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South Africa

Sweden

University Forum

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# South Africa – Sweden University Forum+ (SASUF+)

A brief breakdown of the SASUF's  
virtual AIMday event 26-27 May 2026

# AIMday – Academic Industry Meeting day 26-27 May 2026

– *Time-saving events for attendees*

1. **External organisations** have submitted specific challenges.  
→ These challenges set the agenda and act as their *entry ticket* to the event

The event consists of multiple “**one challenge, one hour**” workshops, each focused on a single issue. This format ensures **targeted, time-efficient conversations** that spark innovation and build lasting connections.

2. **Researchers** can now sign up for workshops based on their expertise and interests  
→ They contribute insights, propose solutions and explore potential collaborations



# How the AIMday event could look like from a researchers perspective



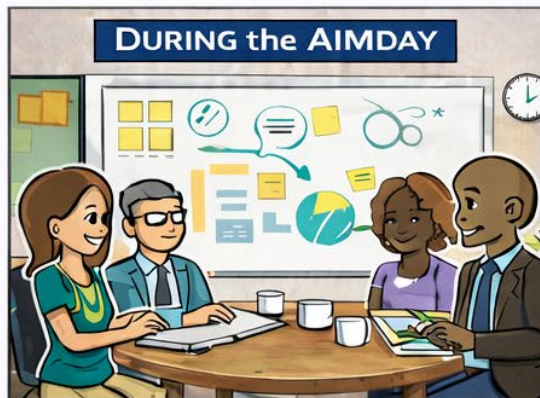
Researcher X wants her research to have real-world impact and is curious about how to collaborate with external partners, but isn't sure where to start.



X learns about AIMday, where organisations submit real-world challenges, and researchers sign up to discuss the ones that match their expertise.



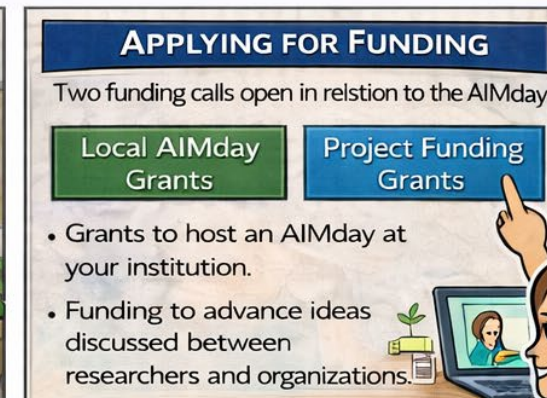
X browses the challenges posted on the AIMday webpage and register for the sessions matching her research interests, No pitching, more focus on dialogue and exploration.



Researcher X wants her research to have real-world impact and is curious about how to collaborate with external partners, but isn't sure where to start.



The conversation sparks new connections, shared interests, and concrete ideas for collaboration. Follow-up discussions begin after the event.



Through **AIMday**, X has expanded her work, connected her research to organisations and identified challenges, and moved ideas to concrete outcomes.

# Workshops – effectiveness in parallel workshops

## One hour

- ✓ Introductions – 5 min
- ✓ Question overview and background (from the organisation) – 5 min
- ✓ Discussion – 45 min
- ✓ Wrap up – 5 min

## One group

- ✓ 7 to 12 people
- ✓ Cross-disciplinary
- ✓ 1-2 senior academics
- ✓ PhD students - yes
- ✓ Facilitator (scribe)

## One challenge

- ✓ Clear formulation
- ✓ Suitable for group discussions
- ✓ Relevant background provided
- ✓ At least 2 company representatives



# What are we hoping to achieve during the event?



- An exchange of ideas and knowledge, with a focus on identifying shared interests for potential collaboration
- Interdisciplinary – a mix of academics offering diverse perspectives on real-world challenges
- An opportunity to uncover innovative solutions to real-world challenges
- Finding pathways to solutions
- Representatives from organisations with mandate to move on to collaboration with researchers

# The benefits for researchers and PhD students

- **Open up new opportunities for your research** – AIMday offers insight into the real needs and challenges faced by external organisations, and how these relate to your research area and questions.
- **Broaden your network** – connect with organisations as well as researchers from other disciplines who share your interest in tackling similar challenges.
- **Conversations that can lead to collaboration** – through engagement, research can gain greater impact and contribute more directly to society.
- **Explore solutions together** – link clearly defined challenges from external organisations with research-based knowledge.

# Companies share their thoughts on AIMday



# Phase 3



- Invite broadly
- Invite targeted audiences
- From promise to delivery
- Add other perspectives if possible



## SASUF – A Virtual Dialogue for Impact

26 May 2026
 Virtual event

The South Africa – Sweden University Forum (SASUF)

[AIMday](#) / [Virtual event](#) / [2026](#) / [SASUF – A Virtual Dialogue for Impact](#)

[Registration for organisations](#)

[Registration for researchers](#)

[Challenges](#)

[Programme 26 May](#)

[Programme 27 May](#)

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## SASUF – A Virtual Dialogue for Impact 2026

Welcome to AIMday within the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF), a structured virtual dialogue format that brings together **academic researchers, industry partners, public sector stakeholders, and civil society organisations** to tackle real-world challenges through collaboration.

The overall aim of the event is to **identify and support concrete, co-created collaboration opportunities**, enabling research, innovation, and education to contribute to **sustainable development, societal relevance, long-term impact, and to address real world challenges**.

AIMday is a very well established method of use, however, this event is a pilot as it is the first time the AIMday method is being applied within the SASUF consortium, and the first time it is delivered in a fully digital format across all 37 partner universities, together with a broad range of industry and societal actors. The pilot is designed to strengthen equitable partnerships between South Africa and Sweden, and to create a shared space where academia, industry, the public sector and civil society can meet on equal terms and explore concrete collaboration opportunities.

ORGANISED BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
 UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
 YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Link to the AIMday event page:  
<https://www.aimday.se/virtual-event/2026/sasuf-a-virtual-dialogue-for-impact>

# Academia, Industry, Society – Dialogues for Impact

- *Two main events open to all 37 SASUF+ universities*

## 26-27 May 2026: Virtual AIMday

- Aiming to generate concrete collaborative projects that address real-world challenges
- Open for **industry/organisations** to submit challenges from **13 Feb – 27 March**
- Open for researchers to register for challenges from **1 April – 24 April**
- Followed by a seed funding call

## 16-18 May 2028: Academia, Industry, Society – Dialogues for Impact in Sweden

- Building on the result of the AIMday event and previous activities

## 17 March – 10 June 2026: Calls for funding

- Launch of Local AIMday Grants
  - Aimed to host an AIMday in your region with your chosen actors
  - 45 000 SEK per project
- Launch of SASUF - NRF Seed Grants for academia, Industry, Society Collaboration
  - 100 000 SEK + 160 000 ZAR per project
  - Eligibility criteria:
    - ≥ 2 South African universities
    - ≥ 2 Swedish universities
    - ≥ 1 industry/societal organisation partner

# Any questions?

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