

Una Europa – Africa Partnership: Vision Statement and Roadmap

What?

Since May 2022, Una Europa members and African partner universities have met to co-create a shared vision for a pilot partnership. Built on existing bilateral links, the partnership's work has been purposeful in its focus on the value of multilateral partnerships in developing equal partnerships in an unequal world (or mutually beneficial partnerships to address global challenges). The partnership decided to focus its work on tangible actions that will lead to the creation of a vibrant international community of researchers, by supporting the growth and development of early career researchers, with a specific focus on addressing global challenges. We believe this is where a multilateral partnership of this kind can have most impact.

Why?

Universities of the future must put front and centre their commitment to supporting and developing the next generation as globally-connected co-creators of the future we want. **Only through strategic collaboration across research, innovation, education and outreach, and community building can this be achieved.** A partnership of institutions from across the continents of Africa and Europe provides an opportunity to share expertise from across diverse contexts, ensuring students and staff are future-ready in a rapidly changing world.

How?

The partnership has embraced an open and collaborative approach to designing a vision statement and roadmap. Both are designed to be agile, and will allow for prioritisation, evolution, and potential growth of the proposed activities. Partner universities have met in Helsinki in June 2022 and again in October 2022 for two co-creation workshops. The session in October included a small number of new partners who had not been present in Helsinki. The outcomes of those meetings have shaped the vision statement and roadmap.

Who?

Universities currently taking part in this co-creative process are:

- University of Edinburgh (Chair)
- University of Bologna
- University College Dublin
- Eduardo Mondlane University
- University of Ghana
- University of Helsinki
- Jagiellonian University
- University of Johannesburg
- Kampala International University
- Leiden University
- KU Leuven
- Makerere University
- University of Nairobi
- University of the Witwatersrand

Una Europa-Africa Vision Statement

“Whatever we do, we do it for the next generation”

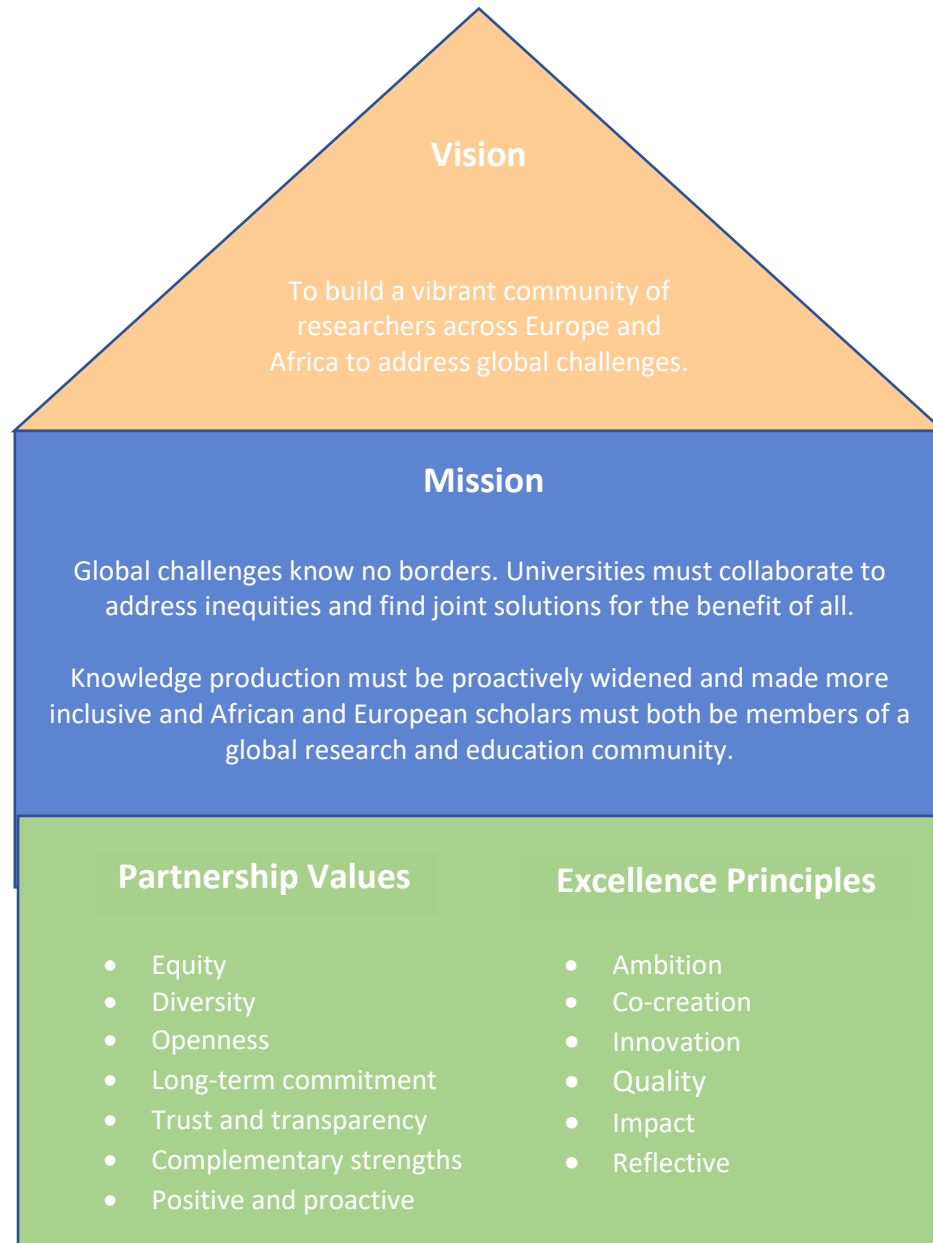
Our universities of the future must ensure our graduates are future-ready in an increasingly interconnected world. The partnership will leverage the strengths of its component parts and should be ambitious in its offer to the future of education, research, and community development.

