

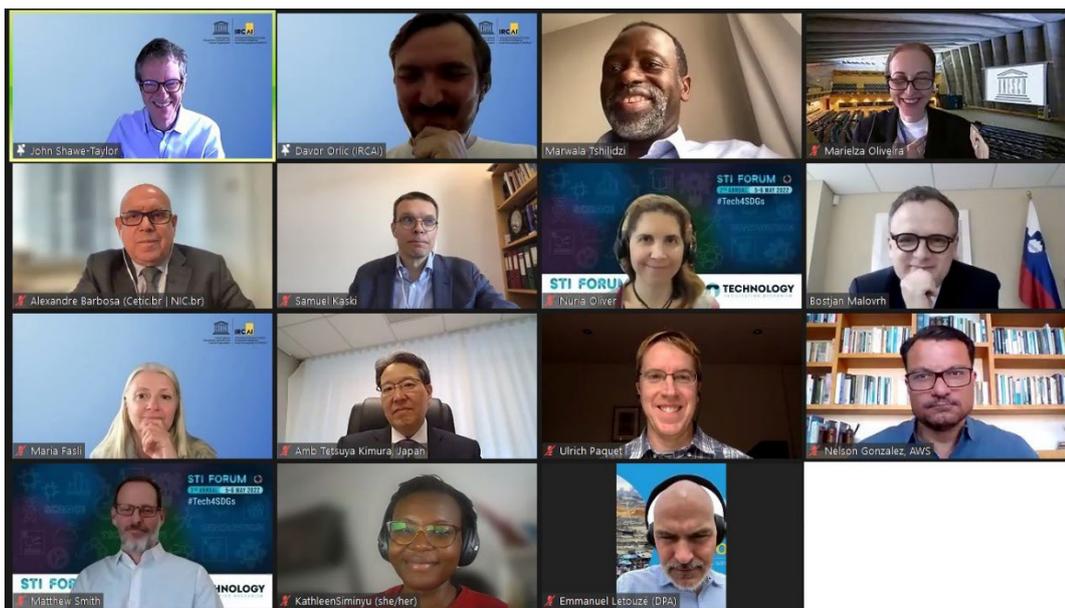
IRCAI – UNESCO, Data-Pop Alliance, ELLIS Alicante cofounders of NAXIUS

Global Network of AI Excellence Centres in Sustainable Development – NAIXUS, launched

Over 30 starting partners

- A multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at bridging the gap between AI and sustainable development
- The objective is to strengthen international cooperation around artificial intelligence and digital technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Alicante, 10 of May, 2022. – The International Research Institute on AI under the auspices of UNESCO (IRCAI) officially launched its Network of Excellence NAIXUS; a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at bridging the gap between AI and sustainable development. This initiative bringing together over 30 partners has been cofounded by ELLIS Alicante, The Institute of Human-Centered AI, as part of its mission to develop AI research that is a generator of social progress and universal well-being. The launch event was held online as part of the STI 2022 Forum on May 4th and was hosted by IRCAI and the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN in New York and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN and the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN.



Speakers at the event included John Shawe-Taylor, IRCAI Director; Davor Orlic, IRCAI Chief Operations Officer; Tshildzi Marwala, Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of Johannesburg; Marielza Oliveira, Director of

press release



Partnerships and Operational Programme Monitoring, Communications and Information Sector, UNESCO, Alexandre F. Barbosa, Director Cetic, Samuel Kaski, Aalto University, ELISE Network Coordinator, **Nuria Oliver, ELLIS Alicante Foundation**, Ambassador Boštjan Malovrh, Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN in New York, Maria Fasli, UNESCO Chair in Analytics and Data Science, Executive Dean, Faculty of Science and Health at University of Essex, Ambassador Tetsuya Kimura, Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN, Ulrich Paquet, Deep Learning Indaba, DeepMind, Nelson González, Head Global Impact Computing, AWS, Matthew Smith, Senior Program Specialist, IDRC, Kathleen Siminyu, Machine Learning Fellow, Mozilla Foundation, and Emmanuel Letouzé, Director Data-Pop Alliance.

The main part of the agenda consisted of short presentations outlining the history, purpose, goals, composition, activities, programmes, and technology focus of the network of supporters and initial partners of this initiative to build a global network of centres of excellence for sustainable development.

The recording of the event is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSca6amLeyU>

The launch of this multistakeholder initiative was broadcast to the 2022 STI Forum audience, streamed live on social media, and followed directly on Zoom by 120 attendees.

Marielza Oliveira, Director for Partnerships and Operational Programme Monitoring, Communications and Information Sector at UNESCO, believes that *"the network launched today is going to be a really important factor in strengthening international cooperation around artificial intelligence and digital technologies."* Other speakers supported this shared vision of IRCAI, ELLIS Alicante and Data-Pop Alliance by emphasising the importance of collaboration. *"We hope to contribute to SD by sharing our know-how on implementing a Society 5.0. With implementation standards differing across countries, NAIXUS will bring together all relevant stakeholders and discuss these differences,"* said Ambassador Tetsuya Kimura, Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN.

Ambassador Boštjan Malovrh, Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN in New York, stated in his opening remarks that *"no country and entity can achieve this alone. The power of collaboration cannot be overemphasized."* This viewpoint was confirmed throughout the event by the various speakers and is evidenced by the projects and organizations currently working in the field of artificial intelligence looking to have a positive impact on sustainable development through collaboration.

Nuria Oliver, Director of ELLIS Alicante, summed up ELLIS Alicante's vision of NAXIUS after the event: *"ELLIS Alicante is very proud to be a co-founder of this international initiative aimed at leveraging AI to drive sustainable development. There is much to be done in the interplay between humans, our planet, and intelligent systems. At ELLIS Alicante, we firmly believe that AI research should be done for and by the people in a socially and environmentally sustainable way."*

Developing AI systems that contribute to sustainable development is not only possible, but also a dire necessity.”

The goal of the NAIXUS network of excellence and its founding partners is to mobilise researchers to work together on AI methods to achieve sustainable development, to achieve critical mass on these topics, and to collaborate across cultural and language barriers. In short, the focus is on science, which is urgently needed to achieve the SDGs.

A list of the initial partners and the detailed goals of the network are described here: <https://ircai.org/naixus>

About ELLIS Alicante | www.ellisalicante.org/ia

ELLIS Alicante is a non-for-profit foundation focused on **ethical Artificial Intelligence (IA) research** in the area of the relationship between people and intelligent systems. Our name, The **Institute of Human-Centered AI**, defines what and how we want to play our role in this 21st century society: we firmly believe in the power of technology as a generator of progress and universal well-being. We aim to be the European and world benchmark for **AI research by and for people** and are the only ELLIS unit dedicated exclusively to this area. We are part of the European network of excellence in Artificial Intelligence ELLIS (European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems - www.ellis.eu). We are the only Spanish ELLIS Unit, the only one created from scratch, with the spirit of a scientific startup, the only one devoted exclusively to this research area. At ELLIS Alicante, we address three areas of fundamental research: 1) **AI to understand us**; 2) **AI that interacts with us**; 3) **AI that we trust**.

ELLIS Alicante is led by Dr. Nuria Oliver (www.nuriaoliver.com), a world renown AI expert who is devoting her scientific work to AI for Social Good.

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ELLIS Alicante is partially
funded by:

