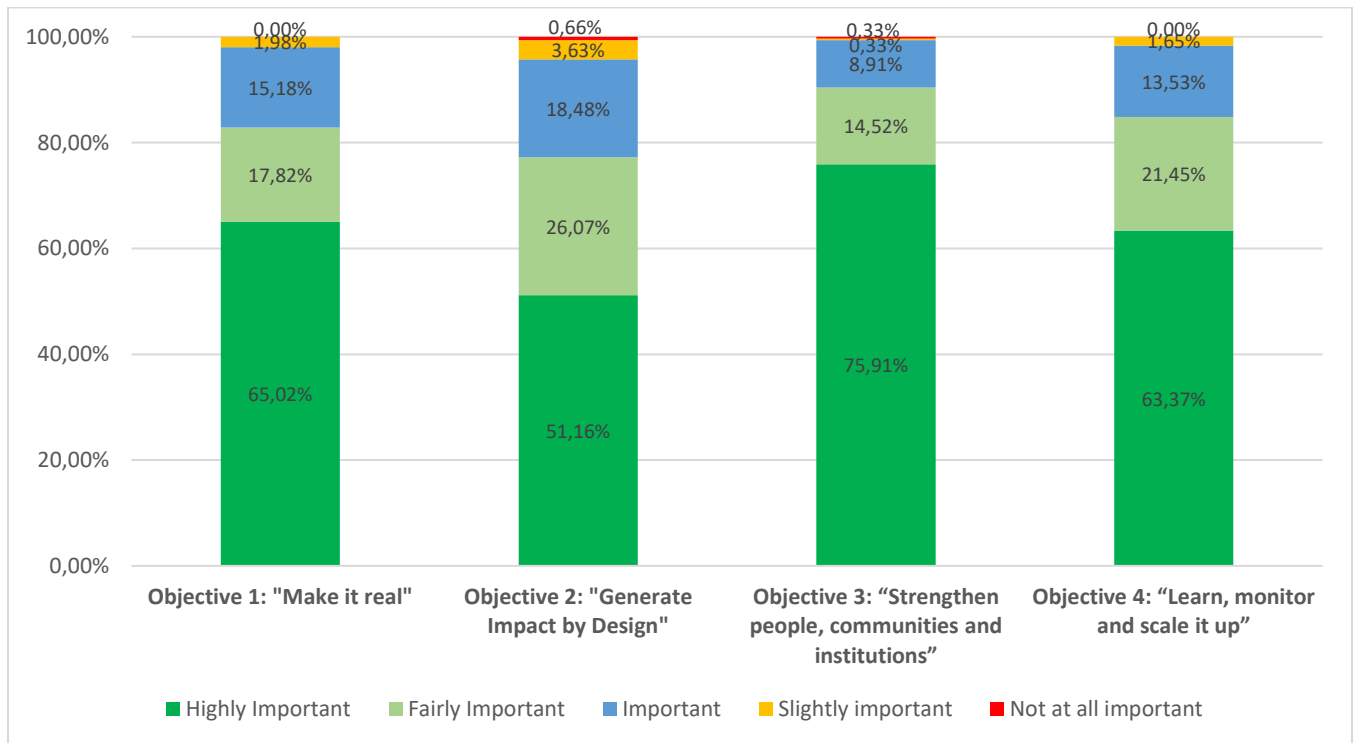
Answers from Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) were automatically analysed by the EUsurvey webpage, providing the breakdown of types of feedback for each question already expressed as percentages and “n” numbers of respondents. The Task Force of the Ad-hoc Innovation Agenda Working Group of the HLPD Bureau took then care of the graphical elaboration of these findings and their interpretation within the context of each question and taking into account the text of the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

### 3.2.2 Findings

#### 3.2.2.1 Objectives

The draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda proposes **four objectives**, namely (1) “**Make it real**”, (2) “**Generate impact by design**”, (3) “**Strengthen people, communities and institutions**” and (4) “**Learn, monitor and scale it up**”. **Figure 14** provides an overview of respondents’ appreciation of these **four objectives** (addressed by **Question 4** of the survey). Overall, all four objectives were esteemed with favourable scores, indicating their importance for participating stakeholders. More specifically, Objective 3 “**Strengthen people, communities and institutions**” received the highest score as “very important” (nearly 76%) among the four objectives, highlighting its relevance for the survey population. Objective 2 “**Generate impact by design**” was assessed with lowest percentage for “very important” (51.16%), among the four objectives, yet with the highest percentage for “fairly important” (26.07%). These results may be a reflection of the background of the survey population, the majority of whom came from non-policy-making sectors, and 50% of whom came specifically from public higher education institution, as illustrated above.

Figure 14 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of the four objectives proposed by the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

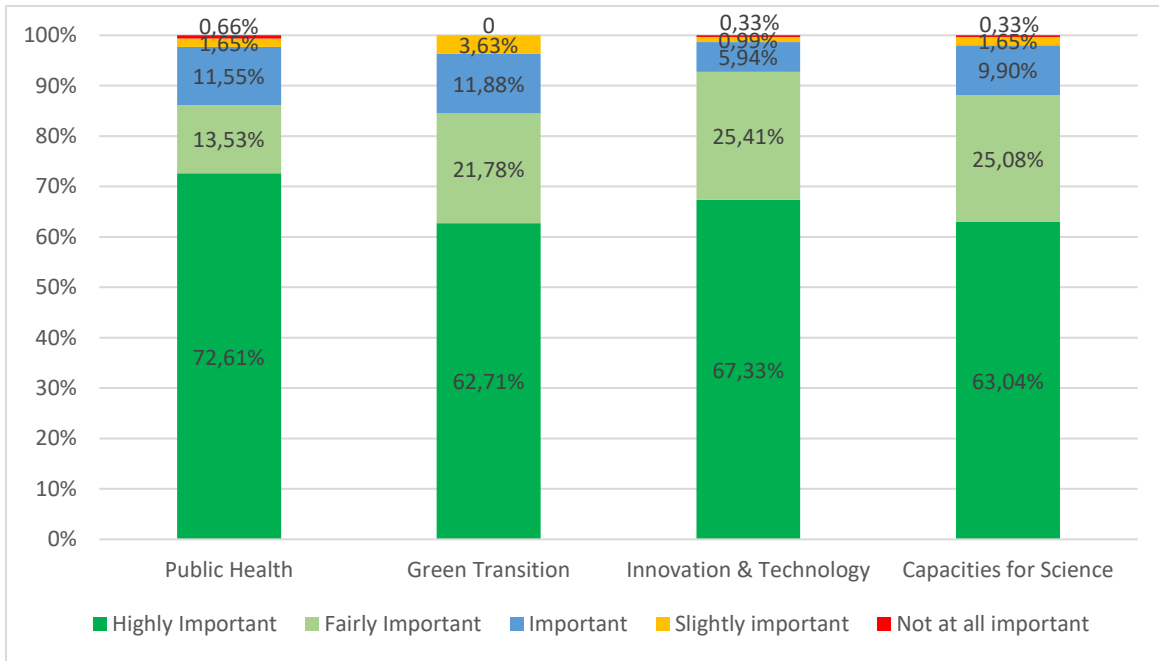


#### 3.2.2.2 Priority Areas

**Figure 15** outlines respondents’ feedback on the **four policy priorities** of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) (addressed by **Question 7** of the survey). Overall, all four priority areas were assessed with favourable scores by stakeholders, being esteemed as “very important” by

more than 60% of survey-takers. The priority area of **“Public Health”** received the highest score as “very important” (nearly 73%), highlighting its relevance for the survey population. When considering the percentages of respondents for both “very important” and slightly important”, the priority area of **“Innovation & Technology”** scored the highest, with an overall percentage of 92.74% of respondents considering it “more than important”, followed by that of **“Capacities for Science”** (88.12%), **“Public Health”** (86.14%) and **“Green Transition”** (84.49%).

Figure 15 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of the four priority areas of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

