

Call for Ideas:
Transregional Workshop – Beirut 2026
“Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparity”
(Deadline: October 8, 2025, 12.30 PM CEST)

We invite current, incoming, and former fellows of the *Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb* (MECAM), and scholars from MECAM's partner institutions to explore their research questions and develop innovative ideas within the collaborative work format of a Transregional Workshop that will take place in Beirut in the framework of MECAM's guiding theme “Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparity” and one or more of its interdisciplinary Research Fields (IRF):

**Aesthetics & Cultural Practice,
Inequality & Mobility,
Memory & Justice,
Resources & Sustainability, and
Identities & Beliefs.**

MECAM's Transregional Workshops are meant to encourage collaborative work among Fellows and Alumni of MECAM, and scholars from MECAM's partner institutions on issues of common concern. We offer an open, flexible and non-hierarchical format, access to strong scholarly networks, and support in conceptual development and funding, while handling all practical organizational aspects, and providing secure virtual workspaces for collaboration before and after the events. The Transregional Workshop announced here will be held in **Beirut in collaboration with the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB)**, one of MECAM's cooperation partners.

Transregional Workshops can serve as an opportunity for the intensive debate and exploration of a particular theme or for identifying, testing, and developing new topics, methods, questions, and research projects, in a multi-disciplinary and international constellation. It is a small-scale (max. 15 participants), short-term and intensely focused event that tests the sustainability of research ideas and develops new forms of cooperation to advance the theme in question that should be related to one or more of MECAM's IRF's. Workshops are directed by one or a group of up to five convener(s). They can be arranged with or without a call for applications.

Transregional Workshops aim to delve into ideas, generate research questions, to contribute to the research agenda of MECAM's guiding theme, "Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparity," and its five International Research Fields (IRFs) mentioned above. They can provide a fertile ground for scholars to explore the dynamic interplay between art, culture, social disparities, memory, resources, and diverse identities in the Maghreb, the Middle East and beyond.

We are looking forward to applications that approach questions relating to one or more of the IRF's from diverse disciplinary, local, regional angles, that contribute to knowledge production from and in the Maghreb and in neighboring regions, rather than solely focusing on one region. We encourage critical engagement with the complexities of the ongoing transformation processes.

Eligibility: Current, incoming, and former MECAM fellows, as well as scholars from MECAM's partner institutions (Université de Tunis, Université de Sfax, the Institut Tunisien des Études Stratégiques (ITES), Université Hassan II de Casablanca (UH2C), Marburg University, University of Leipzig, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), and the Forum Transregionale Studien).

Application Procedure:

- Proposals in **French or in English can be handed in by one or up to five** MECAM Fellow(s), Alumni, or scholars from MECAM's partner institutions in the Maghreb and the Mashreq. **Please submit a CV and a 1-2 page proposal** for a Transregional Workshop, explaining the originality of your idea, and how it relates to one or more of MECAM's IRF's and to its guiding theme "Imagining Futures – Dealing with Disparities". We kindly ask you to submit your proposal with a suggestion of scholars you would like to invite, and a brief reference what their potential contribution may be.
- Proposals should be sent in via the secure online **application platform** (application.trafo-berlin.de) of the Forum Transregionale Studien by **October 8, 2025, 12.30 PM CEST**. Applicants will be notified of the results by late December 2025.
- Upon acceptance of your application you will be invited to co-develop the event with the assistance of the MECAM Science Communication Coordinator at the Forum.
- The Forum and MECAM pursue an open access publication strategy and offer a scholarly publication platform ([The MECAM series on the TRAFO blog](#)) and other digital channels for the dissemination of the discussions and results of workshops.
- The organizers of the workshops must submit an evaluation report within one month of the event's completion.
- Applicants are advised to consult the [MECAM](#) and the [Forum website](#) for information regarding themes and formats of past Workshops. You also find attached to this call the FAQs.
- Applications by email will not be considered.
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact MECAM's science communication coordinator at the Forum Transregionale Studien : diab@trafo-berlin.de

The Transregional Workshops are organized as a collaborative working formats of the [Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb \(MECAM\)](#). MECAM is a joint initiative of the Philipps-Universität Marburg, the Université de Tunis, the Universität Leipzig, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg/Germany, the Université de Sfax/Tunisia, and the Forum Transregionale Studien. MECAM is supported by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space and the Université de Tunis.

