AAS-EU-CNRS Showcasing Event
Ensuring Water for All through Scientific Cooperation
Wednesday, 29th April 2026, 9h00-16h00
Online Registration link:
https://zoom.us/meeting/register/HPRDGm59TFKq5roKeD3Wqg

Background

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) is a Pan-African, non-aligned, non-profit organisation headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, whose vision is to transform lives across the African continent through science. Under one of its tripartite mandates, the AAS implements key Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) programmes that address developmental challenges in Africa. One of the Flagship programmes, Africa Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence (ARISE), implemented in partnership with the African Union and the European Union (EU), is a pathway for R&I exchanges that contribute to sustainable and inclusive development, economic growth, and job creation.

The European Union is a strategic partner, funding the ARISE programme, implemented by the AAS. ARISE supports 47 grantees from 38 countries with research funding and capacity building that enables early- to mid-career African researchers to conduct research that will contribute to solving development issues in their countries. AAS and the European Research Council have signed in October 2025 an agreement to facilitate the mobility between ARISE grantees and ERC fellows. Similar exchange and mobility agreements were signed in July 2025 between AAS, on one hand, and CNRS, CSIC and IRD, on the other hand.

The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) is France's largest public scientific research organisation, a major international player in fundamental research spanning all fields of knowledge, from biology and chemistry to the humanities and social sciences. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, the CNRS operates as a public establishment, organized into thematic institutes, and employs a vast network of researchers, engineers, and technicians. Its mission encompasses conducting both fundamental and applied research, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, disseminating scientific knowledge, and contributing to national research strategies, thereby playing a pivotal role in advancing science and addressing global challenges while driving innovation in France and worldwide.

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS), in partnership with the European Union Delegation, and the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), will host a conference at the University of Burundi in Bujumbura, Burundi. This is the third in a series of showcase events aimed at creating a platform for scientific cooperation between the ARISE grantees and European research centres and EU-funded or affiliated researchers.

The event in Bujumbura will showcase Prof. Samuel Bunani, an ARISE grantee, whose research focuses on developing an electrochemical process for the recovery of nutrients from liquid waste resources. In addition, Dr Abdallah Mahamat Nour, an ARISE grantee in Chad, working on the effects of climate on aquifer recharge, will virtually present his groundbreaking research and findings. To complement these presentations, Prof. Sidy Ba and Dr. Ngonye Keroletswe, also ARISE grantees, will join virtually to showcase their ARISE research projects.

Rationale

Scientific cooperation is essential to build a knowledge-based society. Through collaborative efforts, research is strengthened and pressing challenges are tackled. However, efforts are hampered by poor funding for research and innovation in Africa. The ARISE programme aims to develop a critical mass of scientific leaders who will contribute to solving developmental challenges through research. To enhance knowledge exchange and scientists' capacity, the ARISE programme fosters collaboration through scientific research both within Africa and with other continents. In view of the above, the AAS, EU and CNRS will convene a scientific conference at the University of Burundi, Burundi, on 29 April 2026. The event will feature Prof. Samuel Bunani, an ARISE fellow from the University of Burundi, whose research focuses on water reclamation and recovery and other fellows and researchers working on Water. This hybrid gathering will facilitate networking opportunities leading to strategic partnerships.

Objective

The forum will foster critical exchanges and bring together scientists working in the water and climate sectors, government officials, and other stakeholders to discuss efficient technologies and strategies for a safe water supply and a clean, resilient environment in the face of harsh impacts from climate change. It will be an opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to the African Union (AU) theme for 2026, **"Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063".**

