

The CAAST-Net Bulletin

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NETWORK FOR THE COORDINATION AND
ADVANCEMENT OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA-EU
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

a **Research** publication

ERAfrica kicks off

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu

Thabisa Mbungwana has been appointed the regional coordinator for the recently launched ERA-Net for Africa (European Research Area Network for Africa) project, which is developing African-European joint collaboration for science and technology.

Mbungwana, the director of strategic partnerships at South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST), will be responsible for mobilising donor funding for the project.

"I will go out to spread word about ERAfrica and look for funding," said Mbungwana who was appointed at a kick-off meeting for ERAfrica held in Pretoria, South Africa, in January 2011.

The donor funding will be added to the finances contributed by each of the dozen ERAfrica partners for joint research activities.

Yves Savidan, the project coordinator for ERAfrica, said the funding mobilised by the partners will be used to organise workshops, training and research.

Funds will be given to successful applicants for the initiative's joint calls for research and capacity building. Calls for ERAfrica proposals will be issued once the funding has been pulled together.

"In 2011 we will gather information useful for us to decide where to invest. We will try to make an inventory by elimination of areas where we feel there are already too many players. We have one year to decide where to invest," Savidan said in a telephone interview from Pretoria, South Africa.

Savidan is the permanent representative for Southern Africa of the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) and the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

The inventory will be compiled by the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy (the Työ-jaelinkeinoministeriö, led by Mauri Pekkarinen) one of the nine European partners for ERAfrica.

The European partners, among others, include Austria's Commission for Development Studies, led by Hubert Dürrstein; Spain's Ministry of Science and Innovation (Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación) under minister Cristina Garmendia; and the Swiss National Science Foundation in Bern.

The three African partners include South Africa's Department of Science and Technology, headed by Naledi Pandor; Egypt's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, headed by Omar (Amr) Salama, and Kenya's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, which is currently headed by acting minister Hellen Sambili, who also holds the portfolio for East African Community affairs. The three countries are also partners in CAAST-Net.

The project represents an expansion of the European Research Area Networks (ERA-Nets) from national and regional cooperation within Europe under the Sixth Framework Programme to international cooperation under the Seventh Framework Programme.



Participants at the ERA-Net for Africa kick-off, including Thabisa Mbungwana, regional coordinator for the ERA-Net for Africa (fourth in front row, anti-clockwise) and Yves Savidan, the project coordinator for ERAfrica (fifth in front row, anti-clockwise)

ERA-Net instruments have had their fair share of success and criticisms, including the claim that countries may be reluctant to pool funds that may be allocated to a research organisation in another country.

Savidan said ERAfrica will allow partners to decide their funding rules.

"We don't expect that Egypt, Kenya or South Africa will put up money to be tied outside their countries. We don't envision that," he said.

Andy Cherry, the project coordinator for CAAST-Net, was among those who attended the meeting, in order to speak about cooperation between the two projects. Regional ERA-Nets such as ERAfrica, and INCO-Nets like CAAST-Net are natural partners because of their similarity of purpose.

See page two for contact details...

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Calendar

Event	Location	Date	Website	Contact
Solar energy symposium	Location to be confirmed	23 - 28 May 2011 (provisional)	www.caast-net.org/xwiki/bin/view/	—
1st Africa College International Conference (on food security, health and impact)	Devonshire Hall, University of Leeds, UK	22 - 24 June 2011	www.africacollege.leeds.ac.uk/event_details.php?id=276	africacollege@leeds.ac.uk

What is CAAST-Net?

CAAST-Net is a bi-regional platform whose goal is improved quality and quantity of cooperative efforts between Europe and Africa in science and technology, targeting areas of mutual interest and benefit, particularly through greater use of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) as well as national programmes and other bilateral and multilateral instruments supporting international cooperation, and through lobbying for more synergy between research and development (R&D), and development cooperation. In support of its goal, CAAST-Net has a range of activity clusters aiming:

- to support and inform existing Europe-Africa science and technology policy dialogue and cooperation processes;
- to identify and prioritise common research areas of mutual interest and benefit, especially for inclusion in the thematic priorities of the FP7 Cooperation programme, harnessing cooperation to address specific problems faced locally and regionally within Africa as well as common problems of a global nature;
- to promote synergy between Europe-Africa science and technology partnerships and development cooperation instruments in order to enhance the creation and application of new knowledge in support of achieving the millennium development goals, poverty alleviation and economic growth;
- to undertake specific activities dedicated to strengthening the participation of African countries in the current and future Framework Programmes through events aimed at raising awareness, providing information, brokering partnerships and optimising synergies;
- to monitor the performance and impact of Europe-Africa science and technology cooperation under the FP7 to inform future cooperation policy;

- to network and encourage the sustainability of specific EU-Africa cooperation projects that respond to priorities of the 8th partnership of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

CAAST-Net's activities are conceived as support for the implementation of Africa's continental priorities in science and technology, as expressed for example in the AU/NEPAD continental plan of action, particularly where there is mutual EU-Africa benefit. A key pillar of CAAST-Net's strategy is mobilising our activities in cooperation with Africa's regional economic communities, recognising their vital role in regionalising the implementation of continental priorities, and leveraging international cooperation to advance those priorities.

