

AFRICA CANARIAS CHALLENGE

CALL GUIDELINES

A// PRESENTATION AND ROADMAP

The **Africa Canarias Challenge (ACC)** program was born in 2021 from the collaboration between the **Directorate General for Economic Affairs with Africa of the Government of the Canary Islands and MTA Afrika**. Implemented by **EMERGE**, the ACC is an external action tool of the Government of the Canary Islands towards Africa. It aims to create an intercultural community of entrepreneurs that fosters the impact of socio-business initiatives that promote inclusive development and contribute to reducing inequalities both in the Canary Islands and Africa. The shared purpose of reducing inequality gaps is what unites African and Canarian entrepreneurs.

Through the first edition in 2021, a triangulation concept was developed to connect the ecosystems of the Basque Country, Senegal and the Canary Islands, tightening nodes and connections. In the 2022 edition, the program focused on entrepreneurs from Mauritania and the Canary Islands, who formed intercultural teams to create innovative technology-based solutions that responded to challenges identified in the agricultural sector in both territories.

In this new edition 2024 with Morocco as counterpart, the ACC program is steered to researchers and students from the Universities of **UM6P, ULPGC and ULL**, although not exclusive, preferably with an orientation to entrepreneurship and innovation in past or current endeavors. Such a profile is to be combined and complemented with entrepreneurs from startups/spinoffs, potentially coming from other non-University contexts. Along these lines, The Technological Institute of the Canary Islands (ITC) will share its expertise and knowledge in these areas with the participants.

ACC will serve as a specific tool to enhance collaboration and specific joint projects around science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, under a larger and autonomous framework for cooperation between these three universities. In this context, these three players are encouraged to pursue any additional actions and arrangements beyond the ACC program, which is designed to trigger such an endeavor.

As illustrated in the table below, in this edition ACC will primarily focus on two overarching themes: Research & Technology, and Innovation & Entrepreneurship.



Within the framework of these themes, particular attention will be devoted to the exploration of strategically selected domains such as Water/Agriculture, Energy, and Health. In addition, Circular Economy and Deeptech emerge as cross-cutting fields potentially impacting on every activity conducted in the program.

	Water/Agriculture	Energy	Health	Circular Economy
Research & Technology	✓	✓	✓	
Innovation & Entrepreneurship	✓	✓	✓	
Deeptech				

Building upon all the previous, a set of scientific, technological and social challenges have been identified and will be tackled over the program implementation.

How?

With this edition program ending in november 2024, once the ACC participants have been selected along this call procedure, in a first stage they will participate and contribute to three initial activities with the aim to frame and properly orientate the latter collaborative projects to be launched:

- Presentation and sharing of scientific and technological capacities in UM6P, ULPGC and ULL in order to identify synergies and common points of interest for connection and collaboration.
- Presentation and sharing of approaches and models followed by UM6P, ULPGC and ULL when facing knowledge and technology transfer, applied research and entrepreneurship in a University context.
- Presentation of the ACC challenges defined as the basis of the program and the workflow to be followed by the teams and working groups conformed.

Then the next stage is fully dedicated to run an acceleration program focused on providing specialized support and mentoring to projects, scientific or business oriented, as long as they pursue to seek solutions to the ACC challenges. In this sense, the support provided will cover fields focused on setting the proper conditions to permit the projects materialize and consequent collaborations give a step forward, as well as defining the action plan for such projects/collaborations implementation in the short term and beyond the ACC program. Special attention will be given to facilitating access to existing funding opportunities for the implementation of ongoing



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projects, where European and national-based bilateral (Spain-Morocco) programmes are being tracked.