Strategic collaboration across research, innovation, education, and outreach & community building

We must build a more sustainable future together, building on existing partnership in line with Sustainable Development Goal 17, and funding support. Mainstream African knowledge and perspectives and provide joint mobility opportunities to learn and engage. Create systematic opportunities, including new ways to engage African and European researchers.

Early career focus

The partnership’s primary commitment will be to support early career researchers, the future of the academy.



Una Europa-Africa Draft Roadmap

This is a proposed roadmap, including activities for which there is a shared interest, and would assist the partnership towards its shared vision. They are not intended to be sequential but rather form part of a collaboration that grows organically. Proposed actions are largely drawn from the ideas put forward by participants at the online session, held in October 2022. A further exercise will be necessary to determine which of these activities should be prioritised and carried forward by the partnership, in line with a shared vision.

Activities are broken down into four phases: Scoping – Connecting – Supporting – Skilling.

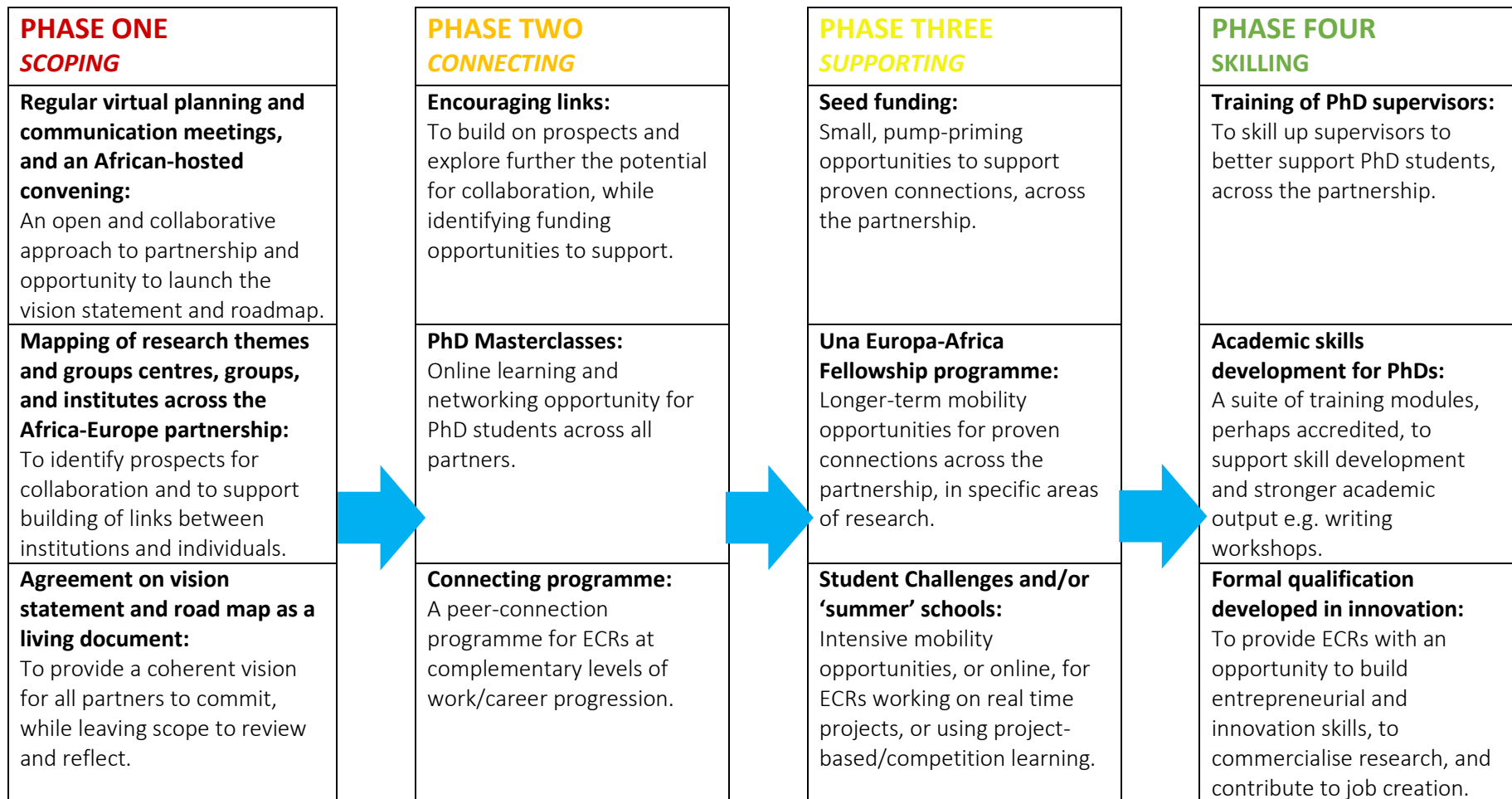
Scoping: We acknowledge there is still work to be undertaken to identify strengths and opportunities within the partnership. The vision statement and roadmap are purposefully agile to respond to the development and growth of ideas.

Connecting: A core component of supporting early career researchers is through connection. Extensive mapping of partner institutions as well as facilitated networking opportunities will support the partnership to connect.

Supporting: Connections require support. Sustained commitments to growing connections across the multilateral partnership can be provided through various opportunities.

Skilling: Connected and supported groups of early career researchers can be skilled through specifically designed programmes and/or through peer networks.

Circular and continuous evaluation and reflection of these stages will be important as the partnership activities progress.



Build an understanding of current projects that support ECRs:

To guide the partnership on best practice and create space for consultation with ECRs.

Mapping of complementary strengths in the six interdisciplinary Una Europa Focus Areas

Artificial Intelligence & Data Science
Sustainability
Cultural Heritage
One Health
Europe and the World
Future Materials

Joint PhD Supervision:

Finding a multi-lateral approach to shared supervision, to benefit the partnership's vision.

Large-scale funding support:

To support one or two key ECR connections within the Africa-Europe partnership.

Career progression opportunities:

To utilise the network of ECRs across the partnership to provide career progression prospects.