Many of CAAST-Net's activities, such as brokerage events, conferences, information days and thematic discussion platforms, are open to participation by interested parties. CAAST-Net has an "open-door" policy with its wider stakeholder community and is dedicated to continued dialogue and networking with our stakeholder community.

This Bulletin is our primary means of communicating our plans, activities and outputs to our stakeholders. We very much welcome your feedback and strongly encourage your involvement and association with the project.

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Coordinator's Column

Eric Mwangi, Africa region coordinator

To start with we wish to thank all the consortium members as well as the relevant stakeholders for their support in the progress made in implementing the CAAST-Net project since 2008.

It is hoped that the same spirit will be maintained in the next phase of the project from 2011 to 2012.

We also look forward to the active engagement of the new CAAST-Net project partners as they start focusing on and implementing their tasks in this quarter.

We look forward to tangible project deliverables as we plan for the next Project Assembly meeting scheduled to be held in London in July 2011. It is important to note that we only have four months to produce the desired results originating from the project deliverables. We look forward to maximum cooperation from all the partners and the continuous support of our stakeholders to achieve our endeavours.

Progress on CAAST-Net's engagement with the RECs

In the updated CAAST-NET project Description of Work (DoW), one of the activities is "deepening the policy dialogue with regional stakeholders". This central task provides an opportunity for engagement between CAAST-Net and Africa's regional economic communities in order to advance the science and technology (S&T) cooperation relationship between the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the European Union (EU) as a region, and as interested member states.

As our partners and stakeholders have been constantly updated, there has been significant progress regarding the implementation of the Southern African Development Community-CAAST-Net cooperation strategy. As a team, we are very keen that this activity is successful since we would like to use it as a model for our engagements with the other RECs.

It is also important to emphasise that a follow-up is being made on the initiatives established with the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) in July last year. Similarly, a strategy to initiate dialogue with the East African Community (EAC) is being developed.

Building synergies with other FP7 projects and other on-going EU-AU initiatives on S&T.

Over the last year a number of CAAST-Net partners, including both the CAAST-Net project coordinator, Andy Cherry, and myself, attended the following events, with the aim of enhancing synergy and cooperation with the existing EU-AU initiatives on S&T in line with the project's overall objectives.

INCONTACT workshop

This event was held from 1 to 2 December 2010, in Pretoria, South Africa. The aim of the FP7 INCONTACT-One World project is to stimulate closer cooperation among International Cooperation National Contact Points (INCO NCPs). The objectives of this workshop were to discuss the following points amongst African counterparts in line with the project aims:

- building African regional capacity with regard to FP7;
- providing a basis for networking with African National Information Points (NIPs); and
- facilitating contact between African NIPs and EU International Cooperation National Contact Points (INCO-NCPs).

2010 Euro-Africa Week on ICT Research & e-Infrastructures

This event was held from 6 to 10 December 2010, in Helsinki, Finland, and was jointly organised by EuroAfrica-ICT and el-Africa FP7 projects, with other partners.

Both Andy Cherry and myself as well as CAAST-Net project partners attended the event. There were adequate opportunities for networking, promoting and popularising CAAST-Net in the margins of these events.

ERA-NET for Africa

The kick-off meeting of the ERA-Net for Africa (European Research Area Network for Africa) took place last month at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria, South Africa, on 12 and 13 January 2011. Several CAAST-Net partner countries are also partners in the ERAfrica consortium, namely Egypt, France, Finland, Germany, Kenya, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and Turkey. Andy Cherry was invited by the ERAfrica coordinator, Yves Savidan, to give a presentation about the scope and potential for cooperation between CAAST-Net and ERAfrica.

While both INCO-NETs and ERA-Nets promote scientific cooperation among the partners, there seems to be a lack of defined strategies for INCO-ERA cooperation.

The launch of ERAfrica therefore provides an excellent opportunity for INCO-ERA cooperation between the two projects, both of which aim to promote S&T for development in Africa. In fact, this synergy will address the 8th EU-AU partnership on Science, Information Society and Space under the Priority Action No. 2 whose objective is "to support S&T Capacity Building in Africa and implement the Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action".

Another major factor that will boost the synergy and enhance the logical relationship between CAAST-Net and ERAfrica is the fact that a majority of the ERAfrica partners are leading tasks in both projects.

Based on the current design of ERAfrica, the project will directly benefit through the uptake and/or assimilation of some of the deliverables from CAAST-Net (hence saving on costs and time).

It is, however, worthwhile noting that the current African member state participation in the ERAfrica project is rather low and, therefore, a major mobilisation process will be required for the project to succeed.