Expected Outcomes

- Increased strategic visibility, policy Recognition, elevated visibility and understanding of the ARISE programme, EU and CNRS among Burundian and regional stakeholders, including policymakers, academia, and research institutions. The event will enhance recognition of the EU –AAS–CNRS partnership as a model for equitable North–South and intra-African scientific cooperation contributing to Agenda 2063 priorities.
- Strengthened institutional and research partnerships initiation and reinforcement of collaborative linkages between ARISE fellows, CNRS researchers, the University of Burundi, regional universities, and government agencies. The forum will catalyse concrete follow-up engagements including joint research proposals, co-supervision arrangements, mobility exchanges, and potential participation in Horizon Europe and other international funding mechanisms.
- Enhanced knowledge exchange and capacity development. Improved awareness of cutting-edge research methodologies and technologies in water reclamation, aquifer recharge, climate resilience, and pollution mitigation.
- Contribution to evidence-informed policy dialogue generation of actionable recommendations to inform national and regional policy discussions on sustainable water management, climate adaptation, and sanitation systems. Deliberations will contribute to the African Union 2026 theme: "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063."
- Strengthened research leadership and talent retention in Africa, showcasing of ARISE fellows as emerging scientific leaders, reinforcing the programme's objective of building a critical mass of African researchers capable of addressing developmental challenges while fostering scientific excellence within African institutions.
- Improved public and academic engagement in science diplomacy, enhanced understanding of science diplomacy and international research cooperation

frameworks among participants, positioning Burundi and the wider region to engage more strategically with global research ecosystems.

Participants and Speakers

- **Prof. François Havyarimana,** Minister of National Education and Scientific Research, Burundi
- **Mr. Damien NIYONKURU,** Minister of Infrastructure, Social Housing, Transport and Equipment
- **Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona,** AUC-ESTI Commissioner**,** former Burundi Minister of National Education and Scientific Research (Virtual/video message)
- **Prof. Prudence Bararunyeretse,** Vice Chancellor/ Representative, University of Burundi
- **H.E Elizabetta Pietrobon,** EU Ambassador to Burundi
- **Sebastien Minot,** French Ambassador to Burundi (tbc)
- **Prof. Zacharie Miburo,** Secrétaire Exécutif Permanent de la Commission Nationale de la Science, de la Technologie et de l'Innovation, CNSTI, Burundi
- **Prof. Juma Shabani,** AAS Fellow
- **Dr. Boniface Ushie,** Programmes Manager, AAS
- **Dr. Laurent Bochereau**, EU Science Counsellor to the African Union
- **Dr. Benoît Hazard,** Directeur du bureau régional de Nairobi, CNRS
- **Dr Laurent Vidal**, Directeur du Bureau régional CNRS et IRD en Afrique australe, Prétoria, CNRS, IRD
- **Prof. Samuel Bunani,** ARISE Fellow, University of Burundi, Burundi
- **Dr. Abdallah Mahamat Nour,** ARISE Fellow, University of Ndjamena, Chad
- **Prof. Sidy Ba,** ARISE Fellow, (ENI-ABT), Mali
- **Dr. Ngonye Keroletswe,** ARISE Fellow, BITRI, Botswana
- **Dr. Marc Jolivet,** CNRS (online)
- **Dr. Florence Sylvestre,** IRD
- **Dr. Didier Orange**, IRD
- **Prof. Manuel Ferrer,** CSIC
- **Dr.Alba Gómez-Arias,** CSIC
- **Dr Jelena Radjenovic,** ERC
- **Dr Prince Nana Amaniampong,** ERC
- **Dr François Zaviska,** Université de Montpellier
- **Pierre Lecomte,** French Embassy in Burundi
- **French Embassy-**Chad (TBA)

Contacts

- ✓ University of Burundi: Prof Samuel Bunani (samuel.bunani@ub.edu.bi)- Burundi
- ✓ European Union : Dr Laurent Bochereau (laurent.bochereau@eeas.europa.eu)-Eu/AU, Ethiopia
- ✓ African Academy of Sciences: Dr Boniface Ushie (b.ushie@aasciences.africa)-AAS Kenya
- ✓ CNRS: Dr Benoit Hazard (benoit.hazard@cnrs.fr)-CNRS Regional Office, Nairobi

Opening Ceremony (Moderator Mr. Jean Claude Ndikumasabo)

