

# CLAIR 2026 - The First International Conference on Leadership & AI in Research

## Agenda Executive Overview

CLAIR is a three-day, cross-industry conference designed to examine how artificial intelligence is reshaping scientific method, leadership, governance, critical thinking, creativity, and organizational design in research-intensive environments. The conference is deliberately structured to move from research insight, to senior leadership dialogue, to collective synthesis and direction.

### Day 1 | Research & Insight Forum (13:00–17:30)

The conference opens with a **Pre-Conference Research & Insight Forum**, based on an open Call for Abstracts. Researchers and reflective practitioners present short contributions across four parallel tracks aligned with CLAIR's core perspectives. This forum establishes a shared research and practice landscape and provides intellectual grounding for the main conference day.

### Day 2 | Leadership Dialogue

The main conference day brings together **invited keynote speakers from across industries and academia**. The day is structured in two parts: first, framing the challenge of AI's impact on research, leadership, and responsibility; second, exploring pathways forward through leadership, governance, and organizational responses. Moderated panel discussions ensure active dialogue and integration throughout the day.

### Day 3 | Working Sessions & Research Agenda (09:00–13:00)

The final day is a focused working forum. Participants engage in parallel work streams across CLAIR's four perspectives and then jointly synthesize insights into a **CLAIR Research Agenda**. This work is academically supported through IMIT's research foundations, and all Day 2 participants are acknowledged as co-authors. The Research Agenda serves both as a concrete outcome of the conference and as a foundation for future CLAIR initiatives and the CLAIR 2027 conference.

Together, the three days form a coherent progression from **insight → dialogue → joint direction**, positioning CLAIR as a **long-term, research-informed leadership platform** rather than a traditional technology conference.

## Day 1 | Pre-Conference Research & Insight Forum

13:00–17:30

The conference opens with a dedicated **Pre-Conference Research & Insight Forum**, based on an open **Call for Abstracts**. This forum primarily targets academic researchers, while also welcoming practitioners who can contribute reflective, experience-based insights from research-intensive organizations.

### Structure

Day 1 is organized into **four parallel thematic tracks**, each aligned with one of CLAIR's core perspectives:

1. **AI and the Scientific & Engineering Method**
2. **Leadership, Governance, and Accountability**
3. **Critical Thinking in Algorithmic Environments**
4. **Organizational and Cultural Transformation in R&D**

Within each track:

- Approved abstracts are presented as short **10-minute presentations**
- Each track includes approximately **eight presentations**
- **Moderated discussion panels are interspersed midway** to synthesize insights, surface tensions, and connect perspectives across disciplines and sectors

### Purpose

The Pre-Conference Forum serves to:

- Establish shared research **and practice landscape** across CLAIR's four perspectives
- Surface **emerging questions, patterns, and contradictions** in how AI is influencing research-intensive work
- Provide **intellectual grounding and “food for thought”** that directly informs the keynote dialogue on Day 1

Many abstract contributors are expected to remain engaged throughout the conference and play an important role in the synthesis work on Day 3.

## Day 2 | Main Conference Day – Leadership Dialogue

The main conference day brings together senior leaders, researchers, and strategists from across industries and academia. All keynote speakers are **invited**, selected by the organizers in close dialogue with the CLAIR Steering Committee to ensure intellectual credibility, senior-level perspective, and cross-industry relevance.

Day 1 is deliberately structured to balance **thought leadership, dialogue, and collective reflection**, and is divided into two complementary parts.

### Part I: Setting the Scene – Understanding the Challenge

The first half of the day focuses on **framing the problem space**.

- Approximately **six-eight invited keynote speakers** deliver focused keynote talks
- Each keynote contributes a distinct lens on one or more of CLAIR's four core perspectives:

Together, these contributions explore how AI reshapes not only technology, but also:

- scientific and engineering method
- organizational design and decision-making
- accountability and governance
- critical thinking and creativity in research-intensive work

To support engagement and integration:

- A moderated panel discussion is held midway, after approximately three keynotes
- A second panel discussion at the end of this section synthesizes insights, surfaces tensions, and engages the audience

Insights from **Day 1's Research & Insight Forum** are actively brought into the discussion.