8th EU-AU partnership Joint Expert Group (JEG8) activities

Some CAAST-Net partners, including myself, participated in the last series of Joint Expert Group (JEG8) meetings held in Cairo, Egypt (March 2010), Brussels, Belgium (September 2010), and Hammamet, Tunisia (November 2010). It is important to emphasise that the Tunisian JEG8 meeting's theme was focused on the implementation of the Space Science component of the 8th EU-AU partnership on Science, Information Society and Space.

EU-Africa Heads of State Joint Summit

The high level S&T policy dialogue was endorsed in Tripoli, Libya, in November 2011 by the heads of states and governments in the action plan for 2011-2013. The launching of a high-level science and technology policy dialogue at senior official and ministerial level will strengthen the science and technology cooperation framework in order to leverage faster and more inclusive economic growth and social development in Africa.

CAAST-Net and the FP7 Coordinated Call for Africa

The FP7 Coordinated Call for Africa represents an important contribution to the implementation of the 8th Partnership of the Joint EU-AU Strategy. It is one of the tools identified to support the implementation of some of the science and technology projects identified in the AU's Book of Lighthouse Projects.

To complement and synergise this programme, one of the CAAST-Net activities (Work Package 8) is aimed at supporting the FP7 Coordinated Call for Africa by providing a networking service and facilitating dialogue and cooperation among the recently funded projects under this call. This will be an exciting activity for CAAST-Net, particularly because it will also involve linking these projects to the relevant existing national and regional programmes.

Letter

Rebecca Day, project assistant, Association of Commonwealth Universities



The case for regional integration and cooperation in Africa has become stronger in recent years, due to the fact that the continent is facing a number of major challenges, such as globalisation and climate change, which require coordinated responses. Therefore, Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) can play a vital role in revitalising and redirecting the development process. The inclusion of science and technology considerations and cooperation within newly adopted regional agreements and priorities has been recognised as crucial in order to tackle and contribute to overcoming these types of challenges in the future.

Regional initiatives are considered as important as they can help build upon national programmes previously implemented, meaning that regional cooperation can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these national programmes, without duplicating what is already being done. Recognition of the essential impact that science and technology can bring to the continent via the RECs, in particular as a key component in contributing to economic development, is also beginning to increase, but is still restricted to a few key stakeholders and analysts within international and African organisations with a focus on science and technology, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST).

To state their commitment to science and technology activities, many RECs have included the issue within their official treaties and protocols, written specific science and technology strategies, or embedded administrative organs that deal with science and technology within their institutional and governance structures. In addition, science and technology initiatives, projects and programmes have been commissioned and undertaken by the RECs, including within non science and technology specific areas, such as education and training.

RECs have also begun to keep track of their member states involvement in science and technology activities by noting the key science and technology indicators within their region, and some, such as the East African Community (EAC), have formed indicators for their member states' participation within the European Commission's Framework Programmes (FP6 and FP7). The report on which this summary is based will attempt to present a summary of the science and technology profiles, using the above points, of the following four RECs: the EAC; the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the South African Development

Community (SADC).

All of these four RECs have successfully integrated science and technology issues within their official treaties, as they consider it to be an important component to overall socio-economic development, and have stated their intention to promote cooperation in science and technology both regionally, between the member states, and internationally. However, the extent to which they have carried out their objectives with regards to science and technology varies considerably between the different regions.

In general, RECs have yet to develop the structural provisions and management necessary to cooperate regionally between member states with regards to science and technology. A report by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) entitled *A Survey of the Capacity Needs of Africa's Regional Economic Communities* (2008), which has been very valuable in providing a comprehensive overview of the institutional capacity of the RECs, has observed that all of the RECs, with the exception of the SADC, currently lack sufficient institutional capacity needed to effectively engage and cooperate in multiple regional activities.

The ACBF report also perceived that there is still a modest infrastructure and small capacity for research and training of the workforce in most of the RECs, creating further potential problems in carrying out their objectives in science and technology and highlighting the lack of human resources to successfully cooperate on a regional level. The apparent lack of science and technology initiatives by some of the four RECs compared to others, may be attributed to the apparent institutional capacity gaps and lack of governance structure currently present, and will affect their ability to effectively implement programmes in science and technology.

Although the institutional capacity of the RECs organs to foster science and technology cooperation is presently restricted, there are many successful and well established independent and university-based institutes and research centres around the continent, as well as several relatively newly formed centres of excellence which deal with science and technology initiatives, such as: the African Laser Centre; the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa (BecA) Hub in Nairobi; and the African Virtual University. In addition, South Africa has the potential to host the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope in the Karoo in the Northern Cape (a final decision to host the telescope is expected next year). Therefore, CAAST-Net is in a unique position, as a long-running network of highly informed partners from Africa and Europe, to help bridge the gap and promote synergy between the RECs and science and technology centres of excellence

within the different regions.