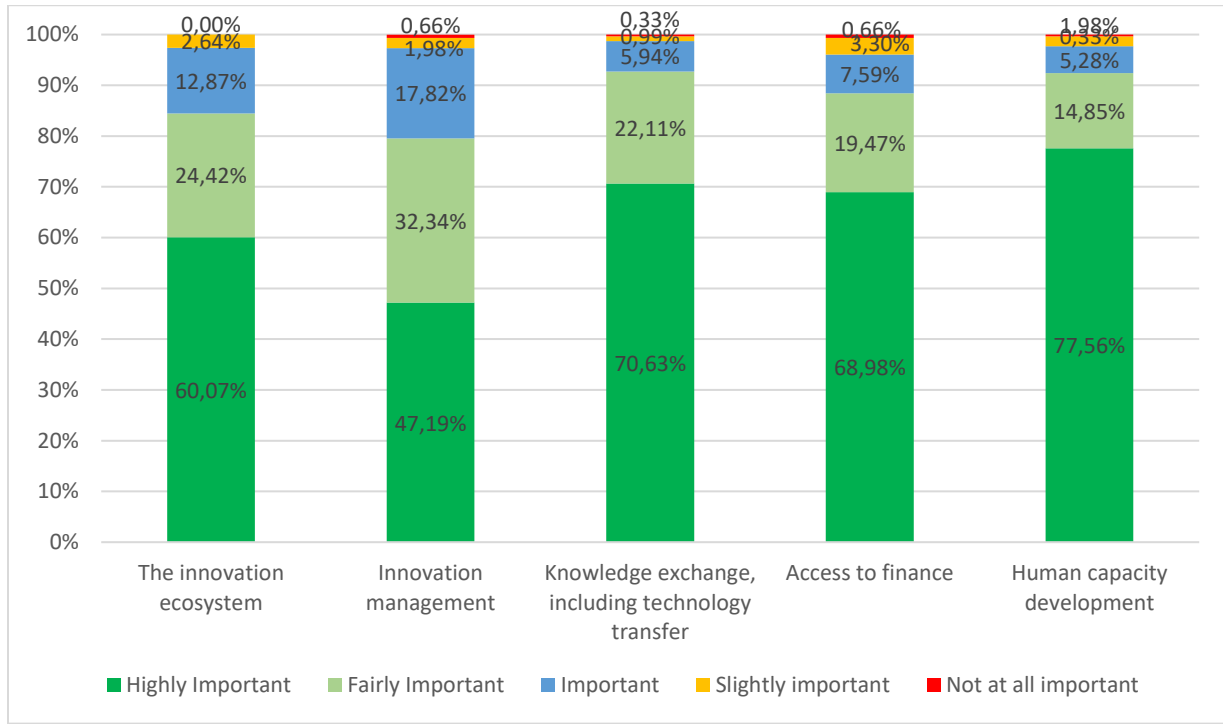


### 3.2.2.3 Gaps and Needs

Through the MCQ #8 survey takers were enquired on their appreciation of the **five tracks** of **“gaps & needs”** that are identified in the draft document of the Innovation Agenda, namely those of: (i) **the innovation ecosystem**, (ii) **innovation management**, (iii) **knowledge exchange**, including **technology transfer**, (iv) **access to finance** and (v) **human capacity development**.

**Figure 16** illustrates the overview of respondents’ feedback on these. On the whole, four out of the five tracks of gaps & needs were assessed as **“very important”** by at least 60% of respondents. The only exception was represented by the track of **“innovation management”**, deemed as “very important” by 47.19%. The one of **“human capacity development”** was deemed as “very important” by the largest number of respondents (77.56%). When considering response rates for both “very important” and “fairly important”, the area that gained the largest percentage was that of **Knowledge exchange, including technology transfer** (92.74%), followed by **Human Capacity Development** (92.41%) (difference of one response between the two), (iii) **access to finance** (88.45%), (iv) the **innovation ecosystem** (84.49%) and (v) **innovation management** (79.53%).

Figure 16 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of the five tracks of gaps & needs identified in the work that led to the working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and there outlined.



### 3.2.2.4 Actions

**Question 10** and its multiple choice sub-questions enquired respondents on their appreciation of the actions proposed by the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda (**Section 10.1** for **short-term actions**; **Section 10.2** for **medium-term actions** and **Section 10.3** for **long-term actions**).

On the whole, the Public Consultation gathered a very positive feedback on the Actions proposed by the working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

Considering at the feedback of “very important”, a slightly larger number of favourable answers were recorded, on average, for **long-term actions** (mean of 62.61%), followed by **short-term actions** (mean of 60.21%) and **medium-term actions** (mean of 57.32%). This was also the case when taking into account both feedbacks of “very important” and “fairly important”, for which the average mean percentage was recorded for **long-term actions** (mean of 85.33%), followed by **short-term actions** (mean of 84%) and **medium-term actions** (mean of 82.51%). Consequently, on the average, most questions were deemed “more than important” (“very important” and “fairly important”) by respondents.

#### I. Short-term actions

On the whole, all short-term actions except two (i.e. “Cross-cutting 3 of 4” and “Green Transition 2 of 2”) were deemed as “very important” by at least 50% of respondents. As shown in **Table 2**, **short-term action #1 of 2 for “Capacities for Science”** received the highest score for “very important” (71.62%), followed by **short-term**

**action #1 of 2 for “Innovation & Technology” (70.30%)**, underlining the importance for stakeholders of these two actions.

Considering the sum of the scores for both “very important” and “fairly important”, the top four most appreciated actions were, in decreasing order, (i) Innovation & Technology 1; (ii) Innovation and Technology 2; (iii) Capacities for Science 1 and (iv) Public Health 1. Action “Cross-cutting issues 3 of 4” scored the lowest by considering both the percentage of respondents appreciating as “very important” (42.90%) and the sum of percentages recorded for both “very important” and “fairly important” (72.93%) (see **Figure 17**).

Table 2 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of short-term actions according to areas of intervention. In bold are the highest percentage for each category (e.g. “very important”, “fairly important”, “important”, “slightly important” and “not at all important”).

Short-term Actions	% of respondents opting for degree of appreciation (number of respondents)				
	Very important	Fairly important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 1 of 4:</b> <i>“Fostering the links and networks between the business and government sectors, including private-public partnerships (PPP), 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 the innovation ecosystems.”</i>	66.67% (202)	18.81% (57)	13.20% (40)	0.99% (3)	0.33% (1)
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 2 of 4:</b> <i>“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 exploit their creative and collective intelligence, while making effective efforts to close the gender gap and to avoid any type of discrimination.”</i>	54.46% (165)	26.07% (79)	15.18% (46)	4.29% (13)	0% (0)
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 3 of 4:</b> <i>“Identifying and sharing climate resilience and adaptation practices during consultative meetings, aiming to avoid lock-in development paths and ‘Combat Climate Change Impacts’ (SDG 13)”</i>	42.90% (130)	30.03% (91)	24.09% (73)	2.64% (8)	0.33% (1)
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 4 of 4:</b> <i>“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.”</i>	58.42% (177)	24.09% (73)	12.54% (38)	4.95% (15)	0% (0)
<b>Public Health – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“Supporting the transformation of health R&amp;I outputs into relevant products, policy guidance and services.”</i>	58.09% (176)	23.43% (71)	14.52% (44)	3.63% (11)	0.33% (1)
<b>Public Health – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Developing joint innovation and research agendas on health priorities, enhancing best practices and common standards in the selected areas of cooperation, and spreading availability and use of key enabling and emerging technologies (e.g., digitalisation, ICT, robotics, AI) to enhance the performance and resilience of public health systems, which have been shown to be extremely fragile under the ‘stress test’ of the COVID-19</i>	64.69% (196)	22.77% (69)	11.55% (35)	0.99% (3)	0% (0)

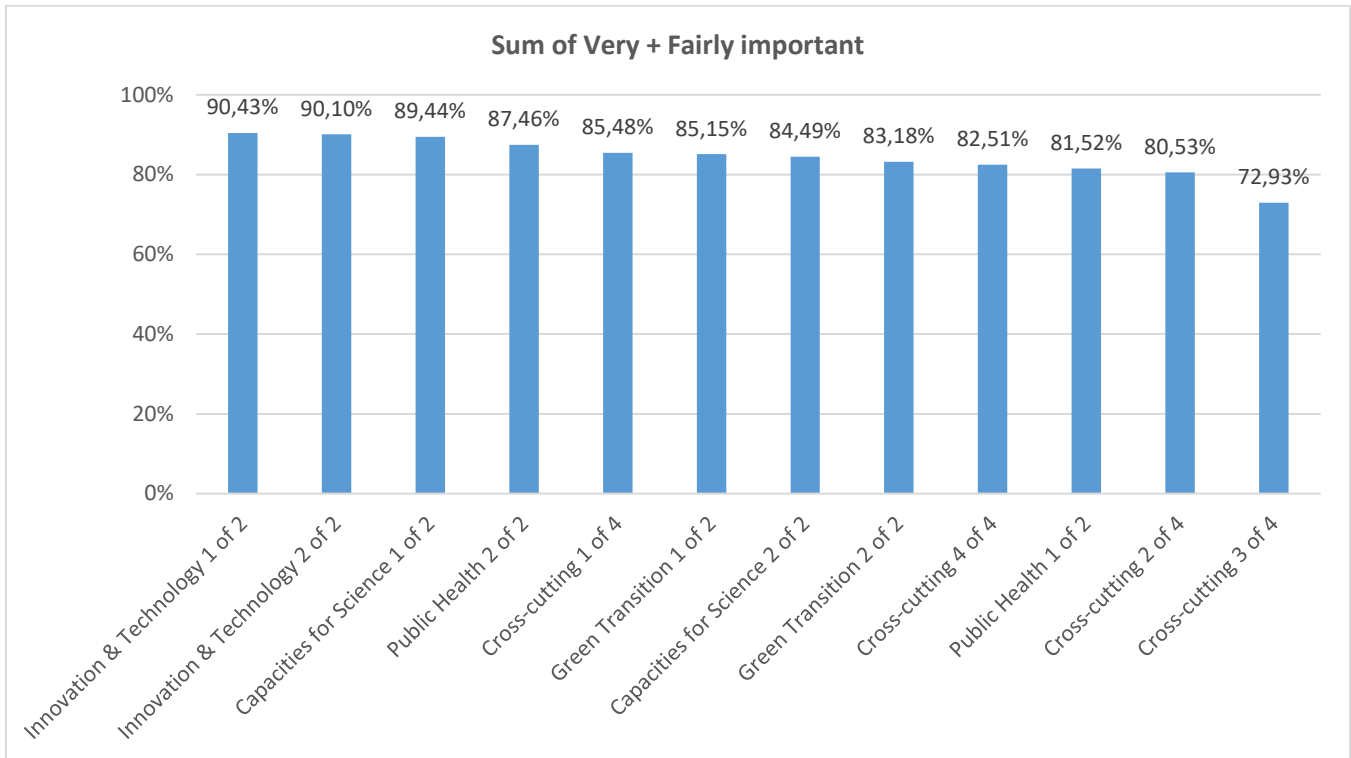
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<i>pandemic, that will be also impacted by on-going climate change.”</i>					
<b>Green transition – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“Developing or transferring innovative renewable energy production and use devices, suitable for easy and prompt adoption by ‘energy communities’, ‘energy villages’, and/or at household level, with affordable and sustainable access for less favoured territories and less favoured groups, to prevent deterioration of rural environments and improve the urban ones (smart &amp; green cities).”</i>	57.76% (175)	27.39% (83)	12.54% (38)	2.31% (7)	0% (0)
<b>Green transition – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Supporting the development of innovative climate services through a new “space science, technical and innovation cooperation” action for risk reduction at local and regional level, based on in-situ and remote networks of climate changes and impacts, as well as on resilience and adaptation practices, in line with the Lisbon Manifesto of the High-Level Europe-Africa Forum on Earth Observation from Space of July 2021.”</i>	48.86% (142)	34.32% (104)	15.51% (47)	2.31% (7)	0.99% (3)
<b>Innovation &amp; Technology – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“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.”</i>	70.30% (213)	20.13% (61)	7.26% (22)	2.31% (7)	0% (0)
<b>Innovation &amp; Technology – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“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.”</i>	69.64% (211)	20.46% (62)	8.25% (25)	1.32% (4)	0.33% (1)
<b>Capacities for Science – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“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.”</i>	71.62% (217)	17.82% (54)	10.23% (31)	0.33% (1)	0% (0)
<b>Capacities for Science – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Improve the transparency and recognition of higher education qualifications and the relevance of curricula, and to enhance mobility. Foster the development of high-performing digital education systems and upgrade digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.”</i>	59.08% (179)	25.41% (77)	13.86% (42)	1.65% (5)	0% (0)