## Part II: Defining the Way Forward

The second half of Day 2 shifts from diagnosis to **response and direction**.

A further six invited keynote speakers focus on how organizations can act in practice.

Contributions address:

- leadership choices in AI-enabled research environments
- emerging governance and accountability models
- organizational and cultural design principles
- ways to preserve rigor, responsibility, and human judgment while enabling innovation

As in the first half:

- **A midway panel discussion** follows the first set of keynotes
- **A final panel discussion** at the end of the day integrates perspectives and highlights implications for leadership practice and future research

## Day 3 | Working Sessions & Collective Synthesis

09:00–13:00

The final day of CLAIR is designed as a **focused working and synthesis forum**, with the explicit ambition of producing a **shared and lasting outcome** of the conference. Day 3 is structured in **two consecutive parts**.

### Part I: Parallel Work Streams – Deepening the Perspectives

The morning begins with **four parallel work streams**, each aligned with one of CLAIR's core perspectives:

1. AI and the scientific & engineering method
2. Leadership, governance, and accountability
3. Critical thinking in algorithmic environments
4. Organizational and cultural transformation in R&D

Each work stream brings together a **cross-sector mix of participants**, including keynote speakers, abstract contributors, senior practitioners, and academic experts. Sessions are supported by experienced facilitators and are designed to move beyond discussion toward:

- shared problem framing
- identification of key tensions and open questions
- articulation of priority areas for further inquiry

### Part II: Synthesis and the CLAIR Research Agenda

In the second part of Day 2, outputs from the four work streams are brought together in a joint synthesis session.

This synthesis is **academically supported through IMIT's research foundations**, ensuring rigor, conceptual coherence, and continuity. IMIT-connected academics support the structuring, integration, and formalization of the outputs.

The explicit outcome is the development of a **CLAIR Research Agenda**:

- articulating shared research questions and leadership challenges
- identifying priority areas for cross-industry and cross-disciplinary research
- outlining directions for continued collaboration and learning

All Day 2 participants will be acknowledged as **co-authors of the CLAIR Research Agenda (White Paper)**.

### **Outcome and Continuity**

The CLAIR Research Agenda serves as:

- a **tangible output** of the inaugural conference, and
- a **guiding framework** for future research collaborations and the development of the **CLAIR 2027 conference agenda**.

Together, the three days are designed to move from research landscape → leadership dialogue → joint direction, positioning CLAIR as a long-term, research-informed, cross-industry leadership platform.

## Target Audience & Participant Profiles – CLAIR 2026

### Research, Science & Technology Leadership

1. Chief Research Officer (CRO)
2. Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)
3. Chief Technology Officer (CTO) – Research & Engineering Focus
4. Head of Research & Development (R&D)
5. VP / Senior Director, AI & Data Science
6. Head of AI or Machine Learning (Enterprise / R&D)
7. Head of Digital R&D / Digital Science

### Governance, Strategy & Transformation

8. Chief Data Officer (CDO) – Research-Facing
9. Head of Responsible AI / AI Governance
10. VP / Director of Research Strategy & Portfolio Governance
11. Director of Scientific Quality, Integrity, or Compliance
12. VP / Director of Innovation & Transformation

### People, Organization & Leadership (Critical for CLAIR)

13. Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)
14. EVP / VP, Human Resources (R&D-intensive organizations)
15. Head of Organizational Development & Design
16. Head of Leadership Development
17. Senior HR Business Partner for R&D / Engineering

### Academic & Public Research Leadership

18. Dean or Vice-Dean of Research
19. Director of a Research Institute or Interdisciplinary Center
20. Professor of Innovation, Technology Management, or AI Policy
21. Senior AI Researchers with responsibility for *research direction and method*, or *AI-enabled discovery and scientific method*, or *engaged in methodological, ethical, or organizational aspects of AI*.