Circle U.
European University Alliance

# Conference on inter- and transdisciplinary research for sustainable development 2026

## Call for abstracts

Document version
01 06 2026

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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European University Alliance

# CONFERENCE ON INTERDISCIPLINARY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SIXTH EDITION: Building Regional and global thematic transdisciplinary research communities

23-24 NOVEMBER 2026

Louvain-la-Neuve - Belgium

Circle U.
European University Alliance

UNIVERSITÉ EN TRANSITION

UCLouvain

## Call for abstracts for researchers from Circle U. Universities

## Deadline: 15 September 2026

## Submission form: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/9SUsX2K4BA

On **23-24 November 2026**, the sixth edition of the "Conference on Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research for Sustainable Development" will be held in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. During the previous editions, close to 150 scientific contributions were presented by researchers from universities of the European Alliance Circle U. and by their non-academic partners.

**This call for abstracts is targeted at researchers from the nine Circle U. universities as well as their non-academic partners interested in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research related to sustainable development.**

Both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are increasingly required to address ecological and social transition challenges involving interdependent technical, economic or socio-cultural dimensions and a plurality of social actors at the level of society. These social actors include both actors from the NGOs, private enterprises, public administrations, non-university research institutions or engaged citizens. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches mobilize specific disciplinary knowledge from all sectors of the university (Sciences and Technology, Social sciences and Humanities, Health Sciences), but they also attempt to integrate different types of knowledge through processes of co-construction of knowledge between researchers from different disciplines and social actors involved in transition initiatives.

Such research often requires specific support in terms of methodological tools, types of partnerships with social actors or visibility in academic journals and international conferences.

In this context, **scientific contributions** are invited from all fields of research, both in science and technology, health sciences, and social and human sciences. From a methodological perspective, these contributions can be based on both already well-established methods such as Living Labs, co- creation, participatory action research, participatory modelling or community surveys are expected, as well as more exploratory methodological choices. This call for papers is **open to all researchers from one of the nine Circle U. universities, especially early career researchers** (e.g. doctoral and post-doctoral researchers) and targets all thematic areas related to sustainable development. Researchers invited to participate may be principal investigators or partners in a project

where the principal investigator is at another university. Submissions in partnership with non- academic actors or by interdisciplinary teams are strongly encouraged.

Sustainable development is understood in the broad sense as addressing, in an integrated way, the social, economic and environmental dimensions, while taking into account the limited availability of planetary resources to sustain this development in the long term.

The selected contributions will be grouped to be presented in thematic workshops.

We invite contributions in English from both

a. Researchers already involved in inter / trans-disciplinary research, who present the results of their research or the methodological/ethical issues raised by this type of inter/trans-disciplinary research approach
b. Researchers who are not yet involved in inter / trans-disciplinary research but who are preparing a research project or protocol, who present the key concepts and the methodology envisioned for their future research project

Participation will take the form of an oral presentation (10 minutes presentation + app. 10 minutes discussion) in one of the parallel thematic sessions

Certificates of participation will be provided so that active participation with presentation by PhD candidates can be validated in terms of ECTS points by doctoral commissions according to the applicable national rules on PhD studies.

The expected format for the submission of proposals is specified in Annex I “Expected format for the submission of abstracts” available below. Proposals must also indicate in which category (1.a/1.b/2.a/2.b) the submission is made, as explained in Annex I.

# Practicalities

- Contributions must be submitted before 15 September 2026 via the online form at:https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/9SUsX2K4BA
  Contributions received before 15 September 2026 as specified in Annex I. and selected by the scientific committee will appear on the official program of the day.
  If you have questions regarding the submission procedure, please contact coordinateur-louvain4@uclouvain.be.
- The conference will take place on 23 and 24 November 2026 in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. The papers will be presented on Tuesday 24 November 2026 (with a possibility to participate online). Participation in the conference is free, but any travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the contributors.
- The conference is a hybrid event. Possibilities for remote presentations will be possible. These remote presentations will be grouped in “virtual rooms” with a dedicated animator and a time slot to report to the plenary after the “virtual room” meeting.
  In-person on-site participation is, however, preferred (especially for all UCLouvain affiliated researchers).
  In the online form, please indicate the preferred mode of participation (online or in-person)

# Annex I – Expected format for the submission of abstracts

Contributions in English presenting transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary ongoing research projects or research protocols for sustainable development are invited.