Time	Activity	Speaker
Opening Session		
09:00 AM - 09:20 AM	The Burundi national anthem, followed by welcome remarks	**Prof.Prudence Bararunyeretse,** Vice Chancellor, University of Burundi
09:21 AM-09:50 AM	Opening remarks	**Prof. François Havyarimana,** Minister of National Education and Scientific Research, Burundi
		H.E. Elisabetta PIETROBON, EU Ambassador, Burundi
		H.E. Sebastien MINOT, French Ambassador, Burundi (TBC)
09:51 AM-10:00 AM	Keynote Speech	**Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona,** AUC-ESTI Commissioner**,** former Burundi Minister of National Education and Scientific Research (Virtually)
10:01 AM- 10:10 AM	Keynote Speech	**Mr. Damien NIYONKURU,** Minister of Infrastructure, Social Housing, Transport and Equipment
10:11 AM-10:20 AM	Presentation about the AAS and Fellows	**Prof. Juma Shabani,** Chairman Programme Committee ARISE and AAS Fellow
10:21 AM-10:30 AM	Presentation of the ARISE program	**Dr. Boniface Ushie,** Programmes Manager, AAS
10:31 AM-10:50 AM	Presentation on Horizon Europe	**Dr. Laurent Bochereau,** EU Science Counsellor to the African Union
10:51 AM-11:00 AM	Introduction about CNRS	**Dr. Benoît Hazard,** Directeur du bureau régional de Nairobi, CNRS
Group photo		
Session One: Scientific Presentation (Moderator, Dr Benoit Hazard)		
11:10 AM-11:25 AM	Development of an Electrochemical Process for Recovery of Nutrients from Liquid Waste Resources (e-Pro4ReNs).	**Prof. Samuel Bunani,** ARISE Fellow, Burundi
11:26 AM-11:40 AM		**Dr François Zaviska,** Université de Montpellier
11:41 AM- 11:55 AM	Multisectoral Water Management: from Pluridisciplinarity to Local Solutions.	**Didier Orange,** IRD
11:56 AM- 12:10 PM	From Monitoring to Action: Integrated Biotechnological Solutions for Water Bioremediation and Decontamination	**Prof Manuel Ferrer,** (CSIC)
12:11 PM- 12:25 PM	Catalytic Cavitation Membrane Agents for Ultrasound-Assisted PFAS	**Dr. Prince Nana Amaniampong,** ERC

	Elimination and Wastewater Purification	
Q & A from the audience		
Lunch Break		
Session Two: Scientific presentations (ARISE fellows)-Moderator Dr Boniface Ushie		
1:30 PM-1:45 PM	Sustainable Water Filtration Using Cellulose Based Membranes Derived from Local Biomass	**Dr. Ngonye Keroetswe,** ARISE Fellow, Botswana
1:46 PM – 2:00 PM	Impact of climate change on wetlands from the Lake Chad basin and its consequences on groundwater recharge	**Dr. Abdallah Mahamat Nour,** ARISE Fellow, Chad
2:01 PM – 2:15 PM	Enzymatic biotechnology for nature-based remediation of environmental pollution (ENZYREP)	**Prof. Sidy Ba**, ARISE Fellow, Mali
2:16 PM- 2:30 PM	Natural toxicity of groundwater in the Okavango Delta: One Health implications	**Dr. Marc Jolivet,** CNRS (online)
2:31 PM- 2:45 PM	Strengthening of the hydrological cycle in the Lake Chad Basin under current climate change	**Dr Florence Sylvestre,** IRD
2:46 PM- 3:00 PM	Selective electrochemical separation and recovery of lithium and other metals using tailored monolith electrodes	**Dr Jelena Radjenovic,** ERC
3:01 PM- 3:15 PM	Cleaning Water, Recovering Value: Turning Mine Drainage into a Critical Elements Resource	**Dr Alba Gómez-Arias,** Institute of Natural Resources and Agrobiology of Seville (IRNAS-CSIC) (Online)
Q &A and Interactive discussions among the researchers		
Session Three: Round table discussions-Research innovation and contribution to water sustainability (Moderator Dr Boniface Ushie)		
3:16 PM – 3:40 PM		**Prof. Samuel Bunani**
		Prof Abdalla Mahamat Nour
		Prof. Sidy Ba
		Dr Ngonye Keroletswe
3:41 PM- 3:50 PM	Summary of the round table discussions and remarks by CNSTI	**Prof. Zacharie Miburo,** National Commission of Sciences, Technology and Innovations (CNSTI)
3:51 PM-4:00 PM	Vote of Thanks and Closing Remarks	**Prof. Prudence Bararunyeretse,** Vice Chancellor, University of Burundi

Refreshments