Under the frame of three thematics (water/agriculture, energy and health) a number of teams/working groups will be configured out of the participants selected and based on their profile and area of expertise. Each working group will work over one or various projects pursuing the solution-to-challenges oriented objectives above-mentioned, following the itinerary of activities included in the acceleration program and therefore receiving the support and mentoring planned for such a purpose. The activities can include either individual or group sessions and be implemented under a virtual or face-to-face format. Whenever possible ACC pretends to organize actions where participants can take advantage of meeting counterparts face-to-face as a tool to generate confidence and motivation. In this sense, at least one face-to-face meeting/event is envisaged to take place in each region where counterparts are expected to attend. *For instance: a visit to UM6P campus in Ben Guerir is planned in September 2024 to attend a face-to-face bootcamp over various days.*

In a closing stage, the Atlantic África Startup Forum III will take place in the Canary Islands in November to share lessons learnt, present ACC's results and collaboration models implemented, as well as stress existing opportunities to drive cooperation with Africa around science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Finally, the ACC program will select and award one or two of the collaborative projects supported, preferably based on their potential to provide an industrial solution in the short-medium term under a joint venture between Morocco and the Canary Islands. An additional support, initially quantified around 50-80k€, is envisaged for each awarded project to guarantee a continuation after the ACC finalization and facilitate the transformation into a startup or spinoff. ACC is committed to provide the means to raise funds or investments for such a purpose.

B // WHY THE ACC AND MOROCCO?

The Africa-Canarias Challenge program emerges as a potential catalyst for economic diversification in both the Canary Islands and Morocco, through the promotion of impact entrepreneurship and social innovation. This initiative not only seeks to address common challenges in both regions, but also seeks to create synergies that will drive sustainable economic development in the regional context.

Both the Canary Islands and Morocco face the challenge of reducing their dependence on traditional sectors, such as tourism and agriculture, and diversifying their economies to stimulate sustainable growth. The Africa-Canarias Challenge project can play a vital role in fostering the emergence of new economic sectors, such as clean technology and the circular economy. This sectoral diversification can



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generate employment opportunities and economic growth, as well as reduce vulnerability to external shocks.

In addition, the collaboration between researchers and entrepreneurs in the Canary Islands and Morocco facilitated by the program can be a driver for innovation and knowledge transfer between the two regions. By sharing experiences, resources and best practices, business opportunities can be identified and innovative solutions to common challenges, such as resource scarcity and climate change, can be developed. This collaboration can strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems in both areas and stimulate the adoption of new technologies and business practices.

C // CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

1. Water Challenge

Challenge Overview: Water scarcity is a significant issue impacting both Morocco and the Canary Islands, driven by climate change and increasing water demand. This challenge seeks innovative solutions for efficient water management, especially in agriculture, to ensure sustainable water use and crop productivity.

Goals:

- Develop advanced irrigation systems that minimize water wastage while maximizing crop yield.
- Promote water-efficient agricultural practices and crop diversification.
- Innovate in water recycling and reuse technologies for agricultural applications.

Key Considerations:

- How can irrigation systems be designed to significantly reduce water wastage?
- What water-efficient crops can be introduced to local farming practices?
- How can cost-effective water recycling technologies be implemented in both rural and urban agricultural settings?

2. Energy Challenge

Challenge Overview: Transitioning to renewable energy is crucial for sustainable development, especially in territories like Morocco and the Canary Islands. This challenge focuses on fostering the adoption of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to enhance energy security, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and stimulate economic growth. Moreover, this challenge aims to develop innovative solutions for repurposing waste materials into valuable products such as energy sources or raw materials

Goals:

- Develop and implement renewable energy technologies tailored to local conditions.
- Promote the use of renewable energy in both rural and urban areas to provide reliable and sustainable power.
- Create economic opportunities through the development and deployment of renewable energy solutions.
- Develop technologies or methods to convert organic and inorganic waste into energy.
- Promote sustainable practices for recycling and repurposing waste materials into useful products.

Key Considerations:

- How can cost-effective and efficient renewable energy systems be designed and implemented?
- What are the best practices for integrating renewable energy into existing infrastructure in rural and urban areas?
- How can economic opportunities and jobs be created through the deployment of renewable energy technologies?
- What are the most effective methods for converting waste into renewable energy?