Overall, the EAC and SADC appear to be the most advanced in integrating science and technology within their organisation, being in the very late stages of establishing an administrative organ that deals specifically with science and technology issues, named the East African Science and Technology Council (EASTCO) in the case of the EAC, or in the case of SADC, possessing an organ already up and running, called the Southern African Ministerial Committee on Science and Technology (SAMCOST). One of the main roles assigned to these organs, is to oversee and commission the provision of science and technology programmes and initiatives between the member states.

Unfortunately, only very broad assumptions regarding ECCAS are presented in this report, as a result of the lack of available information on its science and technology activities. The ACBF survey suggests that the weak institutional and organisational capacity of ECCAS and the lack of its involvement in regional activities may be attributed to the debilitating military conflicts within the region in the past, which many central African nations have still not fully recovered from.

Although ECOWAS appears to have not established any tangible organs that coordinate science and technology activities within its governance structure, west Africa has been successful in some other areas of cooperation and has been particularly robust in requesting that initiatives take place between ECOWAS and external partners that focus on the development of science and technology within the region, such as the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group.

CAAST-Net's new focus on engagement with the four RECs responds to the developments in their important roles in implementing Africa's various science and technology cooperation and integration initiatives. The report that this article has summarised, on the institutional role played by the RECs in implementing African science and technology projects, is prepared by CAAST-Net for its partners in advance of their activities of cooperation with the RECs, and shall be available in the near future on the CAAST-Net website.

*ACBF (2008) *A Survey of the Capacity Needs of Africa's Regional Economic Communities*, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

http://lencd.com/data/docs/6-Survey%20of%20the%20Capacity%20Needs%20of%20Africa_s%20Regional%20Economic.pdf

CAAST-Net asked to draft guidelines for partnerships

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu

CAAST-Net has been asked by some workshop participants to develop a list of guidelines to advise potential partners on how they can best collaborate.

The guidelines, which include improved communication of research results, are a suggestion emanating from the workshop entitled *Increasing the Impact of Projects Targeting S&T Cooperation between Europe and Africa: Exploiting Synergies and Exchanging Lessons Learned*, which was held on 16 and 17 November 2010 in Marseille, France.

The proposed guidelines are targeted at project partners and stakeholders in European Union (EU) initiatives such as those supported by the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and are in the process of being prepared by the Institut de recherche pour le développement (Institute of Development Research or IRD).

The need for improved communication is an essential part of the proposed guidelines, and formed part of the workshop discussions. The guidelines will be posted on the CAAST-Net website when they are finalised.

Anna Balzarini, an independent expert from Belgium, said communication is important to raise the profile of research. She advised project partners to draw up a dissemination plan detailing methods for targeting different audiences, including policymakers, the public, young scientists and the media.

"Dissemination within European projects is very important not for the project itself but for the partners," she told the workshop.

"But it doesn't work because the dissemination is not planned during the preparation of the proposal. If the dissemination plan is not well done during the preparation of the proposal, it's not going to be easy."

Calls for science communication have been growing in Africa.

Oreeditse Molebatsi, the assistant minister of agriculture in Botswana, challenged African scientists in October 2010 to improve the communication of their research to promote its uptake and accountability.

The final version of the guidelines may also include a recommendation on "emancipatory research," which emphasises the need to promote social justice, according to workshop participants.

Ethiopia-born Mammo Muchie, holder of a research chair at the Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, based at South Africa's Tshwane University of Technology, proposed the concept of emancipatory research.

Muchie said the benefits of their research should be shared between scientists and society. He said social justice will be achieved if research is seen to uplifting the lives of people.

Equity in partnerships could also become a feature of the proposed guidelines. Participants from Ghana said research partnerships should consider the difficulties that African scientists face in accessing Internet to promote equality.

"Web access is a real problem in Africa; Wikis within projects are a real problem which is not being addressed. If you want to talk about equity in the partnership, you need to take into account

the communication problem," said Christopher Gordon, a research scientist at the University of Ghana.

Another Ghanaian participant, Gordon Akon-Yamga, a research scientist with the Accra-based Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI), a CAAST-Net partner, was among over 70 participants who attended the workshop.

Information must also be widely disseminated among partners for the success of research projects.

The proposed guidelines will also advise that the "search for potential partners must be conducted with defined objectives on a selected scientific topic in view to respond to a call in FP7."

Participants said a successful partnership should have a lifespan that exceeds that of the initial research project.

"The best result of a project is to sustain the partnership beyond the terms of the contract. Give ideas to further cooperation and new projects. Partnerships should lead to long-term cooperation in the frame of [science and technology] agreements," the minutes suggest.

Participants urged international scientists to treat their African counterparts as partners, not donor recipients, to encourage them to invest in collaborative research projects.

Principal investigators should also play a leadership role that ensures transparency, equity, trust and open communication.

"Team members will often have a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, a variety of values, expectations, and attitudes. They may also differ in their own sense of what is important in their lives.

"These values will affect how they react and are motivated in particular situations. A good scientific leader treats co-workers with respect, recognising their cultures, their priorities and their values," note the draft minutes of the workshop.

