



University of Florence

The ShareAFRICA - Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa Project – CUP E46E24000010006 BEP (Blended Executive Programmes) Call for Applications

Background and Context: the IHEA Foundation

In 2019, six Italian universities – University of Bologna, University of Florence, Politecnico di Milano, University of Naples Federico II, University of Padua and Sapienza University of Rome – with the crucial support of the Ministry of Universities and Research, joined together aiming at contributing to facilitate and strengthen the collaboration and the integration between Italian and African higher education institutions with a special attention to transnational education approaches.

The effort culminated in the establishment of the IHEA Foundation – Italian Higher Education with Africa. IHEA Foundation calls for a reassessment of internationalization as an asset of science diplomacy by fostering the collaborations between Italian and African universities, also by means of strengthening the presence of Italian universities abroad, with the aim of contributing, in line with the essence of academic cooperation, to local and autonomous development.

The IHEA Foundation was formally launched in October 2020 to promote an innovative and collaborative approach to transnational higher education across the African continent, from the Mediterranean region to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Foundation's transnational education strategy foresees the launch of an Italian transnational campus abroad awarding first, second and third level degrees, and other advanced training courses to be delivered in African countries jointly with local African universities and their staff members.

Background and Context: The Frame of the SHARE_Africa Project

Africa is today at the centre of the debate in Italy, in Europe and in the world, and the continent's role will become increasingly strategic in the current era of global and urgent transitions. Within this context, there is room for maneuver to revive relations between Africa and Italy by means of a new paradigm of cooperation grounded in science, education & research. In line with the strategic objective of internationalization assigned by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan to the Italian academia and the EU vision on science diplomacy as an asset of international cooperation, the Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa (SHARE_Africa) project is designed based on the experience of the Italian Higher Education with Africa Foundation (IHEA Foundation) since its launching in October 2020.

SHARE_Africa is structured to empower peer-to-peer scientific cooperation between six Italian universities (University of Bologna, University of Florence, University of Naples "Federico II", University of Padua, "Sapienza" University of Rome, and Politecnico di Milano) and a number of African Higher Education Institutions. The track record of the IHEA Foundation includes a Specializing Master in Ethiopia (60 ECTS) and five Intensive Advanced Courses in Tunisia and Ethiopia, targeting more than 130 young academicians over two years.

The asset of the existing relationships and current activities, combined with strategic considerations for Italy in terms of foreign affairs policy, international cooperation strategies, migration policies, and industrial interests, led the IHEA Foundation to identify the MENA Region and the Horn of Africa—with focal hubs in Tunisia and Ethiopia—as the target regions.

From this analysis, Early Career Academicians were identified as the target group since they are already part of the academic system, yet young enough to guarantee the best exploitation of the projects' results along



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their careers. Being alumni of SHARE_Africa, they will act as the Italy-Africa Education and Research Ambassadors.

The overall objective is to promote the birth of Italo-African Science Hubs to sustain long-term cooperation in Education and Research between the Italian and African Academic Systems by means of joint Education and Research Ambassadors while providing policy recommendation to empowering science diplomacy. Among its specific objectives, the SHARE project addresses the identification and implementation of 6 Blended Executive Programmes (BEP).

BEP: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FOR NEW CHALLENGES

Call for Applications

- HAVING REGARD to the EU Council Decision - 16051/23 of 8 December 2023, which amends the EU Council Implementing Decision of 13 July 2021, concerning the approval of the evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Italy, subsequently amended by the EU Council Decision - 9399/24 of 14 May 2024, with which, in relation to investment 3.4, it was arranged, among others, the modification of the description of the measure and the introduction of the milestone M4C1-23 bis, which provides for the implementation of ten transnational educational initiatives - TNE - by 30 June 2026;
- HAVING REGARD to the Directorial Decree of 3 October 2023, no. 167 "Notice for the granting of funding for transnational educational initiatives - TNE";
- Having regard to the Directorial Decree granting funding from the MUR No. 252 dated 08/08/2024: project identification code TNE2300010, titled *Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa (SHARE_AFRICA)*, submitted by the University Foundation for University Education with African Countries (IHEA Foundation), tax code 11459500960, for the amount of €1,834,200.42 (one million eight hundred thirty-four thousand two hundred and 42/100), to be drawn from the resources provided by the PNRR within the scope of Mission 4 "Education and Research," Component 1 "Strengthening the offer of education services: from nursery schools to university — from research to business," Investment 3.4 "University teaching and advanced skills," and T4 "Transnational initiatives in education," funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. CUP E46E24000010006.
- Having regard to the Articles of Association of the IHEA Foundation, Rep. 161794 Racc. 27468 dated 08/10/2020.
- Having regard to the Statute of the IHEA Foundation, as Annex "C" to the aforementioned Articles of Association.
- Having regard to the signing of the grant agreement ("atto d'obbligo") for the SHARE_AFRICA project by the President of the IHEA Foundation on 29/10/2024.
- Having regard to the commitment made by the University of Florence within the framework of the above-mentioned project TNE2300010, titled *Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa*, to launch a call for applications for the E-BIPs.

The University of Florence communicates the following:

Article 1

Scope and Profile Requirements

Sustainable business for new challenges

Sustainable business practices have become a critical global priority, driven by the growing recognition that businesses play a central role in tackling some of the planet's most urgent challenges. Issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality increasingly strain ecosystems, economies, and communities worldwide. This program aims to deliver interdisciplinary and practical expertise in sustainable business management, combining core competencies from both management disciplines and applied chemistry relevant to business contexts, with a particular emphasis on the African context. Beyond the foundational principles of the field, the intensive course incorporates digital tools and innovative strategies, providing a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

The program adopts a blended learning approach, combining MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course), live online sessions, and an immersive two-week course in Tunis, hosted by IHEC Carthage – Université de Carthage. The in-person component includes lectures, practical exercises, laboratory activities, and case study analysis, enabling participants to apply and deepen their understanding of the concepts covered throughout the course.

Online classes will be delivered remotely from November 14th, 2025. The two-week in-person training will be completed by the end of January 2026.

By the end of the course, the participants will have developed:

- a deepened understanding of sustainable business practices, emphasizing their importance for Africa's socio-economic development;
- the skills and quantitative tools useful to analyze and implement effective sustainable business strategies;
- the ability to analyze and address sustainability challenges from an integrated perspective, combining expertise in economics and applied chemistry.

The program is designed for a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30 participants. The call is open to PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and early-career researchers. Although the course is designed for researchers in the social sciences, participation from scholars in other disciplines is also welcome.

The eligibility criteria are defined in Art. 6.0.

Article 2

The BEP Secretariat

The BEP secretariat is constituted jointly by the University of Florence (1 representative) and IHEC Carthage (1 representative).

The BEP secretariat receives the applications submitted by the Candidates and transfers those in compliance to the Selection Committee.

Article 3

The Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will be composed of three representatives from the University of Florence and may eventually be supplemented by staff from IHEC Carthage.

The Selection Committee receives the applications from the Secretariat and is responsible for evaluating each submission in order to select the candidates to be invited to participate in the program.

The Selection Committee will draft a final report in accordance with the requirements of this Call, confirming that all submitted applications have been thoroughly reviewed and presenting the list of candidates invited to participate in the BEP. The report will also outline the criteria applied in the selection process. The majority of the Members of the Selection Committee shall be present for their meetings to be considered valid.

Article 4

Statement of Principle for the Candidates' selection.

The Selection Committee is committed to securing an equal opportunity selection process, without prejudice, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, pregnancy, disability or other personal attributes provided that these do not affect the candidate's ability to meet the legitimate and reasonable requirements of the position.

The Secretariat ensures that the selection process adheres to documented procedures, providing candidates with access to published criteria on eligibility and selection.

Participation in the BEP program is free of charge.

Up to 25 applicants will be eligible to receive a scholarship of up to EUR 4,000 to cover expenses related to their participation in the program,

The scholarship will be funded by UNIFI within the ShareAFRICA - Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa Project – CUP E46E24000010006.

Article 5

Evaluation procedure steps

1. Eligible Profiles

The course is primarily designed for individuals with relevant professional or academic experience. Such experience will be considered in assessing applicants' eligibility for participation in the program.