3. Health Challenge

Challenge Overview: This challenge emerges from the first two. On the one hand, derived from the global drought problem, there is a need for diversification of agriculture towards less water demanding crops, such as those with potential medical applications that not only add positive value to the economy but also to



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society. On the other hand, improper waste management presents significant health risks and environmental challenges, which poses a threat regarding public health and environmental sustainability. In general, this challenge seeks to find innovative solutions to improve the health and well-being of society in both Morocco and the Canary Islands.

Goals:

- Foster water-efficient agricultural practices and crop diversification towards medicinal plants.
- Reduce health risks associated with waste disposal through innovative management practices.
- Promote innovative solutions in order to ameliorate public health through sustainable practices.

Key Considerations:

- How can cost-effective and water efficient crops with potential medical applications be implemented?
- What innovative practices can reduce health risks associated with waste management?
- How can scalable solutions for improving individuals health and well being be implemented?

D // WHO IS THE ACC CALL EXPECTING TO APPLY?

Researchers, students and entrepreneurs from the Canary Islands and Morocco with a background/expertise on the thematics of water/agriculture, energy or health (preferably linked to the Universities UM6P, ULPGC or ULL although not exclusive), and committed to undertake a collaboration with other peers oriented to develop solutions to the ACC program challenges.

E // LANGUAGE

The Program will be fully run in English.

F // REQUIREMENTS

- Be a resident in the Kingdom of Morocco or the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands for at least one year prior to the date of application.
- Be +18 years old.



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- Possess medium-high written and oral level in English (*French will be positively considered for Canary Islands participants*).
- Possess scientific, technological, innovation or entrepreneurship background/expertise on any of the following thematic: water/agriculture, energy and health.
- Be committed to complete the programme and initiate or continue a collaborative project potentially becoming a startup/spinoff or transferring results into the industry.

G // SELECTION CRITERIA

- Academic and/or professional background/expertise on water/agriculture, energy or health; and/or technology application on any of those thematic - *3 points*
- Academic and/or professional working experience - *1.5 points*
- Written and oral level in English - *2.5 points*
- Cover/Motivational letter suiting into ACC's essence and objectives, as well as the program's challenges (3.000 characters maximum) - *3 points*

The selection team reserves the right to appoint an interview with the candidates for a proper evaluation of requirements and selection criteria, if needed.

The total number of participants accepted is subject to the nature of the applications received in order to cover the general requirements of the ACC program in terms of aspects such as thematic areas or origin of participants facilitating multiregional collaboration projects.

H // HOW TO PARTICIPATE AND DEADLINE

- Fill in a form on the website: www.africacanariaschallenge.com
- Provide the documentation supporting the selection criteria: CV, motivational letter, certificates, reference to papers or articles, PhD, etc.

The application process will be open until 17th of July 23:59.

I // WHAT DO THE PARTICIPANTS COMMIT TO?

- Take an active part in all the ACC program activities and events, steered by the organizers and collaborating partners.



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- Be motivated and open-minded to participate in solution-to-challenge collaborative projects, scientific or business oriented, with a common interest and impact in both territories (Canary Islands and Morocco).
- Share knowledge and technical resources for the sake of the projects and actions developed as a response to the challenges specified.
- Show willingness to physically attend face-to-face meetings/events organized in the counterpart region, to the extent possible.
- Take responsibility for leading or participating in further development of the collaborative projects initiated within the frame of ACC after the program finalization, or transferring it to third qualified partners/collaborators.

J // EXPENSES COVERAGE

As a program financed by the Government of the Canary Islands, there will be no cost for the participants of the Africa Canarias Challenge in whatever relates to the management, planning, organization and implementation of the different activities planned, as well as the support provided by experts and ACC's staff. For instance, travel expenses to participate in actions or attend events in the counterpart region are covered by the program.

It is out of the program coverage any cost related to the technical development of the specific projects/actions emerging from the collaboration between both territories and supported by the ACC along its duration. However, as previously mentioned an economic support initially quantified around 50-80k€ is envisaged for each awarded project to guarantee a continuation after the ACC finalization and facilitate the transformation into a startup or spinoff. ACC is committed to provide the means to raise funds or investments for such a purpose.

K // MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACT

- Website: www.africacanariashallenge.com
- Email address: acc@asociacionemerge.com