



Call for Contributions

**New Insights from African Cities: policy briefs and synthesis papers,
2026 to 2027**

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The Leiden-Delft-Erasmus-East Africa Research Network (LEARN) is launching a new series of policy briefs and synthesis papers to bring rigorous evidence from the network into global and regional debates on African urban development. Over 2026 and 2027, the series carries East African and broader African scholarship into three international moments where policy on cities, climate, informality and the sustainable urban future is being shaped.

Potential Outlets

The events below are being considered by the network as potential outlets for pieces from this series. Contributors are invited to review them and to indicate in their expression of interest which event they would like to target. The LEARN Advisory Board will confirm the target for each accepted piece based on subject fit and the balance of submissions received.

- **Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-13)** (April 2027), feeding the High-Level Political Forum (July 2027).
- **UN-Habitat Assembly (UNHA-3)** (Nairobi, 2027; dates being finalised).
- **COP32** (Addis Ababa, November 2027).

Two formats

Format	Length	What it is	Honorarium (EUR)
Policy brief	2,000 to 2,500 words	A structured problem, evidence and options format aimed at delegates and decision-makers. Editorial review by the Advisory Board.	1,000
Synthesis paper	3,000 to 3,500 words	A rigorous synthesis of existing academic and policy evidence, producing new insights for policymakers and researchers. Peer review by two network readers plus editorial review. <i>See the literature base note below for what 'rigorous synthesis' means in this call.</i>	2,500

Both formats are grounded in the author's existing published work; the series does not commission new empirical research. Every piece ends with two to four clear policy messages.

Literature base for synthesis papers

‘Rigorous synthesis’ means a structured but not systematic review: it does not require a full systematic-review protocol, given the timeframe. Synthesis papers should draw on the author’s own published work (in peer-reviewed journals, institutional reports, or other credible published outputs) grounded in empirical data, together with the broader literature on the theme. Contributors should draw primarily on recent literature: peer-reviewed empirical work from the last five years (or older where foundational to the theme), and reports or grey literature from the last two to three years. Synthesis papers should include a short (150 to 250 word) evidence base note within the introduction or as a standalone paragraph describing the sources drawn on and how they were selected. This note serves in place of a full methodology section.

Who can contribute

Established researchers, academics, senior practitioners and policymakers affiliated with the LEARN network across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia, with partners at Leiden University, TU Delft and Erasmus University Rotterdam. Co-authoring is encouraged, particularly East Africa with the Netherlands, senior with early-career, researchers with policymakers, and researchers with civil society or community-based organisations. Applicants assembling co-authoring teams are also encouraged to consider gender balance.

How to submit

The call runs once. Submit an expression of interest of 250 to 300 words including your chosen format, working title, your two to four intended policy messages, the event from the list above that you would like to target, a short description of the author team – names, affiliations, and how the team reflects the network’s encouraged co-authoring patterns, including gender balance where relevant – and a one-paragraph biography for each author. The Advisory Board will review all EOIs together and confirm the target event and the drafting deadline for each accepted piece, taking into account subject fit and the balance of submissions received.

Key dates

Milestone	Date
Call opens	7 September 2026
Expressions of interest due	30 September 2026
Authors notified and target event confirmed	7 October 2026
Drafts for pieces targeting ARFSD-13 (April 2027)	19 February 2027
Drafts for pieces targeting COP32 (November 2027)	10 September 2027
Drafts for pieces targeting UNHA-3 (typically late May / early June 2027)	Around end of March 2027; confirmed on notification once UNHA-3 dates are announced

Rule: full drafts are due at least two months before the target event, to allow time for editorial review and (for synthesis papers) peer review by two readers, and for design and dissemination ahead of the event.

Contact

Submissions and enquiries: learn@nuvoniresearch.org



Leiden-Delft-Erasmus-East Africa Research Network (LEARN)

www.learnresearch.network