Proposals will be assessed in terms of their scientific soundness, their relevance to the challenges of sustainable development and the adoption of an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach.

**The expected format for the submission of proposals is an extended abstract of 500 words maximum, in one of the 4 following categories.**

# Category 1 : Transdisciplinary contributions

## 1.a. TRANSDISC-RESULTS and PRACTICES

Scope: Contributions from researchers or social actors already involved in transdisciplinary research, in order to present the results – intermediate or final – of their research and/or the methodological/ethical issues raised by this type of trans-disciplinary research approach.

Format: For the contributions presenting results of a transdisciplinary research, an extended abstract including the following elements is expected:

1) state of the art of the issue
2) research questions
3) detailed methodology
4) description of the process of interaction with social actors
5) results achieved
6) presentation of the different partners of the project
7) description of methodological/ethical issues encountered

It is desirable that the submission include sufficient detail on point (4) “Description of the process of interaction with social actors”, specifying the steps, tools and challenges encountered.

Expected contribution at the conference: For the presentation of transdisciplinary contributions at the conference on 24 November 2026, we do favour presentations with the involvement of both "researcher" and "social actor" (including for example social actors from the associative sector, companies, public administrations, non-university research institutions, groups of engaged citizens, etc.). Transdisciplinary contribution proposals must include a brief presentation of the role of the non- academic partner who participates in the supervision or co-construction of the research.

## 1.b. TRANSDISC-PROTOCOL

Scope: Contributions from researchers or social actors who are not yet involved in transdisciplinary research, but willing to present a research project or protocol, in order to present the key concepts and the proposed methodology.

Format: For the contributions presenting a transdisciplinary research protocol, an extended abstract including the following elements is expected:

1) state of the art of the issue
2) research questions
3) detailed methodology
4) description of the planned process of interaction with social actors
5) expected results

6) presentation of the different partners of the project
7) identification of the main questions, uncertainties, or challenges the authors wish to discuss with the audience as well as their expectations regarding the feedback on the proposed protocol

Expected contribution at the conference: For the presentation of transdisciplinary contributions at the conference on 24 November 2026, we do recommend presentations with the involvement of both "researcher" and "social actor" (including for example social actors from the associative sector, companies, public administrations, non-university research institutions, groups of engaged citizens, etc.). Transdisciplinary contribution proposals must include a brief presentation of the role of the non- academic partner who participates in the supervision or co-construction of the research.

# Category 2 : Interdisciplinary contributions

## 2.a. INTERDISC-RESULTS and PRACTICES

Scope: Contributions from researchers or social actors already involved in interdisciplinary research, in order to present the results – intermediate or final – of their research and/or the methodological/ethical issues raised by this type of inter-disciplinary research approach.

Format: For the contributions presenting results of an interdisciplinary research, an extended abstract including the following elements:

1) state of the art of the issue
2) research questions
3) detailed methodology
4) description of the interaction process to build a common interdisciplinary research framework
5) results achieved
6) description of methodological/ethical issues encountered

## 2.b. INTERDISC-PROTOCOL

Scope: Contributions from researchers or social actors that are not yet involved in interdisciplinary research, in order to present the results – intermediate or final – of their research.

Format: For the contributions presenting an interdisciplinary research protocol, an extended abstract including the following elements is expected:

1) state of the art of the issue
2) research questions
3) detailed methodology
4) description of the planned interaction process to build a common interdisciplinary research framework
5) expected results
6) identification of the main questions, uncertainties, or challenges the authors wish to discuss with the audience as well as their expectations regarding the feedback on the proposed protocol