CAAST-Net's Marseille event was divided into two workshops, namely the Second Workshop of Coordinators of Projects Targeting Science and Technology Cooperation Between Europe and Africa; and Lessons Learned from Bi and Multilateral Science and Technology Activities between Europe and Africa.

CAAST-Net partners involved in the organisation of the event were the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) headquartered in France; the International Bureau of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in Bonn; and the Sénégalaise Ministry of Scientific Research, based in Dakar.



*Participants at the workshop entitled **Increasing the Impact of Projects Targeting S&T Cooperation between Europe and Africa: Exploiting Synergies and Exchanging Lessons Learned**, which was held on 16 and 17 November 2010 in Marseille, France*

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MIRA General Assembly and Open Management Board Meeting

Anne Louise Taylor

CAAST-Net's sister project, MIRA (the Mediterranean Innovation and Research Co-ordination Action) had its general assembly and open management board meeting at the start of the year.

MIRA covers North Africa as part of its focus on the Mediterranean region, and so CAAST-Net cooperates with MIRA whenever possible to ensure a coherent approach by INCO-NETs to the whole of Africa.



Participants at the MIRA General Assembly which was held from 10 to 13 January 2011

The four-day MIRA meeting was held at the Institute for Catalan Studies (Institut d'Estudis Catalans or IEC), with IEC president Salvador Giner in attendance, in Barcelona, Spain, between the 10 and 13 January 2011.

An important aspect of the assembly was the launching of the MIRA dialogue platform, which deals with issues affecting the improvement of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Research and Innovation and its implication in the innovation objectives.

According to the agenda, the assembly was a re-launching of the MIRA project after the amendment of the contract resulting from the European Commission 2010 call for proposals for the topping up of INCO-NETs, the re-drafting of its technical annex, the new landscape created by the launching of other projects, specifically the ERA-Wide and the BILAT project which have affected the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, as well as new partnerships created by the Agenda 2020 and the European Innovation Union.

There was an open discussion about the content and work plan of the MIRA project's nine thematic work package areas and a session on strategic aspects of the MIRA project such as its coordination of activities with other projects, initiatives and actors of the Euro-Mediterranean scientific and innovation cooperation arena.

All members of the consortium and experts representing various projects were invited to participate in discussions of the different work packages.

Rafael Rodríguez-Clemente, the MIRA coordinator, from the Spanish National Research Council (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas or CSIC) and Luis Calvo, a representative of the CSIC in Catalonia, and Philippe Froissard, deputy head of the international cooperation unit from the European Union, were among those who gave the welcome addresses.

CAAST-Net's Cameroon health priorities workshop a "valuable contribution" - journal

Anne Louise Taylor

Following a 2009 CAAST-Net health workshop on non-communicable diseases, hosted in Cameroon by the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), two things have happened:

- a recent European Commission (EC) health call has included some of the workshop's recommended topics, highlighting the successful uptake of an INCO-NET recommendation; and
- four workshop participants published an article on the event and its implications, which among many other things, praises CAAST-Net for its contributions.

This article focuses on the publication while a more detailed article on the workshop report and EC health calls can be expected in the next issue of The Bulletin.

The CAAST-Net meeting - held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in November 2009 - drew together a small group of selected experts, from both Europe and Africa, who specialise in the topics covered by

the workshop.

The aim of the CAAST-Net consultation was to recommend broad priorities for joint research on three non-communicable diseases - cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes - which have particular significance for collaboration among researchers from the two continents. A fourth area of discussion focused on integrating approaches for all three illnesses.

"Bringing together the different stakeholders, and feeding the results through to the European Union research programme is a valuable contribution of CAAST-Net," was a conclusion of the article, published in the open-access journal Health Policy Research and Systems. "None can act effectively alone."

The article, entitled Developing the Agenda for European Union Collaboration on Non-Communicable Diseases Research in Sub-Saharan Africa, was published last year. The open-access

journal in which the article appeared, Health Research Policy and Systems, is published in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The four authors of the article, who all attended the Cameroon workshop, are Mark McCarthy from the department of epidemiology and public health at the University College London, UK; Dermot Maher from the Medical Research Council/Uganda Research Unit on AIDS in Entebbe, Uganda; Adama Ly from the André Wolff Institute at the University of Paris XI and founder of the AfroCancer group in France and Senegal; and Agbor Ndip from the Manchester Diabetes Centre at the University of Manchester, UK

They state that their paper "contributes to transparency in the process of priority-setting for health research in Africa."

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2010 Euro-Africa Week calls for improved access to ICTs

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu

Improved access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) will help Africa to meet the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), delegates to the 2010 Euro-Africa ICT Week have said.

The forum, which took place on 7 and 8 December 2010 in Helsinki, Finland, drew up a list of recommendations that could spur the growth of ICT in Africa.

The recommendations include improving access to affordable ICTs in all sectors of the economy in order to ensure that Africa meets the MDGs.