The African countries involved in this program are: Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Tanzania, Tunisia.

To be eligible for admission, applicants must:

- Hold at least a Bachelor's degree (or an equivalent qualification), obtained by the start date of the BEP.
- Demonstrate interest and commitment to the program's subject through their Curriculum Vitae.
- Submit a support letter in English, specifically prepared for this application, printed on official letterhead and signed—preferably by an institutional representative (Head of Unit or Department, or Supervisor) of the home institution/authority/university (maximum 1 page).

A good command of both written and spoken English is required, as the entire program will be conducted in English and the selection interview will also be held in English. If available, applicants may include a valid English language certificate as an additional document in their application.

Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible.

2. Call for applications

Applications for the SHARE_Africa BEPs shall be submitted according to this call, published in English on the following websites: <https://www.disei.unifi.it/vp-680-progetti-pnrr-tne-iniziativa-educative-transnazionali.html>.

The application process opens on **September 25th, 2025** and the deadline for submission is **October 14th, 2025**. Applications received beyond this deadline will be automatically rejected.

3. Evaluation of applications and ranking

Applications will be evaluated by the Selection Committee (Art. 3) based on the criteria outlined in Annex 1 and the specifications defined in Article 1 (Scope and Profile Requirements).

The rank list will be compiled by the Selection Committee based on the information provided in the application documents (Art. 6), using the following evaluation criteria:

- Degree grade – 1 to 10 points
- CV and other educational and relevant educational or extracurricular experiences in the field of sustainable business – 1 to 5 points
- Assessment of the support letter – 1 to 5 points
- Alignment of the candidate's profile with the objectives of the program, – 1 to 5 points.

Maximum total score: 25 points.

Article 6

Application documentation

Applications must be submitted using the application form (see Annex 2) exclusively via email to: selezioni@disei.unifi.it. The email subject line must follow this format: *Name Surname_Application TNE-ShareAfrica BEP – Sustainable Business for new challenges* attaching the following documents:

- Bachelor or Master of Science degree
- Copy of a valid Passport
- A CV (in English, including academic background and professional experiences) (MAX: 2 pages)
- A support letter in English, specifically prepared for this application, printed on official letterhead and signed—preferably by an institutional representative (Head of Unit or Department, or Supervisor) of the home institution/authority/university (maximum 1 page)
- Any additional documents or statements providing further information that may highlight relevant experience in the field

Incomplete and/or inconsistently filled out applications and/or those that do not meet the required criteria will be considered ineligible.

Article 7

Publication of Results

The list of accepted candidates will be published on the website <https://www.disei.unifi.it/vp-680-progetti-pnrr-tne-iniziativa-educative-transnazionali.html>

Below is an indicative schedule of the participation of students in the program:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • Publication of the call for applications: | September 2025 |
| • Deadline for the submission of the applications: | Mid-October 2025 |
| • Deadline for Trainee Selection Announcement and acceptance | End of October 2025 |

In the event of a withdrawal by selected student(s), the next candidate(s) on the ranking list (Art. 5.2) will be admitted.

Article 8

Visa

The Visa procedures are entirely the responsibility of the student. Therefore, the possibility of carrying out the period abroad for selected students is always subject to the issuance of the Visa by the destination country (Tunisia). It should be noted that the issuance of a Visa for some countries may be restricted for certain nationalities.

Article 9

Insurance

The participants to the exchanges, while exercising the activities provided for in the project, must have both accident insurance and third-party liability insurance for unintentional damage, hereby releasing the host university from any liability to this regard. Such insurance coverage may be either provided by the home institutions, according to their own regulations, or contained in a policy covering the above-mentioned risks obtained by the interested person from an insurance company.

For what concerns health insurance (coverage for medical expenses and/or hospitalization) the participants must provide their own insurance according to the rules of the host country.

Article 10

Contacts

Any request for clarifications or communication about the BEP course shall be addressed to prof. Laura Bini laura.bini@unifi.it; for administrative issues to Ms. Michela Calabrese michela.calabrese@unifi.it.