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<b>Mean %</b>	60.21%	24.23%	13.23%	2.31%	0.19%
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Figure 17 – Ranking of short-term actions according to the sum of percentages of respondents esteeming them as “very important” and “fairly important”.



## II. Medium-term Actions

All medium-term actions except one (i.e. “Green Transition 2 of 2”) were deemed as “very important” by at least 50% of respondents. As illustrated in **Table 3, medium-term action 1 of 1 for “Public Health”** received the highest score for “very important” (67.00%), followed by **medium-term action 1 of 2 for “Capacities for Science”** (64.36%).

When considering the sum of the scores for both “very important” and “fairly important”, the top three most appreciated actions were, in decreasing order, (i) Public Health 1 of 1; (ii) Capacities for Science 1 of 2 and (iii) Green Transition 1 of 2. The medium-term action “Green Transition 2 (of 2)” scored the lowest by considering both the percentage of respondents appreciating as “very important” (48.51%) and the sum of percentages recorded for both “very important” and “fairly important” (76.89%) (see **Figure 18**). Although the highest percentage of respondents considered it as “fairly important” (28.38%), this action gathered also the largest percentage for “slightly important” (being the only action that had a percentage higher than 5%, i.e. 5.94%) and “not at all important” (i.e. 0.66%, equal to two respondents).



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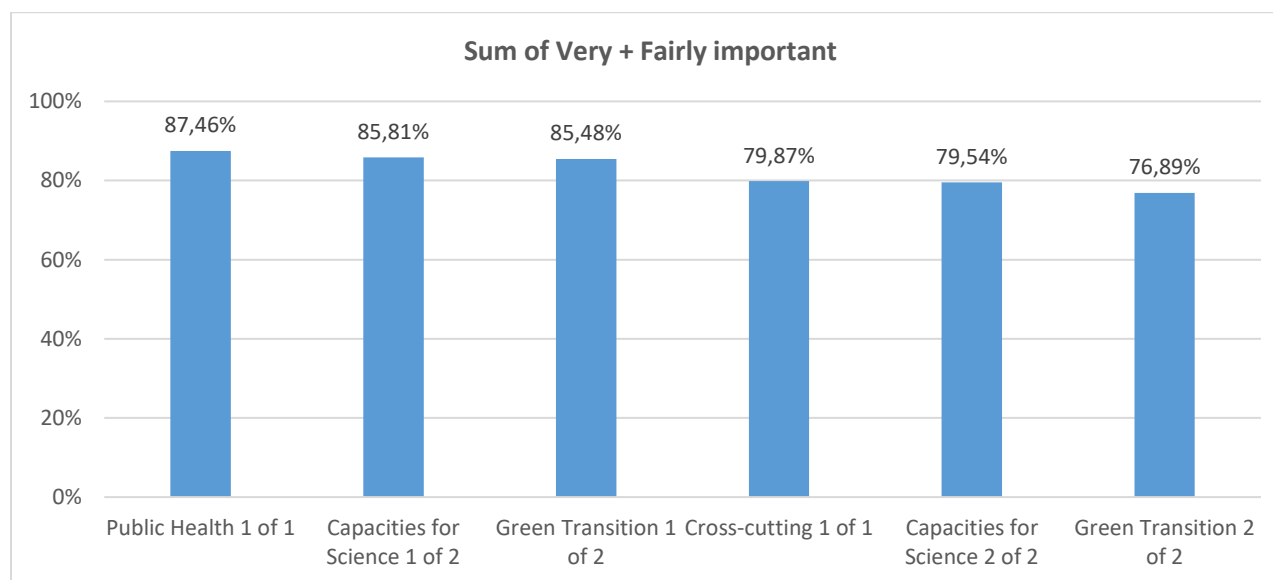
Table 3 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of medium-term actions according to areas of intervention. In bold are the highest percentage for each category (e.g. “very important”, “fairly important”, “important”, “slightly important” and “not at all important”).

Medium-term Actions	% of respondents opting for degree of appreciation (number of respondents)				
	Very important	Fairly important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 1 of 1:</b> <i>“Re-skilling and/or upskilling citizens of all ages in countries in the AU and in the EU, to allow them all to profit from innovation and technologies, and to counteract the insurgence of new or the increase of existing inequalities and/or discriminations, targeting SDGs 8, 9 and 13.”</i>	52.48% (159)	27.39% (83)	16.50% (50)	3.3% (10)	0.33% (1)
<b>Public Health – 1 of 1:</b> <i>“Ensuring technology transfer and improving and developing quality vaccine, medicines and health technologies and production, to avoid shortage and ensure affordability, availability, and accessibility for the people in need, while also ensuring equal distribution among geographical areas.”</i>	<b>67.00%</b> <b>(203)</b>	20.46% (62)	10.89% (33)	1.32% (4)	0.33% (1)
<b>Green transition – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“Fostering digital applications and green technologies to give impetus to agro-ecological production, healthy and sustainable food processing and consumption, and by co-designing with food system actors to scale digital solutions for production, processing and marketing to support sustainable and agroecological transition.”</i>	59.08% (179)	26.40% (80)	11.55% (35)	2.97% (9)	0% (0)
<b>Green transition – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Developing in Africa renewable fuels in a changing world for climate change mitigation.”</i>	48.51% (14)	<b>28.38%</b> (86)	16.50% (50)	<b>5.94%</b> <b>(18)</b>	<b>0.66%</b> <b>(2)</b>
<b>Capacities for Science – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“Promoting joint master and doctoral degrees between AU and EU universities, and supporting the inclusive mobility of students, researchers and staff by building on existing programmes (such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions) to increase the number of future researchers and innovators freely moving among and between both areas, while limiting the risks of talent drain.”</i>	64.36% (195)	21.45% (65)	12.21% (37)	1.98% (6)	0% (0)
<b>Capacities for Science – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Supporting the creation of enabling STI environment for sustainable innovation ecosystems through Smart Specialisation roadmaps to reinforce the innovation culture across the quadruple helix actors, the evidence basis for prioritisation of innovation investments and the participatory governance processes for tackling place-specific developmental challenges.”</i>	52.48% (159)	27.06% (82)	<b>16.83%</b> <b>(51)</b>	3.30% (10)	0.33% (1)
<b>Mean %</b>	57.32%	25.19%	14.08%	3.13%	0.27%



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Figure 18 – Stakeholders’ ranking of medium-term actions according to the sum of percentages of respondents esteeming them as “very important” and “fairly important”.



### III. Long-term actions

All long-term actions were deemed as “very important” by at least 50% of respondents. As illustrated in **Table 4**, the **long-term action for “Green Transition” (1 of 1)** received the highest score for “very important” (69.31%), followed by the **long-term action 1 of 2 for “Innovation & Technology”** (64.36%), which gathered the highest score for “fairly important” (25.41%) (see **Figure 19**).

When considering the sum of the scores for both “very important” and “fairly important”, all actions scored above 80%, with the top three most appreciated ones, scoring above 85%, being (i) Innovation & Technology 1 of 1; (ii) Green Transition 1 of 2 and (iii) Capacities for Science 2 of 2.

