

Proposals for NORMAN Joint Programme of Activities 2026

Title	Exploring NORMAN's global expansion with focus on Global South membership
Type of activity	Conceptual development, workshop
Leader	UFZ (Werner Brack), WUR (Célia Bento) & VU Amsterdam (Sicco Brandsma)
Topic / activities	<p>Background / Justification for the proposed activity:</p> <p>The World Café discussion at the NORMAN GA 2025 showed strong support for expanding NORMAN beyond Europe and therefore, including members, data, and projects from the Global South. Members highlighted several reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Many countries already use European legislation as a blueprint for their own regulations. 2) Exporters to Europe must comply with European rules. 3) NORMAN offers valuable resources for partners in the Global South, including networking experience, databases, expertise, etc. 4) NORMAN can learn from Global South experiences and strengthen its role as a global player in the field of environmental pollution by organic micropollutants. 5) New, jointly developed cost-effective technologies, citizen science approaches, and other innovations can also benefit Europe, where environmental monitoring budgets are declining. 6) Expanding globally enhances data sharing and harmonizes monitoring methods, improving scientific knowledge and environmental policy both in Europe and the Global South. <p>However, this expansion also presents challenges for NORMAN that need careful consideration. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) NORMAN needs a clear vision and strategy for this expansion, developed carefully and involving as many NORMAN members as possible, as well as potential Global South partners. Lessons learned from UNEP projects should also be integrated. 2) Expanding to the Global South may require new organizational structures in NORMAN to ensure adequate representation and voice for these new partners. 3) New membership models may be needed, as many potential Global South partners may not be able to afford the membership fees. 4) GA formats must balance the value of face-to-face meetings with accessible participation options for non-European members who cannot travel. 5) Developing appropriate methodologies for the Global South, including sampling, storage, sample preparation and analysis, QA/QC, and data sharing and evaluation, will require substantial communication and capacity building. 6) Chemical lists will need to be updated to include substances of relevance in the Global South. <p>Description of the proposed activity and expected outcomes for 2026:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A questionnaire will be designed and distributed to all NORMAN members to collect ideas, identify existing partnerships with the Global South, and propose potential partners. Information on existing data from Global South countries held by current NORMAN members will also be compiled to support potential invitations to the NORMAN DBS. 2) A short report will be prepared that summarizes the lessons learned from UNEP projects and outlines potential ways forward, developed in close cooperation with NORMAN members previously involved in UNEP activities. The outcome of this report will support the organization of the workshop proposed in point 3 below. 3) A workshop will be organized to develop a strategy for engaging partners from the Global South into NORMAN, addressing the issues listed above and any emerging topics. We propose actively involving scientists from the Global South already connected to NORMAN members, and inviting one or two interested candidates from Africa, Asia or South America to share their perspectives on what would make NORMAN attractive for Global South participation. 4) A presentation will be prepared for the NORMAN GA 2026 (should a suitable time slot be available) to highlight the outcomes of the questionnaire, the report on lessons learned from UNEP, and the workshop, as well as to outline plans and next steps for 2027. <p>Expected timeline of events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of the questionnaire among NORMAN members: March 2026 - Evaluation of questionnaire outcomes and start of workshop preparation: May–June 2026 - Deadline for the report on lessons learned from UNEP: May 2026 - Workshop: mid-November 2026 <p>Added value / Link with other NORMAN activities and / or other projects</p> <p>This JPA will open new opportunities for the entire network to become a global player in monitoring emerging pollutants and to foster collaboration of NORMAN members at the international level. As a science-policy network, NORMAN could strengthen its engagement with UNEP, WWQA, IPCP and other global initiatives, complementing its current strong focus on the European Commission.</p>
Participants	All NORMAN members will be contacted. It seems that there is broad interest. Potential interested partners from Global South (besides the invited ones).



Proposed contribution	in-kind	Organising questionnaire, small report and workshop
Contribution needed from NORMAN Association¹		Budget for workshop costs, catering and travel support for Global South candidates: Workshop costs + catering: 1000€ Travel support for GS candidates: max. 1000€/person (flight ticket), with a maximum of 4000€

¹ Please, provide here a transparent justification of the requested resources and of the in-kind contribution, thereby distinguishing between the costs associated with “person-months” for the organisation, the “travelling costs” for invited speakers and the costs for the logistics (e.g. meals, room rental etc.)