# Provisional Programme (subject to change)

6th Edition (2026): Building Regional and global thematic transdisciplinary research communities

| Monday 23rd November 2026 |
|---|
| *Pre-conference Workshop*<br><br>*09:00 – 16:00* ***Circle U. ECR*** *Training in transdisciplinary research approaches* |
| 16:15 -18:00 **Opening and networking cocktail with keynotes on Innovations in regional transdisciplinary research environments (Speakers to be announced)**<br><br>***Transdisciplinary Living Lab Research at Aachen University***<br><br>Responsible Research and Innovation-Labs: towards new forms of reflexivity in engineering and innovation practices<br><br>*Speakers to be announced*<br><br>The Living Labs Incubator, a measure within the RWTH Excellence Strategy to connect, study and support existing and emerging Living Labs at and around RWTH Aachen University.<br><br>*Speaker to be announced*<br><br>***Transdisciplinary research on social innovations at the research chair on socio-economics of the commons, Lille University***<br><br>Territorial transformative research approaches: lessons from ecological socioeconomics<br><br>*Speaker to be announced*<br><br>Social actor partnership for commons based research: "Coopérative des communs"<br><br>*Speaker to be announced*<br><br>***Transdisciplinary research partnerships at the Ghent City Academy***<br><br>Understanding urban sustainability from Mode 2 Science and transdisciplinary education: how Master Thesis Ateliers of the Ghent Stadsacademie tackle wicked issues<br><br>*Speaker to be announced*<br><br>"Stadsacademie": A plaform for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research for urban transitions in Ghent<br><br>*Speaker to be announced* |

| Tuesday 24th November 2026 |
| --- |
| 09:30 – 11:00 Parallel sessions A |
| 11:15 – 12:15 PANEL “Embedding of university research into regional transdisciplinary research environments for sustainable development”<br><br>• Participants from Circle U. ECR Training platform<br>• Spokespersom UCLouvain transition office of the pro-rector<br>• Invited key-notes |
| 12:15 – 14:00 Lunch |
| 14:00 – 15:30 Parallel sessions B |
| 15:30-17:00 Parallel sessions C |

# Scientific and Organising committees

## Organising committee

Prof. Marthe Nyssens (UCLouvain - Vice-rector “Transition et Society”)
Prof. Tom Dedeurwaerdere (UCLouvain - LPTransition)
Pierre Mersch (UCLouvain - Louvain4 Coordinator – Research Administration)

## Scientific committee

Prof. Isabelle Aujoulat (UCLouvain –IRSS - Institut de Recherche Santé et Société)
Prof. Patricia Luis Alconero (UCLouvain – IMMC - Institute of Mechanics, Materials and Civil Engineering)
Prof. Mathieu Berger (UCLouvain – IACS - Institut d'analyse du changement dans l'histoire et les sociétés contemporaines)
Prof. Matteo Cacciari (Université Paris Cité)
Prof. Vinicius De Carvalho (Kings College London)
Prof. Florence Degavre (UCLouvain – IACS - Institut d'analyse du changement dans l'histoire et les sociétés contemporaines)
Prof. Tom Dedeurwaerdere (UCLouvain -JURI - Institut pour la recherche interdisciplinaire en sciences juridiques)
Prof. Ulrike Felt (University of Vienna)
Prof. Julie Hermesse (UCLouvain – IACS - Institut d'analyse du changement dans l'histoire et les sociétés contemporaines)
Prof. Tommaso Luzzati (University of Pisa)
Prof. Patrick Meyfroidt (UCLouvain – ELI - Earth and Life Institute)
Prof. Ivan Mihajlovic (University of Belgrade)
Prof. Anaïs Perilleux (UCLouvain – LIDAM – Louvain Institute of Data Analysis and modeling in economics and statistics)
Prof. Daniela Perrotti (UCLouvain - LAB Louvain Research Institute for Landscape, Architecture and Built Environment SST/LOCI Faculty of Architecture, Architectural Engineering and Urban Planning)
Prof. Jean-Pierre Raskin (UCLouvain – ICTEAM - Institute for Information and Communication Technologies, Electronics and Applied Mathematics)
Prof. Laurent Taskin (UCLouvain – LOURIM - Louvain Research Institute in Management and Organizations)
Prof. Sandy Tubeuf (UCLouvain –IRSS - Institut de Recherche Santé et Société)
Prof. Martin Wagener (UCLouvain - IACS - Institut d'analyse du changement dans l'histoire et les sociétés contemporaines)