The MDGs are a set of eight developmental goals that include eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality rates, and achieving universal primary education by 2015.

Most African countries are far from meeting the developmental goals, according to Economic Prospects in Africa, a report published by the Africa Development Bank in May 2010.

Delegates also called for improved investment in ICT to help implement the 2010 Addis Ababa AU Summit Declaration on ICT. The declaration called for regulatory reforms that will help harness ICT to promote development.

Delegates said reducing the digital divide between Africa and developed countries should also be prioritised in the continent's ICT programmes.

About 325 delegates from 55 countries in Europe and Africa attended the event.

The delegates included Vera Brenda Ngosi, the Malawi-born director of the Human Resources, Science and Technology Division of the African Union (AU) who co-chaired a session entitled Africa-EU partnerships: strengthening capacities.

Other delegates were Mohamed Ben Amor, the Africa president of the Joint Expert Group for the Africa-European Union (EU) eighth partnership on Science, Information Society and Space; and Funda Mpanza, the science and technology coordinator for the Southern African Development Community. Ben Amor and Mpanza shared their views on how Africa and EU partnerships can be strengthened.

Paavo Matti Väyrynen, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Trade and former member of the European parliament, also attended the event.

The event provided a platform for policymakers, researchers and representatives from government to network. Policymakers also shared progress on EU-AU programmes on ICT.

One such programme is Africa Connect for Research and Education, which hopes to bridge the digital divide on the continent by promoting the development and use of ICT in education and research institutions. The project is due to take off once a funding agreement has been signed with the European Commission.



Participants at the 2010 Euro-Africa Week which took place from 6 to 10 December last year in Helsinki, Finland

The event was organised in part by Karine Valin, the project coordinator of Euro-Africa ICT, along with her team of project partners. EuroAfrica-ICT is a two-year Seventh Framework project (FP7), which is dedicated to supporting collaborative ICT research between Europe and Africa. Valin is the managing director of Sigma Orionis, a private company in France.

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A discussion at the third Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research which took place from 7 to 8 December last year in Helsinki, Finland



Closer collaboration for INCONTACT and CAAST-Net

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu



Epaminondas Christofilopoulos

Two European Union (EU) initiatives hope to join forces to improve Africa's participation in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

INCONTACT, a network of national contact points (NCP) nominated by their respective governments to support potential FP7 applicants, is one of the collaborating projects.

The other initiative is CAAST-Net.

The parties have been working individually to offer support for the FP7 programmes but will now join forces to increase efficiency.

"We have not been collaborating in close ways. We have just been going to each other's events and exchanging experiences. Now we have officially agreed to work together," Epaminondas Christofilopoulos, the project coordinator for INCONTACT, explained.

He was speaking in a telephone interview from his home in Greece.

Christofilopoulos said the INCONTACT initiative will collaborate with CAAST-Net to organise training sessions on FP7 in 2011.

Collaboration with INCONTACT is part of CAAST-Net's mandate, Christofilopoulos said. CAAST-Net will decide on the dates, venue and select participants for the training sessions, which will be held in Africa.

"CAAST-Net will identify people to participate in the training. It will be researchers with a good track record," Christofilopoulos said.

INCONTACT offers its support to NCPs around the globe while CAAST-Net's work focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa.

CAAST-Net's work package five - led by Portugal's General Directorate of Higher Education and Science (Direcção Geral do Ensino Superior e Ciência or DGESC) and the Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia) - will lead CAAST-Net's collaboration with INCONTACT.

The FCT, which is led by João Sentieiro and falls under Portugal's Ministry of Science, Technology and Education, will join forces with the DGESC, led by Jorge Arnaldo Mendes de Brito, in order to improve the dissemination of information between the INCONTACT and CAAST-Net initiatives.

Christofilopoulos added that the parties will jointly identify suitable trainers and develop a training programme that will include description of the FP7. The programme will also offer information on how to apply for FP7

funding and to prepare and submit a proposal.

The training sessions will also help participants to prepare profiles that can be easily accessed by European scientists looking for potential partners.

The sessions are likely to focus on the FP7's ten thematic areas covering health; food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology; information and communication technology; nanosciences and nanotechnology; energy, environment, transport, socioeconomics and humanities; security, and space.

CAAST-Net and INCONTACT will also work together to encourage more African countries to nominate national contact points (NCPs).

NCPs are experts "nominated by the competent national authorities, to provide assistance to potential FP7 participants in their countries."

Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco and South Africa are among the African countries that have NCPs.

"CAAST-Net has better contacts on the continent. They know more people in different countries. We will work together to see who is a more suitable person and contact them. [We] will explain what will be the benefits and guide them through the process of nominating NCPs," said Christofilopoulos.

"We will provide the countries with documentation about the work of NCPs, its responsibilities and how other countries have nominated NCPs," he said.

Countries need to notify the European Union about the nominee.

The Cape Verde archipelago has nominated Maggy Fragoso, adviser to its Minister of Higher Education, Sciences and Culture, Fernanda Marques, as its NCP.

