Concept Note:
A **K**nowledge **M**anagement and **C**ommunication **S**ystem for the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture

23 April 2017

" ˙Africa-EU Partnership on Food & Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)

In April 2016, Senior Officials of the Africa-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) met in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, to adopt a Roadmap for the Africa-EU R&I Partnership on FNSSA. The Roadmap emphasises collaborative actions in research and innovation to address mutual challenges in FNSSA, taking the whole value chains, societal challenges and environmental aspects into consideration. CAAST-Net Plus, in collaboration with a group of Africa-EU STI projects and initiatives in support of this policy dialogue, held a subsequent Stakeholder Forum focusing on the next steps for the implementation of the roadmap on FNSSA.

One of the key recommendations stemming from this forum was the need for an Africa-EU platform for structured access to all knowledge, outputs and lessons learned from various initiatives and research projects, as well as the need for a communication strategy, not only for the implementation of the roadmap on FNSSA but also for the transfer of knowledge into solutions, including the national decision-makers and potential investors in Research and Innovation (R&I) and entrepreneurs.

A need for a joint system for management and communication of knowledge for action

In the past few years, CAAST-Net Plus has engaged with several stakeholders in pursuit of addressing the challenges that exist within the Africa-EU FNSSA landscape. In 2015, an analysis was conducted on the challenges and gaps that exist within the Africa-EU research collaboration on food and nutrition security landscape[1]. Furthermore, a recommendation paper from the 1st CAAST-Net Plus Stakeholder Forum in Uganda in 2014[2] on knowledge transfer and research uptake was published, providing potential actions for decision-makers in various contexts and geographical levels. One of the recommendations made during the April 2016 CAAST-Net Plus Stakeholder Forum was the establishment of an appropriate knowledge management system between stakeholders involved in the FNSSA innovation value chain and the development of appropriate communication strategies.

The need for interconnectedness between stakeholders of different sectors became even more evident during the multi-stakeholder dialogues, which are a necessity in identifying priorities for joint agenda setting and synergising activities, for research uptake and resource mobilisation. Following these engagements, CAAST-Net Plus has been tasked to identify and conduct consultations with relevant actors who are involved in the FNSSA sector and those who are key in establishing a Knowledge Management and Communication System (KMCS). ˙

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[1]See report: *Africa-EU Research Collaboration on Food Security: A critical analysis of the scope, coordination and uptake of findings (2015)* https://caast-net-plus.org/object/news/1212/attach/CN__FoodSecurityReport_v7.pdf

[2] See report: *Findings and Recommendations for Decision-makers (2015)* https://caast-net-plus.org/object/news/1170/attach/EntebbeStakeholderForum2014_EMAIL_.pdf

Objectives of the KMCS

The objectives of the KMCS consultations are to:

- Highlight cases of existing portals and actors in Africa and Europe in the field of FNSSA;
- Identify the methodological/technical needs for a joint Africa-EU KMCS;
- Identify communication gaps between existing portals and amongst actors of the FNSSA value chains;
- Identify best practice methods and principals for knowledge sharing and communication strategies for research uptake;
- Explore tangible long-term options for the implementation of a joint Africa-EU KMCS; and,
- Identify potential investors for a joint Africa-EU KMCS and potential hosting entities.

Potential collaborations in setting up the KMCS

Important to note is that there are several existing portals and initiatives engaged in knowledge management and structured communication between stakeholders aimed at transferring knowledge into solutions. To ensure there are no cases of duplication of portals within the aforementioned focus area, synergies and collaboration would be needed with the ERA-Net Cofund LEAP-Agri (emerged from the ERAfrica initiative).

A pool of facilitators exist within initiatives such as the PAEPARD project, PROIntensAfrica, the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) or 2Scale agribusiness initiative. These facilitators could play a role in sharing, disseminating knowledge provided for the FNSSA sector and developing systemic communication strategies – translating research into practice by raising relevant research topics based on the needs formulated by end-users and producers. This KMCS initiative could also contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Hub.

Target audience for the consultations

- Representatives of research institutions,
- IT experts
- Media experts,
- Communication experts,
- STI project coordinators in the field of Africa-EU collaboration in STI,
- African Regional Economic Communities (RECs),
- African and European Science Academies and their networks,
- Civil society, End-users,
- Private sector representatives, i.e. entrepreneurs, formal and informal SMEs, industry
- Tech-transfer officers, business incubators, innovation centres
- R&I funders (public and private), and
- Other relevant stakeholders within the knowledge management, communication, STI and FNSSA field.

A blueprint for a joint Africa-EU KMCS

The findings from the consultations on the KMCS will be consolidated and packaged into a Blueprint comprising of actions to take towards establishing a portal that encourages a co-owned and co-funded Africa-EU FNSSA KMCS. It is envisaged that the KMCS Blueprint could furthermore be used as a reference for establishing portals focusing in other thematic fields. The final blueprint of the joint Africa-EU KMCS is envisaged to be presented to the HLPD Bureau in late 2017.