Article 11

Personal Data

Personal data of the interested parties will be processed in accordance with the principles of correctness, lawfulness, transparency and minimization, for the protection of confidentiality and all the rights of the interested parties, in accordance with

with the provisions of the European Regulation on the protection of personal data. (EU Regulation 2016/679, so-called GDPR), by the Code regarding the protection of personal data (Legislative Decree 196/2003 and subsequent amendments) and by the consequent implementing measures adopted by the European authorities and by the Guarantor for the protection of personal data (www.garanteprivacy.it).



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Annex 1 – Ranking for the evaluation

Degree grade (1-10 points);	<input type="checkbox"/> Master degree with a grade from 100 to 110: 10 points <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree with a grade from 93 to 99: 8 points <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree with a grade lower than 92 or Bachelor's degree with a grade from 100 to 110: 6 points <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree with a grade from 93 to 99: 4 points <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree with a grade lower than 92: 2 points				
Grade Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum-vitae – in English, including other educational or extra curricula experiences on Sustainable Business (1-5 points)	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Support letter – in English and prepared on purpose) (1-5 points)	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Alignment of the candidate's profile with the program (1-5 points)	No alignment	Fair	Good	Excellent	Outstanding
Overall grade	\25				

Annex 2 – Application form

**The ShareAFRICA - Science Hubs for Advanced Research & Education with Africa Project (CUP
E46E24000010006)**

**BEP (Blended Executive Programmes) in
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FOR NEW CHALLENGES**

To the Department of Economics and Management, University of Florence (selezioni@disei.unifi.it)

**Subject: Application for the BEP “Sustainable Business for New Challenges” (Project TNE2300010 –
SHARE_AFRICA)**

I, the undersigned (Name Surname) _____,
born on (date of birth) _____ in (place of birth)

currently residing at (full address) _____
e-mail _____ mobile phone _____

hereby SUBMIT

my application to be admitted to the candidate selection process for participation in the BEP program titled
“*Sustainable Business for New Challenges*”, within the framework of the SHARE_AFRICA project
(TNE2300010), aimed at:

- providing interdisciplinary knowledge and practical skills in sustainable business management, with a particular focus on the African socio-economic context.

For this purpose, being fully aware of the responsibilities and of the criminal sanctions established by Italian law for false statements and untruthful declarations (art. 76 of Presidential Decree no. 445/2000),

I HEREBY DECLARE

that I meet all the eligibility requirements established in the Call for Applications (Articles 5 and 6), in particular:

- I hold a Bachelor's (or higher) degree from one of the African universities listed in Annex 1, obtained by the start date of the BEP;
- I have demonstrated academic and/or professional interest in the field of sustainable business, as documented in my Curriculum Vitae;
- I am proficient in written and spoken English, as required for participation in the program.

I FURTHER DECLARE

that I am submitting my application complete with all documents required under Article 6 of the Call, namely:

- Copy of my Bachelor/Master of Science degree;
 - Copy of my valid passport;
 - Curriculum Vitae in English (maximum 2 pages);
 - Support letter in English, printed on official letterhead and signed by an institutional representative of my home university/authority;
 - Other documents (please specify the type of non-mandatory supporting annexes):
-

I further provide the following additional information regarding my participation in the BEP program. This information is collected for informational purposes only, and it will not be used in the selection.

- I have got a personal laptop to attend the online module ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I can access a reliable internet connection that allows me to attend the online module independently ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I have some scheduling constraints that limit my ability to participate in the online module? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Due to my constraints, I will **NOT** be able to attend the online courses: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a) in the morning ☐
 - b) in the afternoon ☐
 - c) in the evening ☐
- I hold a bank account authorized to receive international payments, or alternatively, a rechargeable card (e.g., Revolut) that is valid in my country ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I will be able to obtain a bank account authorized to receive international payments, or alternatively, an international prepaid card before the start of the BEP ☐ Yes ☐ No

Processing of Personal Data

Personal data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU Regulation 2016/679) and Legislative Decree no. 196/2003, as amended.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.unifi.it/vp-11360-protezione-dati.html#studenti>

Place, Date _____

Signature _____