Fragoso holds a PhD in medical physics from the University of London in the UK and is vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Verde, which has three campuses on the islands of Santiago and São Vicente.

Fragoso's nomination is yet to be approved by the EU but it is expected that she will be interested in encouraging effective communication between the two projects, said Alfred Moreno, a consultant for the DGESC and assistant professor of English at the University of Cape Verde, which is a CAAST-Net partner.

Moreno added that the work to encourage countries to appoint NCPs will begin in early 2011.

INCONTACT and CAAST-Net hope to join forces to improve Africa's participation in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)



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INCONTACT and CAAST-Net hope to raise awareness on the benefits of appointing NCPs. The EU finances travel to training events but countries can choose to fund operation costs for NCPs.

Some of the benefits of appointing NCPs include improved collaboration with the EU. Countries could also accrue financial benefits from appointing NCPs, Christofilopoulos said.

CAAST-Net will also participate in an International Scientific Cooperation Activities (INCO) conference to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 to 28 September 2011, being organised by INCONTACT with local support from South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST). Mabatho Ndwandwa from DST's strategic partnerships unit is the lead official organising the conference, which seeks to improve collaboration between EU and Africa.

Botswana embraces CAAST-Net

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu

Botswana hopes to galvanise local support for science and technology through its involvement in the CAAST-Net project seeking to increase Africa's participation in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

Botswana is one of the five new country partners in the recently expanded CAAST-Net project.

Boitumelo Sekhute-Batungamile hopes the relationships Botswana builds with some of the CAAST-Net project partners will transform into scientific partnerships that will in turn be used to garner political support for science. Sekhute-Batungamile is the principal research, science and technology officer for monitoring and evaluation at Botswana's Department of Research, Science and Technology (DRST), which was established in 2004.

"It is an opportunity for us to extend our network. CAAST-Net has members from Africa and Europe, some of whom we have never dealt with," she said. Some of the CAAST-Net project partners include Kenya, Nigeria, France, Germany and Cape Verde.

"It will expose us to partners we can do business with in the future. We are in the process of formulating a policy on indigenous knowledge systems. Some of the countries have gone through the processes and we can learn from them," said Sekhute-Batungamile, a former staff member of the BirdLife Botswana environmental organisation.

She hopes the partnerships will translate into joint research projects that the DRST can use to raise the government's awareness of the importance of science in a country where the sector is still in its "infancy stages".

"We hope our international collaboration will help us to convince government of the importance of science. We would like to see science and technology transforming the economy to be more diversified."

"Participating in CAAST-Net will help us to build our case to government, to say science and technology is helpful in advancing economic growth," said Sekhute-Batungamile, a holder of a master's in sustainable agriculture from the University of Aberdeen's Scottish Agricultural College.

The support of government will be particularly important for the DRST, which recently submitted its new science and technology policy to the ruling Botswana Democratic Party cabinet for appraisal and approval.

The policy set an ambitious target of allocating two percent of the sub-Saharan African country's Gross Domestic Product to science by 2016. Botswana also hopes to create a fund for research in line with the new policy.

The DRST falls under the Ministry of Infrastructure, Science and Technology, currently led by Johnnie Swartz.

Botswana also hopes to be able to offer some help to CAAST-Net.

For example, Botswana hopes to use its close proximity to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has its headquarters in the Botswana capital of Gaborone, to leverage support for CAAST-Net.

"There are forums where we meet with the SADC secretariat and will take advantage of them to talk about CAAST-Net," said Sekhute-Batungamile.

Tomaz Augusto Salomão, who is based in Botswana, is the executive secretary of SADC, an intergovernmental organisation seeking to strengthen integration and cooperation among 15 African countries south of the equator. Member states include Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

SADC's collaboration with CAAST-Net will be done through the regional body's science desk, currently manned in Botswana by South Africa-born Funda Mpanza.

Botswana's support with the SADC is especially crucial for CAAST-Net, which seeks to improve collaboration with regional economic communities as part of its expansion.

CAAST-Net hopes to work closely with regional economic communities, including the SADC, to act as a platform to add value in the relationship between the regions and Europe/European parties, Andy Cherry, the project's coordinator said in May 2010.

The collaboration with regional economic communities such as SADC is expected to help identify regional priorities.

The expansion exercise has seen CAAST-Net introduce an additional eighth work package to network beneficiaries of the FP7 Call for Africa 2010. The beneficiaries, where appropriate, may also be linked to research and development programmes outside the European Commission to ensure their sustainability.

Twenty-six successful applicants of the EU's first Call for Africa grants process, worth 63 million Euros, were announced in July 2010. Botswana is very interested in meeting with successful applicants in order to further their own applications in the future and so they will be considered when consortia are forming.

One of the 26 projects is the African Programme for Advanced Research Epidemiology Training (APARET), run by a consortium that includes the University of Ghana, Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Zimbabwe, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States.

