

Press Release

Africa's AI Builders Go Global: Seven Partnerships Signed with European Industry Leaders



BOLOGNA, Italy, 17 June 2026 — Seven partnerships between African AI innovators and Italian and European industry leaders were signed this week at Tecnopolo DAMA, marking a significant milestone in efforts to scale African-built artificial intelligence (AI) solutions through world-class research, computing infrastructure, and industrial collaboration.

The partnerships were formalised under the G7-endorsed AI Hub for Sustainable Development, concluding two days of structured engagement between African companies and European partners. Discussions focused on new market opportunities, including offline voice AI for the 1.2 billion people who lack reliable connectivity, the integration of renewable energy into data centres, and the deployment of African AI

workloads on European supercomputing infrastructure. The agreements reflect a broader effort by the Italy-Africa Mattei Plan Cooperation Framework to build global AI infrastructure in collaboration with African innovators.

The partnerships build on a year of collaboration since the AI Hub's launch in Rome in June 2025. Its inaugural cohort includes 130 startups across the African continent that have accessed graphics processing unit (GPU) resources on CINECA's Leonardo supercomputer and leveraged cloud infrastructure allocated through Microsoft and Amazon Web Services. The impact of this work is documented in this newly released brief, [Compute Unlocked: Voices from Africa's AI Infrastructure Frontier](#), which profiles what these companies have built to date.

Agriculture, Health, Language AI and Education

The cohort's work has already produced deployable AI systems spanning agriculture, healthcare, language technology, education, and digital infrastructure.

DeepLeaf, which develops AI-powered crop disease detection and agricultural monitoring systems for farmers, signed a research and validation partnership with Fondazione Edmund Mach, one of Italy's leading agricultural science institutions. The collaboration will support scientific validation of DeepLeaf's models and facilitate knowledge exchange between Italian agricultural research and African farming ecosystems.

IRIS Africa signed three separate agreements: with the Africa Compute Fund, to expand access to AI infrastructure and strengthen Africa's emerging AI ecosystem; with Chestify AI Labs, whose AI-assisted chest X-ray technology has screened nearly 50,000 patients, to support the deployment and scaling of healthcare AI solutions; and with Crane AI Labs — the first African language technology company to run a model on a European high-performance computing system, having processed Luganda on Leonardo — to advance local-language AI, voice technologies, and inclusive digital access.

Addressing one of the most persistent barriers to AI deployment — device access — Twist, part of Quadriovio Group's Industry 4.0 Fund portfolio, expressed interest in providing refurbished Android smartphones, tablets, and laptops to support offline voice AI deployments in low-connectivity environments. Through parallel agreements with Crane AI Labs and the Africa Compute Fund, the initiative links affordable hardware with AI software and compute resources already operating across African markets.

Separately, Apodissi/Afrigene and Armstrong EdTech formalised a partnership focused on AI-enabled education, multilingual learning, and access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) instruction. The collaboration spans African, Arabic, and European learning markets, making it one of the few initiatives announced at the event to operate simultaneously across three continents and multiple language communities.

Building the Infrastructure for Responsible AI Growth

Under the theme "Right-Sizing AI Infrastructure to Scale Innovations for Sustainable Development," the event was hosted by Italy's Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT), Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, Bi-Rex Competence Centre, the Metropolitan City and Municipality of Bologna, CINECA, and the AI Hub for Sustainable Development.

Alongside the commercial partnerships, participants formalised a shared statement of intent on [green and energy-aware AI infrastructure](#). The initiative brings together Italian institutions — including the University of Torino, E4 Computer Engineering, ENEA, and InQuattro — with African partners including Horus Labs Rwanda, Carnegie Mellon University Africa, and the Africa Compute Fund. The group committed to joint work on energy-efficient AI workloads, modular data centre architecture designed for variable power-grid conditions, advanced cooling systems for high-density computing, and data governance frameworks tailored to African deployment environments.

Together, the agreements signal growing momentum toward demand-driven AI diffusion — partnerships designed to generate economic growth while building durable African capacity, infrastructure, and innovation.