The **long-term action 2 of 2 for “Innovation & Technology”** (with a focus on open science) received the lowest percentage when considering both the sum of respondents for “very important” and “fairly important” (i.e. 82.18%) and also the percentage recorded for “very important” only (i.e. 58.09%). This action is also the only one that received a vote of “Not at all important” within this group, along with the highest percentage for the “slightly important” category (i.e. 2.64%).

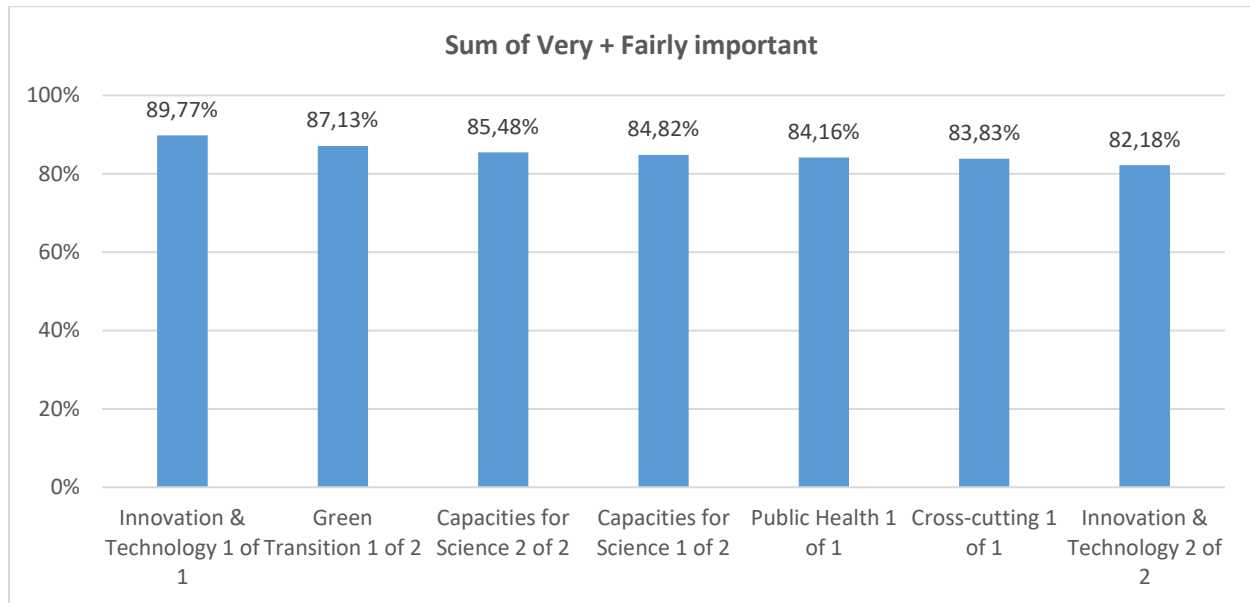
Table 4 – Stakeholders’ appreciation of medium-term actions according to areas of intervention. In bold are the highest percentage for each category (e.g. “very important”, “fairly important”, “important”, “slightly important” and “not at all important”).

Long-term Actions	% of respondents opting for degree of appreciation (number of respondents)				
	Very important	Fairly important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important
<b>Cross-cutting issues – 1 of 1:</b> “Tapping the full potential of sciences by promoting research with a	59.41% (180)	24.42% (74)	14.19% (43)	1.98% (6)	0% (0)

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<i>special focus on youth, women and demography, mitigation and management of global challenges (including those posed by climate change and natural hazards), to build better societies and create well-being for all, in the AU and EU member-states and regions.”</i>					
<b>Public Health – 1 of 1:</b> <i>“Designing and implementing new and innovative methods and tools to counteract future health threats due to long standing, (re)emerging, or antimicrobial resistant pathogens, and to promote one health and precision medicine, in a changing environment.”</i>	63.37% (192)	20.79% (63)	13.86% (42)	1.98% (6)	0% (0)
<b>Green transition – 1 of 1:</b> <i>“Improving the agricultural innovation ecosystem to strengthen capacities of actors to innovate, including research organisations, to co-design and scale technology and innovation through multi-stakeholder approaches, to build thematic networks in Africa and to strengthen relationships for exchanges of knowledge and experiences between Europe and Africa, to co-invest in start-ups and agro-SME and their ecosystem, and most importantly to enhance capacity for proactive innovation policy development.”</i>	69.31% (210)	17.82% (54)	11.55% (35)	1.32% (4)	0% (0)
<b>Innovation &amp; Technology – 1 of 2:</b> <i>Reinforcing and facilitating inclusive and affordable access to world-class research and innovation infrastructures in the AU and EU countries, so that they can fully play their role of research and innovation hubs and ‘lighthouses’ for the whole continents.”</i>	64.36% (195)	25.41% (77)	9.24% (28)	0.99% (3)	0% (0)
<b>Innovation &amp; Technology – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Ensuring that digital transformation supports the dissemination of knowledge, e.g. through promoting connection with the European Open Science Cloud.”</i>	58.09% (176)	24.09% (73)	14.85% (45)	2.64% (8)	0.33% (1)
<b>Capacities for Science – 1 of 2:</b> <i>“Providing specific support for better bridging research and innovation in AU and EU countries by fostering the emergence of new and/or by strengthening the existing centres of excellence, inter alia for young African and European researchers while supporting senior researchers by establishing ‘advanced study institutes’ (“collegium”) bringing together AU and EU researchers in residence, within the framework of calls for proposals targeting cross-cutting subjects.”</i>	62.38% (189)	22.44% (68)	13.53% (41)	1.65% (5)	0% (0)
<b>Capacities for Science – 2 of 2:</b> <i>“Modernising and reinforcing the research and higher education systems (RHESs), both in AU and EU countries, since effective, enduring and impactful innovation ecosystems cannot thrive in the absence of RHESs based on excellence, high quality, inclusiveness, openness, transparency and merit.”</i>	61.39% (186)	24.09% (73)	12.87% (39)	1.65% (5)	0% (0)
<b>Mean %</b>	62.61%	22.72%	12.87%	1.74%	0.05%

Figure 19 – Ranking of long-term actions according to the sum of percentages of respondents esteeming them as “very important” and “fairly important”.



### 3.2.2.5 Beneficiaries of the work of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda

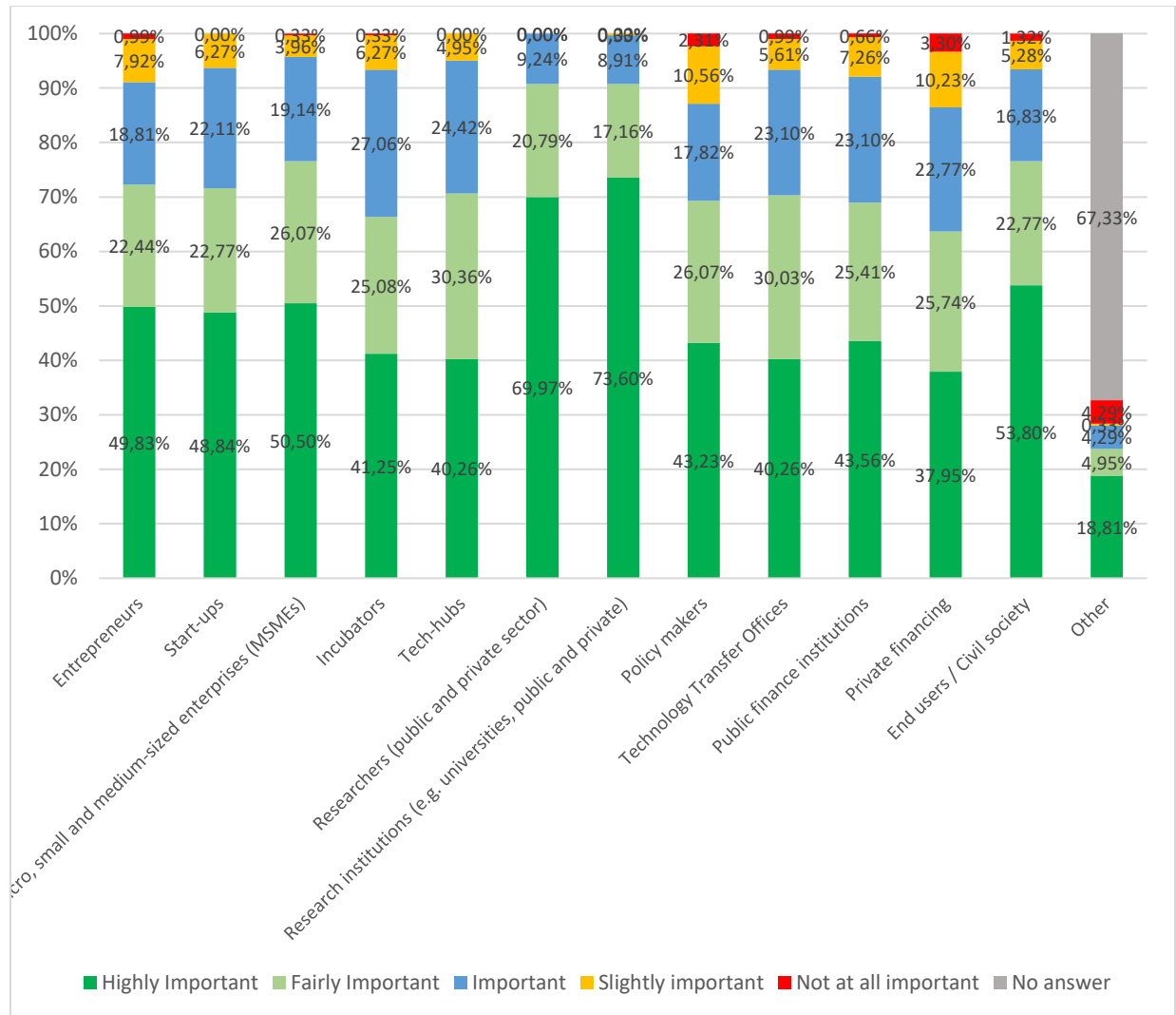
Figure 20 illustrates respondents’ feedback on who should be the **main beneficiaries** of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. In these regards:

- Approximately 70% of the responders recognised as “*Very Important*” **Research institutions (universities, public & private)** (73.6%) and **Researchers** (69.97%).
- About one half of responders indicated as “*Very Important*” **End users/ Civil society** (53.8%), **Micro-, Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises** (50.5%), **Entrepreneurs** (49.83%) and **Start-ups** (48.84%).
- Slightly lower response rates for “*Very important*”, of around 40%, were placed for **Public finance institutions** (43.56%), **Policy makers** (43.23%), **Incubators** (41.25%), **Technology Transfer Offices** (40.26%), **Tech hubs** (40.26%) and **Private financing** (37.95%).
- Importantly, not many responders indicated as “*Slightly important*” or “*Not at all important*” the beneficiaries included in the repertoire of the survey. The categories of beneficiaries deemed as either “*Slightly*” or “*Not at all Important*” by approximately 10% of responders were, in decreasing order, **Private financing** (13.53%, considering both scoring categories), **Policy makers** (12.87%) and **Entrepreneurs** (8.91%). All remaining categories were judged of negligible importance by less than 8% of the responders; in one case – *Researchers* – by no respondent at all.
- The largest response rates for “*Slightly important*” were recorded for **Policy makers** (10.56%) and **Private financing** (10.23%). For these two categories, the highest response rates were also noted for “*Not at all important*” (3.30% for **Private financing** and 2.31% for **Policy makers**), behind that for ‘**Other**’ (potential groups of beneficiaries), of 4.29%.

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- The above-reported scores increase in a proportional way if the “*Very Important*” classification is integrated with that of “*Fairly Important*”: for example, **Research Institutions** were recognised as “*Very or Fairly Important*” by more than 90% of responders.
- The professional background of the respondent population should be taken into account in the interpretation of these and subsequent data. Indeed, more than half of the responders were affiliated to Research Institutions, while only approximately 14% were affiliated to business enterprises, start-ups or incubators.
- It should be noted that almost 70% of the respondents did not quote any beneficiary among the ‘others’, indicating that the taxonomy of the selected categories was considered fairly adequate to cover the spectrum of possible beneficiaries.
- When responders did so, the most quoted words were (i) **Local (communities)**, (ii) **Public (institutions)**, (iii) **Organisation + Associations + Leaders + Students**, (iv) **People**, (v) **Partnerships** and (vi) **Youth**.

Figure 20 – Stakeholders' appreciation of potential main beneficiaries of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.



### 3.3 Open Questions/Answers

#### 3.3.1 Analytical methodology

Answers to open questions were analysed both **qualitatively** and **quantitatively**, taking into account recommendations and suggestions raised by respondents and, for those being made more than once, the frequency of their occurrence. To do so all answers to all open questions were read thoroughly in order to identify (i) keywords and (ii) specific recommendations or proposed actions, to help the devising of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses, respectively. Eligible “**keywords**” were (i) nouns around which sentences were constructed (as subjects or as direct objects) and to which respondents assigned a particular semantic relevance and connotation and (ii) adjectives providing specific connotations to nouns. A keyword could be composed either by one word (e.g. “health” or “green”) or more than one word (e.g. “public health” or “green transition”). This taxonomy of keywords was developed after having read all answers from all respondents, by also taking into account the language of the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda and of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals.

More than 650 keywords were eventually identified, across different semantic areas such as (i) **actions**, (ii) **methods**, (iii) **geography**, (iv) **stakeholders’ types**, (v) **sectors of intervention**, (vi) **gaps and needs**, (vii) **timeframe**. For each keyword, the frequency of occurrence across all open questions were noted for organisations and individual responses. Subsequently, “top scoring” keywords were noted from answers for each question (with threshold values identified as frequency higher than 10, defined based on the average of top frequencies across answers). The search of keywords through the text of answers was then used as a guide to identify most frequently occurring messages. Doing so (considering the large number of keywords identified) eventually allowed to examine the vast majority if not the entirety of answers. Messages (i.e. proposals, recommendations and examples) built around such keywords were therefore progressively annotated. Once this step was performed, all remaining answers (if any) were examined to ensure all inputs would be taken on board and examined against the backdrop provided by each question and the text of the working document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. Datasets containing the full text of all answers to open questions as well as the matrix featuring all keywords and the frequency of their occurrence for each question can be accessed at the following hyperlinks:

- [For organisations](#)

- [For individuals](#)

Finally, keywords-based word clouds were generated both automatically, through the EUSurvey webpage (see **Figures 21, 22 and 24**) and also manually, employing the most frequently occurring keywords (see **Figure 23**).

### 3.3.2 Findings

#### 3.3.2.1 On “Additional Potential Objectives” and “Strategies” to accomplish them

This point was addressed through the optional open **Question #5** “Please clarify other potential objectives that you feel should be included in the draft Innovation Agenda and possibly explain why.” and through the optional open **Question #6** “What strategies would you recommend to accomplish the abovementioned proposed objectives?”. In answer to these questions, respondents provided a number of recommendations on areas to be targeted by the work of the Innovation Agenda and, to some extent, on potential modalities to do so. While considering these proposals against the backdrop of the draft Agenda, the Task Force dealing with findings’ interpretation, deemed all these recommendations as consistent with the already existing four objectives. Therefore, rather than creating additional objectives, it was decided to group such proposals under the current objectives, in light of their overarching nature, and based on thematic consistency. Potential amendments or expansions of the language of the existing objectives may be considered accordingly in the near future, also pending further discussions to take place under the aegis of the AU-EU HLPD on STI. Importantly, in this case, inputs from individuals and organisations were considered together, due to their strong correspondence.

1. For **Objective 1 “Make it real”** – The following recommendations were extrapolated (merging input from both individuals and organisations):
  - a. Ensure **local innovation / smaller projects** and **less codified forms of knowledge, indigenous knowledge** and **citizen science** are taken into consideration.
2. For **Objective 2 “Generate impact by design”** – The following recommendations were extrapolated:
  - a. Enhance **openness in science** and innovation and entrepreneurship **joint ventures**.
  - b. Strengthen **private-public sector relations**.
  - c. **Support incubation**. Provide **access to funding for R&I**.
  - d. Uphold **management of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)**.
  - e. Focus on **Digital transformation**.
3. For **Objective 3 “Strengthen people, communities, and institutions”** – The following recommendations were noted:
  - a. Involve the **African Diaspora**.
  - b. **Empower women**, include a **gender dimension**.
  - c. Pay special attention to the **training of researchers**.
4. For **Objective 4 “Learn, monitor and scale it up”** – The following recommendations were gathered:

- a. Enhance R&I in sectors such as **agriculture, water, climate, health, materials science, humanities and social sciences, poverty elimination, human geography** and, more broadly, **socio-ecological sustainability**.
- b. Make sure the learning component reaches policy making. Following the public policy circle of design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and again design, the learning aspects coming from monitoring and evaluation need to feed the policy design into a new cycle. This process can be hindered because of different aspects. A solid policy agenda should take this into consideration.
- c. The objectives need to be complementary to each other, in a systemic approach. The objectives proposed were seen indeed as interdependent upon one another, not as stand-alone. The adoption of a systemic perspective was recommended to guarantee the effectiveness and success of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

### 3.3.2.2 On “Additional Gaps & Needs”

Following the MCQ #8, the optional open **question #8** enquired survey takers to share any clarify and justify any other needs that they felt should be included in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

## I. Organisations

From the input received from Organisations, several areas emerged for additional needs to be addressed by the work of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. **Actions** and **projects** outlined are expected to **provide change** and/or **support** in several areas such as (i) **health**, (ii) **education**, (iii) **exchange of staff, researchers/scientists**, (iv) **science and research**, (v) **innovative technologies**, and ultimately, (vi) **development**.

For topics such as **knowledge exchange** and **technology transfer**, the aspect of protection of **Intellectual Property (IP)** was flagged as essential to address.

Respondents demanded **inclusiveness** and **accessibility of innovations** through support in (i) **policy**, (ii) **infrastructure**, (iii) **access to finance** and (iv) **dissemination of information**, but also by (v) **imparting knowledge** and **advice** to entrepreneurs throughout the entire innovation process.

