ENLIGHT

European Dialogue

Experimenting with Transitions

11-12 May 2027

Hosted by the University of Bordeaux

université de BORDEAUX



Co-funded by the European Union

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The European Dialogue is a flagship conference of the ENLIGHT alliance. Conceived as a space for exchange, co-creation and development of bottom-up collaborations, it seeks to strengthen the capacity of academic and regional stakeholders to work together on concrete societal challenges.

Against the backdrop of climate change and territorial adaptation, local and regional authorities as well as universities are increasingly developing new forms of cooperation to experiment with, test and deploy innovative solutions for society.

The 4th ENLIGHT European Dialogues will take place in **Bordeaux on 11-12 May 2027** and will focus on the following theme: "**Experimenting with Transitions**". The ambition is to contribute to the development of a network of stakeholders committed to territorial experimentation, capable of generating actionable knowledge, supporting transitions as closely as possible to the needs of local territories and disseminating and replicating effective initiatives on these issues, in connection with European dynamics.

Discussions should focus on emerging models of collaboration between universities and territories, including Living Labs, AIMDays, challenge-based learning programmes, participatory and citizen science, innovation hubs and third places, as well as partnership agreements and frameworks that facilitate cooperation between institutions, and with citizens. These approaches offer a range of levers for designing, testing and evaluating solutions to address the challenges of the transitions.

We welcome joint or individual submissions from representatives of ENLIGHT universities & local communities, as well as from representatives of selected ENLIGHT strategic partners and representatives from other European Alliances.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate networking and matchmaking among academics, administrative staff supporting external collaborations, and non-academic partners
- Share experiences and practices of collaboration for societal and environmental transitions
- Explore institutional strategies for embedding collaboration within and between universities, cities and communities addressing real societal challenges

- Support the co-creation of educational and research projects addressing real societal challenges
- Encourage the development of skills related to transdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Academics
- Early-career researchers
- PhD students
- ENLIGHT administrative staff
- Representatives of ENLIGHT cities and local communities
- Other: economic actors, associations, NGOs connected to the selected theme

FORMAT

Contributions will be selected through a call addressed to the above-mentioned target audiences. They can be submitted for the following session formats and **cannot exceed 2 000 characters**:

- **Showcase presentation (30')**: intended to **share ideas, experiences and findings** about the development of collaborations between universities and local stakeholders on societal and environmental transitions. The speaker presents their project/experience for 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of dialogue with the participants (Q&A).

  If you wish to submit a showcase presentation, your abstract should include:
  - Description of your project/experience of collaboration (rationale for the collaboration, practices to establish and sustain effective collaboration, key partners involved, evidence that demonstrate the collaboration's success, etc.)
  - Planned outcome/impact of the session (why is this valuable for participants?)
  - Back-up questions for the discussion with the audience

- **Challenge clinic session (45')**: These sessions allow interactive discussions in small groups to **explore innovative ideas and creative solutions** to a real challenge you wish to explore around collaborations on societal and environmental transitions. Participants learn not only from the presenter's challenge but also from the collective discussion, diverse perspectives, and co-creation of solutions.
  Informal presentations are encouraged (no digital support available). The speaker presents their challenge for 10 minutes, leaving 35 minutes for discussion and brainstorming.
  This format is open to applicants at any stage of collaboration with local partners, including those who have not yet established successful collaborations and would like to discuss the challenges they are currently facing.
  If you wish to submit a challenge clinic session, your abstract should include:
  - Description of your challenge (what is it, who does it affect, in what context does it arise?)

- Questions for the audience: what do you want help with
- Planned outcome/impact of the session (why is this valuable for participants?)

Please note that:

- You are welcome to submit multiple contributions if you wish to showcase different initiatives, but a project (same content and speakers) can only be submitted for one single format
- The organisers **reserve the right to request a change in format** in order to ensure the consistency of the programme

REVIEW CRITERIA & TIMELINE

To apply, you must submit your abstract through this platform by 6 December 2026 (23:59 CET). Please note that **no deadline extension** will be granted.
The submissions will be reviewed by a pool of evaluators from ENLIGHT universities, based on the following criteria:

- Does the proposed contribution align clearly with the conference theme?
- Does the contribution provide relevant insights, experiences, approaches or lessons that participants could learn from?
- Are the planned outcomes/desired impact clearly described? And do these align with the overall conference objective to strengthen cooperation between universities and local partners?
- Does the contribution showcase existing or planned collaborative practices, successes, challenges and/or lessons learned involving universities, cities and/or external stakeholders?
- Is the contribution clearly connected to challenge-based education/research and/or societal impact?
- Does the contribution support capacity building, knowledge exchange and/or transdisciplinary and cross sector collaboration?
- Can the contribution be replicated or applied in other contexts and/or by other communities?
- Does the contribution demonstrate, or offer potential to explore, the added value of international collaboration?

TIMELINE

- Submission deadline: 6 December 2026
- Evaluation period: 7 December 2026 – 31 January 2027
- Notification of acceptance: 8 – 12 February 2027 (tbc)
- Finalisation of the programme: 15 February – 5 March 2027
- Registration period: 8 March – 11 April 2027 (tbc)

COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

Participation in the conference is free of charge.

- If you are a representative of an ENLIGHT university: ENLIGHT funding is available to support participation in this activity. To ensure compliance with institutional procedures, staff should first consult their local ENLIGHT team, as funding remains subject to prior institutional approval.

- If you're a representative of a non-academic institution (public institution, economic actor, association, NGO, etc.) located in an ENLIGHT territory, please contact your corresponding ENLIGHT university to ask about funding opportunities:
  Basque Country: enlight@ehu.eus
  Bern: enlight@unibe.ch
  Bratislava: enlight@uniba.sk
  Galway: enlight@universityofgalway.ie
  Ghent: enlight@ugent.be
  Göttingen: enlight@uni-goettingen.de
  Groningen: enlight@rug.nl
  Tartu: enlight@ut.ee
  Uppsala: enlight@uu.se

- If you're an external partner: you are responsible for covering your own travel and accommodation expenses