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FAQ for Applicants for Transregional Workshops

1. Who is eligible to convene a Transregional Workshop/Academy?

Current, incoming, and former MECAM fellows, as well as scholars from MECAM's partner institutions (Université de Tunis, Université de Sfax, the Institut Tunisien des Études Stratégiques (ITES), and Université Hassan II de Casablanca (UH2C), Marburg University, University of Leipzig, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), and the Forum Transregionale Studien).

2. Can I apply alone or together with team of researchers?

Applying alone or together with one or several colleagues is possible. If you applying alone please express your openness to a conversation with us about who a potential second, third or fourth co-convenor could be. In case you want to apply with a team, please submit the CVs of all team members.

3. Are there thematic preferences?

The proposals should address a question that relates to one or more of its five Research Fields (IRFs): Aesthetics & Cultural Practice, Inequality & Mobility, Memory & Justice, Resources & Sustainability, and Identities & Beliefs. It should also relate to MECAM's guiding theme "Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparity", and to MECAMs principles and orientations in fostering research in, on, and with the Maghreb, provide possibilities for interdisciplinary and transregional cooperation, be potentially interesting also to other fellows, and members of MECAM and of its partner institutes in Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Germany.

4. How many persons can participate in a workshop?

Workshops should be small-scale events of about max. 15 participants to allow an intensely focused discussion. The workshops should take into consideration a significant participation of scholars from the place where they are conducted (ca. half of the participants).

5. Do I have to name participants in my application?

For the workshops you can name potential participants but do not have to hand in a final list. In fact, a mixture might be good for workshops, you can and should name the scholars who you would like to invite, because it gives more profile to your suggestion. This can also be helpful information for us and our selection committee. A certain openness however, for further suggestions of scholars from MECAM and MECAM's members' networks is something we would like to encourage. Nevertheless, since the outcome of the application is not certain, it might be recommendable only to ask your potential co-convenors or persons you closely work with before the decision is taken.

6. How long do workshops last?

Workshops generally last two days.

7. What is covered by the financial support?

The administrative and organizational support is provided by us. We have a substantial basic funding for the workshop that allows for conducting it with up to 15 participants, provided around half of the participants are residing in the locality of the venue. No fees will be asked for, and no honoraria will be paid for. Matching funding and institutional collaboration are welcome.

8. What is the role of Forum and MECAM and which support do they give?

The Forum and MECAM finance the workshop. However, we regard our activity not as a funding initiative only, but also take care of the administrative and organizational work and provide for opportunities of communication and collaboration for the participating scholars. Furthermore, we see our mission in an ongoing intellectual engagement with MECAM's guiding theme and Interdisciplinary Research Fields. We want to collaborate closely with the conveners in the preparation and execution of the workshop. We therefore look for a combination of innovative ideas and transregional approaches and offer our own expertise in the field. For more information on our workshops, please visit our [website](#).

9. What is expected from the conveners?

The conveners are responsible for all matters concerning the content of the workshop, for choosing the participants, for developing the program and for leading the event academically. They should be interested in peer-to-peer exchange with other scholars from different disciplines and regions, from the Maghreb but also other parts of the Middle East and neighboring regions. Furthermore, they agree to actively support the public documentation of the workshop on the digital communication channels provided by the Forum and MECAM. After the event, they have to provide a report of around 1 to 2 pages.

10. Where do workshops take place and who makes the administrative arrangements?

Transregional Workshops will be held at network sites of MECAM. The Forum handles all administrative arrangements (e.g. visa, travel, accommodations). The Transregional Workshop 2026 should take place in Beirut in collaboration with the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), one of MECAM's cooperation partners.

11. When will results of an application be known?

We will inform applicants in late-December 2025.

12. Within what time frame must the workshop take place?

The Workshop must take place in the calendar year 2026.