From a geographical standpoint, the **African continent** and a **stronger cooperation between the AU and the EU** gained a special focus. Interestingly, besides highlighting such needs, several organisations proposed a number of **actions** in order to address them. For example:

1. Proposed example to improve the dissemination of information in R&I included (i) the **creation of platforms and rules for exchanging data, resources, and information** [including **technology** and **Intellectual Property (IP)**];
2. With special regards to health – Support **transcontinental laboratories** led by AU and EU researchers hosted by institutions committed to **evaluate performance and sustainability**, exchange of skills and

methodologies on operational research, and promote modular training approaches especially in emergency and health crisis preparedness.

3. Concerning knowledge exchange and technology transfer, it was recommended to *“use bottom-up approaches in addressing actual needs”* **adapting projects to African problems**.
4. With regards to areas of AU-EU collaboration, a call for **water** to become one of the priority R&I axis, together with open-source medical technologies able to respond to local medical needs and applicable in local settings.
5. To address the need to foster more R&I-conducive policies – the creation of a **Science-Policy interface** was proposed, to enable the interaction and exchange of ideas between scientists and decision-makers, so to promote more science- and evidence-based policy-making;
6. To fulfil the need for an improved ecosystem for entrepreneurs – It was proposed to **finance small projects rapidly**, as part of the implementation of the short-term actions of the Innovation Agenda, assessing them for their outputs and outcomes rather shortly too.
7. To attain **effective capacity building on innovations**, it was deemed as essential *“to train scientists able to be persistent with capacities in targeting high impact via at scale technology [Technology Readiness Level (TRL) > 6]”* and *“avoid basic research that is not even at TRL 3 yet”*.
8. The importance of **data collection** and **analysis** were highlighted to *“improve and strengthen the governance and management of renewable natural resources and the enhancement of ecosystem services in the rural area and strengthen resilience by monitoring, anticipating and mitigating natural risk including climate change”*, hence the relevance of deploying *“climate services”* and digital literacy.

## II. Individuals

When it comes to “additional needs”, individuals put particular emphasis on aspects such as (i) **financing** (i.e. access to finance), (ii) **knowledge** and (iii) **technologies**.

With special regards to knowledge, the importance of including **“indigenous/traditional knowledge”** in knowledge and innovation generation, was underscored by several answers.

The point of **“access”** was frequently mentioned with reference not only to (i) **funding**, but also (ii) **knowledge**, (ii) **innovations, services** (e.g. **water for rural communities**) and **products**.

Moreover, the importance of **“monitoring”** and **“following up” on interventions**, so to guide decision-making and future investments, was also brought up by several responses. This was coupled with the importance of *“learning from the past”*, to build on existing and previous cooperation experiences.

*“Exchange of good practices and solutions”* through **“open systems”** and *“minimal IP protection”* was also raised by a respondent.

Additional needs indicated included:



- Addressing **racism, exploitation and appropriation of African history** (raised by one respondent), ensuring the Agenda will be implemented in a level-playing field;
- Within the priority area of “Public Health”:
  - **building capacity** on **data collection** and on **monitoring** of interventions;
  - Establishment of **manufacturing capacity**, with special reference to biotechnologies and vaccines, in Africa (several responses) – this to go hand in hand with training of a skilled labour force (hence the importance of training and mobility/exchanges of scientists and postgraduate students).
- The need for “*opportunities for African Institutions and researchers to lead projects in collaboration with EU institutions*” so to better “*harness indigenous knowledge in Africa*”.
- **Infrastructural capacity** in Africa, not only including funding, but also **administrative** and **logistical support**;
- The importance of considering **water** as a focal topic for Research & Innovation.

Geographically, **Africa** represented the focus of the majority of open answers, with special emphasis on needs such as (i) **funding**, (ii) **ownership**, (iii) **good governance** and (iv) **technology transfer**, (v) **infrastructural and human capacity** (as shown above), underlining the need for addressing “*the aspect of Intellectual Property (IP)*” therein. The more general “*need to assemble critical mass needed in a field to collaborate within Africa before building collaborations with Europe*”, also emerged. “**Security issues and political instability** in some regions of Africa” were also mentioned on a few occasions.

The need to “**address the socio-economic gap between AU and EU countries**” was also noted.

From a sector-standpoint, the inclusion of **Education** and **Humanities** was also raised. The need for **training and capacity building** also **outside the Academia and Higher Education Institutions** was also evoked. For example, the role of **community education** was highlighted as crucial to secure good **governance** of implementation programmes.

With regards to stakeholders, the importance of involving **citizens** and **local communities**, not only in the implementation, but also in the conception and in the decision-making process on the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, was also remarked. Within this context, the necessity of ensuring **equity** and **gender balance** were also highlighted. The need for considering “*the plight of the refugees and the world’s most forgotten conflict in the continent of Africa*” was also indicated.

A general remark regarding the “*need to engage the African diaspora in Europe for knowledge exchange*”. Stakeholders also remarked that the potential success of the strategy will depend on the creation of a conducive environment for **mobility between continents** while, at the same time “*working to reduce and reverse brain drain of young, talented African researchers*”.

Finally, addressing the issue of “*unfortunate experiences of collaboration due to both excessive bureaucracy and*

*lack of transparency*” that could potentially jeopardise the AU-EU innovation strategy, could help turn challenges into lessons learnt and opportunities.

### 3.3.2.3 On potential “Additional Areas or Actions”

The optional Open **Question #11** enquired respondents to suggest any **potential additional area(s) of action** or a **specific action** that should be included in the Innovation Agenda, and whether it should be in the short-, medium- or long-term. In most cases, rather than proposing new areas “from scratch”, stakeholders’ responses suggested additional work streams or themes that fall within the existing areas of intervention of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. Such recommendations will be presented accordingly here below.

#### I. Organisations

Responses from organisations were more focused on **short-term** and **medium-term** timespans, with emphasis being put on actions supporting and/or developing innovations the domains of **Research** (in the broad sense) and **Health**. For example, specific areas of work being proposed included:

1. For the priority area of “**Public Health**” – A clear focus on **poverty related and neglected diseases (PRNDs)**, including, among others, Tuberculosis, and on **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**;
2. For the priority area of “**Green Transition**”:
  - a. A clear focus on **food security** was demanded;
  - b. With special regards to agriculture, proposals came in the area of **sustainable agro-ecology, digital innovations in agriculture** and **green technology**;
  - c. Emphasis was put on the use of **renewable energy sources**.
  - d. **Water management** and **waste recycling**.
3. Focus on solutions that meet the needs of the **most vulnerable**.
4. For the priority area of “**Innovation & Technology**”, the absence of specific mid-term actions was also questioned by a respondent, who remarked the importance of investing in **manufacturing** capacity, being this “*one of the biggest value-add and job-creation opportunities for the African continent*”. Accordingly, the suggestion “*to focus on advanced manufacturing and digitalisation to ensure new innovation leads to actual manufacturing (and export) opportunities for Africa*”.

A special focus on **Africa** and on the **general public** was also requested, making sure that innovative technologies would be made **accessible**, while addressing **actual needs on the ground**. Several

recommendations were made in this space, with great emphasis being put on **training** and **capacity building**, as indicated below:

1. **Training of stakeholders on the priority areas of the AU-EU cooperation in R&I**, through targeted investment in **Higher Education** and **Vocational Education and Training (VET)**;
2. Access to **financial resources**;
3. **Enhancement of digital knowledge in Africa** (e.g. enabling access to high-speed internet and libraries).
4. Providing access to the **European Open Science Cloud**;
5. Incentivising **researchers' mobility** (e.g. putting in place specific VISA permits, support in salaries and transnational expenditures);
6. Creating **thematic networks** across Africa and **supporting incubators for high tech-research**;
7. With regards to Open Access, enabling **open access to pathogen information** (e.g. materials and data) was also demanded by stakeholders from the pharmaceutical and biotech industry, for the short-, medium- and long-term. Open access to pathogen information is indeed deemed essential for disease surveillance (facilitating the identification of potential novel and emerging threats), and for the timely development of medical countermeasures.

From a stakeholder point of view, most answers emphasised the importance of involving AU and EU **researchers, entrepreneurs, companies, and institutions** throughout the different stages of the implementation of the actions.

## II. Individuals

Recommendations from individuals included:

1. For the area of “**Capacities for Science**” – For the short-term, emphasis on **improving the curriculum and encouraging more uptake of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** at a basic education at higher education level, making capacity building through Masters and PhD a short-term action.
2. For the area of “**Public Health**” and “**Green Transition**” – Stakeholders remarked that the Innovation Agenda should also address issues of **primary healthcare** in Africa while **improving food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture**.
3. For the area of “**Green Transition**” – Respondents demanded:
  - a. Promoting the concept of urban green transition/smart and green cities;
  - b. Fostering sustainability that includes **clean energy, clean water** and **recycling of waste**;

- c. Support the development of **adaptability to deal with shocks** of climate and human-induced disaster. To do so, they observed the importance of strengthening innovative environmental observation networks, in addition to space-based observations.
4. For the area of “**Innovation & Technology**” – Respondents asked that:
  - a. The Agenda would support innovations up to **tech demonstrations and beyond**;
  - b. **Intellectual Property (IP)** emanating from R&I should be retained in Africa and systems should be put in place to support innovations from TRL1 to TRL9;
  - c. In the short-term, the development of a **statistical information system on African Science, Technology and Innovation** to collect high-quality baseline statistical data;
  - d. In the long-term, innovations should be geared towards **addressing unemployment, poverty and inequality** in Africa;
  - e. Innovation should reflect **all demographics** in Africa (especially **youth** and **women**), it should not exclude **rural communities** and should be **Africa-led** while promoting **bi-continental collaboration and co-creation**. This should be done through the creation of an enabling STI environment for sustainable innovation ecosystems and fostering **knowledge exchange** between innovators supported by business support organizations (incubators and innovation hubs) through programmes including twinning, academic mobility, soft landing and mentoring;
  - f. The Agenda should increase the **link between science and policy** by increasing the capacity of scientists to inform the policy-making process on innovation;
  - g. Enablers of innovation such as research infrastructure and facilities should be a priority and in the short-term, so that infrastructure and facilities could be shared among European and African researchers and innovators.
5. For the area of “**Cross-cutting issues**” – Stakeholders recognised **access to the international market** as a key enabler of innovation, recommending to include it in short- and medium-term actions.

#### *3.3.2.4 On potential “Other Beneficiaries”*

An additional open part of the MCQ #12 provided respondents with the possibility to indicate additional stakeholders to be considered as main beneficiaries of the work of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

### **I. Organisations**

Organisations encouraged the Innovation Agenda to enhance the focus of its **short-term actions on students and youth in Africa**. Contributions also highlighted the importance of **social organisations** and **innovators**, and of the **public outreach** and **education** that needs to be achieved to ensure inclusivity.

Respondents underscored the importance for technology and innovation to **serve society at large**. Taking this into account, it was also recommended that **research** would leverage existing representation fora, platforms and networks of EU and AU institutions and other international organisations' level, as well as those of **local communities**.

The following quote is reported as a representative example:

*“A missing stakeholder are **schools** – it is important to prepare the next generation of talent by attracting young children to pursue post-secondary education in the public health, research and climate. The Innovation Agenda should be inclusive of this particular stakeholder that represent the future and in a certain way, the sustainability of many of the projects that will be implemented.”.*

## II. Individuals

Individuals responded to this question mostly by highlighting the **need to support early level education institutions**. While emphasising **youth** engagement, they suggested that programmes involve out of school **youth, women, and persons with disabilities**. It was also recommended that **knowledge** from the **indigenous communities** should be tapped into with **new research developed** around existing information. In the **short-term and medium term, green initiatives** should be implemented. **Pan-African** and regional networks should be partners of science and innovation initiatives in order to effectively guide **technology transfer** where it would be possible to learn from each other.

### 3.3.2.5 On “How to maximise impact”

Through the mandatory open **Question #13**, survey takers were asked to express their views on how to possibly maximise the impact of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda for sustainable and inclusive growth. Below follows an overview of the input received from organisations and individual respondents.

## I. Organisations

Within the very **diverse opinions** expressed, it was widely recognised that to deploy its full impact, the Agenda should *“focus on the real problems of society, apply research findings in the field, help people with innovative ideas to bring them to life”* and, at the same time, develop *“plans for staunching the brain drain”*, combining both **top-down** and **bottom-up approaches**. Moreover, respondents recommended that Agenda should also rely upon *“rigorous evidence of impact to focus investment on solutions with a demonstrated potential”*, and support *“impactful development solutions that demonstrate a viable pathway to scale”*.

The inclusion and interaction of the actors of the **quadruple innovation helix framework** was also evident throughout the responses. Some answers pointed to an increased involvement of the **private sector** as a factor for success, others stressed the importance of upscaling participation of **governments** and public institutions, that should commit themselves to *“connect the AU-EU investment in research capacity to the national R&I ecosystem”*. The inclusion of **“trusted investors”** and the important role of the **financial institutions** added to the overall picture. Furthermore, it was well appreciated that **political ownership and inclusiveness** (from social,

geographical and cultural points of view) are instrumental for the Agenda to maximise its impact, as is a reinforced **networking of African and European Universities**.

A substantial **input of resources** - with a focus on **youth** and **gender** (through research funding, scholarships and policies) - was considered widely necessary to maximise the impact of the Agenda, accompanied by **proven accountability** through transparent advisory boards. The importance of choosing *reliable* partners/beneficiaries and of setting up appropriate mechanisms of **Monitoring and Evaluation**, with appropriate metrics, was highlighted frequently, with collection, proper handling and analysis of data being mentioned as essential for that purpose. Making the burden of **bureaucracy lighter** was also remarked several times.

The importance of communication and dissemination activities to maximise impact and visibility was quoted repeatedly, together with awareness raising and promotional events for *“The Innovation Agenda to become a household name”*. Specifically, highlighting that *“**Storytelling** should be a part of it. The media world might be included...to promote a new understanding of cooperation related issues.”*

The **heterogeneity of the context(s)**, not only across the continent(s) but also within countries, was highlighted, entailing the need for tailored approaches. The importance of working with partners deeply involved in the innovation process on the ground was acknowledged too and the example of the “Burkinabé Centre for Sustainable Development” involving Burkina Faso, Algeria, Tunisia, Belgium, France and South Korea, was provided.

Also recognised was the need to act with a **long-term perspective**, even when short-term actions or projects are undertaken through promoting long-lasting, sustainable, and **equitable partnerships** that could help maximising the impact of the Agenda. In this regard, the proposal to develop *“**a one-stop-shop portal for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, including information on how research institutions can engage within each of the actions**”*, was made, so to have an “intelligent” centre on this Innovation Agenda enabling stakeholders to network and exchange views, expertise and resources *“in the areas of the needs of each African country”*.

Evidence was given on the need for strategically prioritising access to **basic social needs**, *in primis* in the areas of **health, green** and **digital**, in the absence of which any perspective of sustainable development and growth risks to be unrealistic and impracticable. In particular, healthcare solutions should be brought as close as possible to those in need, fully **leveraging new technologies** that should be also **developed in Africa, going beyond the standard notion of “technology transfer”**.

The nature of the challenges that the contemporary society has to meet requires **multi- and interdisciplinary training** of the workers, innovators and the local community, hence the need for an emphasis on capacity building in terms of training and (higher) education for the Agenda to maximise its impact by ensuring a smooth transition to a green and digital society.

A remarkable contribution to the impact of the Agenda could come from the **alignment** of **national funding schemes** and of **higher education institutional policies**, both in Africa and Europe. “Alignment” was also evoked with reference to **regulatory and policy harmonisation** (e.g. in trade, licensing and standards) and **infrastructures** expected to act as “enablers” for the implementation of the Innovation Agenda. Such an alignment, is also expected to facilitate **mobility of researchers, innovators** and **innovations** (e.g. **product** and **services**).

The *“**marketability**”* of innovation products, rather than recurring consistently to public funds, was acknowledged as crucial factor for the sustainability of innovation processes. **Interlocutors and incubators** were

regarded as key for the development of SMEs and start-ups, thence encouraging efforts to identify such catalyst players. Concrete ways to support innovation, like through introducing “risk capital” or “changemaker challenge calls” to address emerging challenges were emphasised, although most of the answers included only general statements.

While not outspoken, **open innovation** and **free circulation of knowledge** were perceived as contributors to the impact of the Agenda.

## II. Individuals

For Individuals, an even more diverse set of suggestions were made on “how to maximise the impact of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda”. Occasionally, the answers indicated a difficulty to think widely, outside one’s own disciplinary silos, while in other instances, some strategic proposals were raised.

**Caring for the needs of the end users**, i.e., focusing on demand-driven, rather than on supply-driven needs to mitigate vulnerabilities and address livelihood challenges (“*The impact could be maximised if the Agenda should shift from supply-led to people demand. It should be demand oriented based on people concerns.*”), **involving all possible stakeholders** and **ensuring governments buy in** were advocated as instruments for achieving success, impact and **sustainability on the longer-term** (“*It is essential to build long lasting multi-stakeholders alliances across the Continent.*”, for example “*some meta alliances between our European alliances and Africa groups or alliances of universities*”). A **long-term perspective of support to research**, to enable the **growth** and **retention of trained and skilled people**, was also mentioned just like for Organisations.

Given the individual nature of responses, a strong call to provide better **support to individual researchers** and to centres of excellence was a reoccurring theme. The focus on applied research was also pointed out, while the potential role of joint practical projects leveraging synergies was underscored.

The role of indigenous communities was clearly recognised “(...) as **the custodians of local lived knowledge and experiences** which is very essential for the success and **uptake of any innovation** in the targeted communities”.

A quite widespread **mistrust in “politicians”** (and public officials in general) was reported, with the suggestion to entrust **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)** and end-users to maximise the impact of the Innovation Agenda; to simplify: “*Your project proposals become mired in such obscure requirements and language that successful proposals need paid consultants to complete the proposal. This cuts out all but the best-connected insiders*”. Therefore, a call to “**create platforms**” was made, in order “*to encourage the development of synergies and complementarities between different actors and stakeholders*”, in which **incubators** may play an important role.

Focusing on **lessons learned from past experiences** (both successful and unsuccessful) was considered of high importance to maximise impact (“*Extract conclusions both about the successful and the unsuccessful projects, and change according to these conclusions*”), while the **equity of partnerships** was quoted repeatedly (“*There should be equity in decision making*” and “*Strengthen Africa-based institutions and empower them with resources*”) as being instrumental for impact.

The importance of **communication activities** (tapping also into Social Sciences, specifically “Science Communication skills”) to maximise impact was frequently mentioned (“*By presenting it [the Agenda] to as many fora as possible. Through print, social media and speaking slots at events and through public lectures. This*”

***public consultation*** is (...) *one great example of how the Agenda can gain better recognition and understanding.*”).

Frequently mentioned was the need for improving the **quality of management** of projects/programmes, for **using evidence-based policies**, and for **strengthening institutional capacity and infrastructure**. Use of **foresight/trends analysis** and of appropriate **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** (with adequate **indicators**) would also contribute. According to respondents, projects and proposals should be evaluated based on their **“impact by design”** characteristics. Interestingly, it was also suggested that ***“The principles of the Agenda should be a sort of priorities in all grant applications.”***

**Access to open-source technology**, creating a transparent channel for **knowledge and skills sharing** (*“Removal of barriers to collaboration and increased information transparency can maximize AU-EU Innovation Agenda”*), was mentioned especially in the **health domain** and **rural innovation** (*“Our policies now must encourage information dissemination and include marginalised areas in terms of technology and encourage them example building rural innovation hubs for rural people.”* Another idea also referred to ***“challenge prizes”*** to attract innovators.

**Student and staff education, training and mobility** were considered crucial, with some proposals being made in these areas (e.g. *“Involving the African and European youth, so that they can work together and learn from each other”*). On the other hand, as a way to maximise the impact of the Agenda, **attracting/retaining young people in rural communities** was suggested: *“As the continent has a young population, skilling youth in areas of economic growth in their communities and stop urban migration”*, by **modernising agriculture and farming thanks to digital and green technologies** and **including innovation and product development as part of school curriculum**.

Within the need for **inclusiveness**, which was widely mentioned, **women and youth** were asked to be **prioritised**, even outside large African cities, with a **focus on reaching out and involving the underprivileged**, including also **persons with disabilities** (*“avoid the digital divide of the most vulnerable, favouring e-inclusion and e-equality”*).

**Coordination among and awareness on innovation projects** at all levels were recognised as impact-maximising factors with ***“action plans where the landscape of both regions are assessed and differences in development level are considered.”*** Moreover, successful innovations should be scaled up and commercialised ***“through public and private sector initiatives”*** while a different view suggested **localising the initiatives** *“to encourage solutions that deal with root causes rather than emphasizing excessively on scalable solutions that mainly address the general cross-cutting issues”*.





- **Providing policy expertise and feedback** to EU and AU policymakers and suggesting experts who could sit in **scientific advisory councils** and helping creating **spaces of scientific networking** between European and African researchers;
- Contributing to the development of **ocean industries** to encourage **green growth** and a **low-emissions society**;
- Stimulating **people-to-people contacts** (for **students and staff**) and engaging in (new) partnerships and networks, as well as **boosting education, R&I and co-creation**;
- Strengthening African innovation ecosystems and reinforcing the capabilities and competitiveness of African partners in R&D projects, including **frugal innovation**, leading to “new products” (goods and services);
- Providing **technical “backstopping” (expertise)** in multi-stakeholder collaboration and co-creation of knowledge;
- Playing a role in **capacity building of scientists** by producing high-quality scientific outputs, and **building partnerships with private sector and enterprises** to translate research/scientific outputs into practical solutions for society;
- **Promoting advanced training** through long/short-term fellowships for PhD students and post-Docs in the field of **biotechnology** and implementing **transfer of scientific and technical know-how** in various areas of biotechnology (e. g. biotherapeutic products);
- **Raising awareness on the AU-EU Innovation Agenda** in the French and European research, innovation and higher education communities;
- **Offering end-to-end support** in conceptualising, establishing, operating and maintaining **manufacturing facilities** that meet specific geographic needs;
- Strengthening the existing collaborations in various areas of cooperation, training, coaching and matchmaking to **SMEs** and **small mid-caps** and providing technical assistance to local public authorities;
- **Financing grants to support innovations** that contribute to **reducing global poverty and inequality** and enable innovators and researchers to **test new ideas**;
- Building **rigorous evidence for effective programs**, and scale up the most impactful and cost-effective solutions;
- Contributing to **building robust health systems in African countries**;
- **Promoting and pushing cooperation between Africa and other developing regions**, such as **Latin America**, around **common development challenges**;
- **Regarding** the area of “**Innovation and Technology**”, proposals on assisting African partners in the formulation, adoption and implementation of new technologies in **health, agriculture or sustainable energy** were expressed by various institutions, based both in Africa and Europe.

## II. Individuals

Answers from individuals unveiled a general support towards the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda through several initiatives such as **joint research, capacity building, conferences, doctoral programs; continuing education for students and professionals, linkages between academia and the community of practice** in priority domains of the Agenda. With special regards to the area of **Capacities for Science**, proposals were multiform, and included **capacity mentoring by conducting public awareness, sensitising on the activities and publicising the possible outcomes** of the Innovation Agenda or in **monitoring and evaluating the impact** of the Agenda. Several proposals were also made to **enhance technology transfer** and to conduct **periodic reviews**

**on the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda**, in order to define successful and unsuccessful approaches and build on the former accordingly.

Contributions on “**partnerships**” also covers notions such as the **sharing of equipment in research laboratories** and **improving the access to scientific infrastructures** to overcome the technology divide between AU and EU countries. **Incubators, Intellectual Property (IP)** and **entrepreneurship** were also considered for the implementation of technical solutions conducing to **creation of jobs** and **startups**.

The thematic areas of collaboration proposed were aligned with the AU-EU priorities and the current SDGs, including the ongoing AU-EU flagship programs in Public Health, Green Transition, Technology and Innovation and Capacities for Science.

Topic recommendations focused on **health, agriculture, food, natural resources** (and particularly **water**), **waste management, climate change, energy** and also **cross-cutting issues** such as **digitalisation**, or use of **emerging technologies** such as “*artificial intelligence*”, “*robotics*”, “*Space science*”.

In the area of **Public Health**, some individual researchers disclosed having experience of cooperation with African institutions, which could be possibly leveraged to established research networks, to share experiences, best practices and lessons learnt.

In particular, within the priority area of “**Green Transition**”, many contributions were made on **productive and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems**, mentioning the need for scaling up national products but also to develop species and varieties more resistant to climate change, soil erosion and salinisation, or to improve knowledge in the field of water and environmental sciences, considering the major principles of governance, adaptation and resilience. In this area, the role of start-ups was considered crucial to support “*innovation and incubation programs that will enable growth for agrifood-tech entrepreneurs*”.

In the (sub-)area<sup>1</sup> of “**Sustainable Energy**”, commitments were expressed for **technical assistance** in innovative technologies and pathways to scale-up deployment of green energy.

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<sup>1</sup> In the AU-EU Cooperation in R&I, the sub-area of “Sustainable Energy” belongs, together with that of “Climate Change”, to the broader priority area of “Green Transition”.









## 4. Conclusions

On the whole, the feedback received from the online public consultation very much welcomes the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, endorsing the **objectives** and **actions** that it proposes.

For the Agenda to be successful in bringing sustainable and inclusive growth, stakeholders highlighted the importance of **“building on”** the good outcomes that have been generated thus far, working, indeed, **inclusively** and **collaboratively** from conceptualisation to implementation, **across the two continents and beyond, bridging sectors** (e.g. public, private and NGOs/CSOs), involving **local communities**, in both **urban** and **rural areas** (including not only the “conventional” knowledge makers, such as **Higher Education Institutions**, but also **schools** (basic, vocational and higher education level), **marketplaces, farms** and **factories**, and all respective **stakeholders**), **leveraging** and **protecting indigenous know-how** and empowering **youth, women** and **vulnerable groups** (persons with disabilities included) and **involving the African diaspora**. Moreover, and possibly linked to the professional background of half of the survey population, this consultation asserted the centrality of **Higher Education** and **Research Institutions** in the Innovation generation and “value chain”.

Aspects such as **infrastructure capacity** (e.g. in digital transformation and health preparedness), **training and capacity building** [e.g. in Intellectual Property (IP) management], **exchanges of staff and researchers** (within and between continents), hence **transfer of technologies and know-how** as well as **access to funding** were some of the key needs that were reported by stakeholders.

The input gathered indicated some additional routes of action that could be taken by the Agenda, especially in the **short-term** and **medium-term**. Above all, in light of this, the possibility of including a short-term and a medium-term action explicitly focusing on **agriculture, food security** and **water** (including access and waste management as well as seas) as well as medium-term one on **Innovation & Technology** (e.g. in the area of **infrastructure / manufacturing capacity**, which by nature is not a short-term task) should be further explored.

Finally, the role of **measuring, monitoring** and **evaluating results** emerged as essential throughout several responses, in order to ensure the **successful implementation** of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

In the weeks to come, the AU-EU HLPD Bureau and its Working Group on the Innovation Agenda will work with utmost commitment to ensure all these aspects will be well-reflected in the final version of AU-EU Innovation Agenda, to be presented for adoption during the first quarter of 2023. Further discussions, including those foreseen for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda Stakeholder Event in November 2022, will build on these findings and expand on their interpretation here presented. Working concertedly, with stakeholders and end-users, aiming for sustainable tangible impact.

## 5. Contributions and Acknowledgements

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All further comments and feedback are welcome and could be addressed to the following email address:

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