SADC has an epidemiology and informatics sub-committee, which meets on an annual basis in Gaborone, Botswana. The sub-committee is composed of the heads of epidemiology units in the respective member states. However, the focus of the unit is on animal rather than human health, and in particular regional rabies control strategies.

However, both the government of Botswana and SADC also has a strong interest in epidemiology, as both the country and the region have very high rates of HIV infection.

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Africa-EU heads of state approve action plan to build Africa's science capacity

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu



Mohamed Ben Amor

Capacity building will be the focus of a two-year action plan on the eighth partnership on science, information society and space of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

The science partnership is one of eight routes for promoting collaboration between the 53 countries of Africa and the 27 countries of the European Union.

The two-year action plan was approved at the EU-Africa heads of state summit late last year. A renewal of the first action plan, it is the second such action plan for the 8th partnership.

The action plan outlines three priorities for partners to implement to build Africa's science capacity.

The three priority actions include science and technology building for the implementation of Africa's Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA).

"Expected outcomes [are] improved training, and hence increase the quality and number of African and EU scientists, technicians and engineers," said the heads of state in a communiqué published

after their meeting in Tripoli in November 2010.

The heads of state said building Africa's science capacity is crucial to create a human capital base that will implement poverty reduction strategies.

"The development of Africa's vast human capital requires a focus on skills development, innovation and entrepreneurship, which should be complemented with a comprehensive approach to social and labour market policies.

"Without a food-secure, educated and healthy population, both economic growth and poverty reduction remains elusive," the heads of state said. Part of the objective would be to spearhead the creation of business incubators, meant to help young firms survive and grow during the start-up period when they are most vulnerable.

Vera Brenda Ngosi, the director of the African Union's (AU's) directorate of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) said in a recent interview that the incubators should begin operation in 2011.

Funding for the incubators will be issued as loans

to researchers at an interest rate, which will be lower than that of banks.

Creating an AU-EU science policy is also part of the action plan.

A second priority is to support the development of an inclusive information society for Africa.

"Expected outcomes [include] a more competitive African economy through ICT uptake and innovation," the heads of state said.

Heads of state also want to see the action plan support the implementation of the African Regional Action Plan for the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE).

ARAPKE was developed in response to a request from the second African regional preparatory conference - held in Accra, Ghana, in February 2005 - for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia later the same year.

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First call for proposals for Africa Research Grants

The African Union (AU) is calling for proposals for its Africa Research Grants programme.

Up to 7 million Euros will be disbursed in the first call of proposals for the programme, which hopes to finance research projects that seek to promote food security. Funding will be divided as follows: 3.5 million Euros for post-harvest and agriculture; 1.75 million Euros for energy; and 1.75 million Euros for water and sanitation.

The grant, dubbed a mini framework programme, also hopes to improve water resources and waste management, and to develop renewable and sustainable energy technologies.

Proposals must focus on any of the following three topics.

- post-harvest and agriculture: proposals are for food security and productivity, focusing on processing and improving the quality of agricultural produce; agro-forestry, cereals, root or tuber crops, food legumes and crop-livestock integration; and agricultural policy, including the commercialisation and marketing of agricultural produce.
- renewable and sustainable energy: proposals are for local and regional sustainable energy; the impact of renewable energy on the environment; innovative approach to renewable and sustainable energy; and measures for making sustainable energy more widespread.
- water and sanitation: proposals are on projects focusing on the social and economic dimensions of water management as well as water for agriculture.

The topics are aligned to the priorities of the Consolidated Plan of Action, Africa's blueprint for science, approved by the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST) in 2003.

Applications must be submitted by a consortium comprising scientists from three different member states, two of whom must be nationals of a member state of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states.

The implementation of the research projects must not exceed a period of 36 months.

Priority will be given to consortia that consist of scientists from the eight

regional economic communities recognised by the AU. The eight include the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community and the Economic Community of West African States.

African institutions must be willing to cover 30 percent of the costs for the research projects.

An application form, which must be in print version and saved on a CD-Rom and flash disc must be posted to the Programme Management Unit, African Union Research Grant, Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, African Union Commission, Roosevelt Street, PO Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The deadline for applications is 30 April 2011.

The Africa Research Grants programme is one the projects outlined in the 19 lighthouse projects.

The lighthouse projects were developed in line with the 8th partnership on science, information society and space of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, approved by both continents' heads of state in 2007.

EU and African heads of states approved the joint strategy in 2007.

WEBSITES

Africa Research Grants (532 KB DOC)

[http://www.africahrst.org/stict/rgp/download/en/GFA%20Guidelines%20for%20Applicants%20\(e3_a\)_en.doc](http://www.africahrst.org/stict/rgp/download/en/GFA%20Guidelines%20for%20Applicants%20(e3_a)_en.doc)

Application form (1 MB DOC)

[http://www.africahrst.org/stict/rgp/download/en/APF%20Application%20form%20\(e3_b\)_en_bis.doc](http://www.africahrst.org/stict/rgp/download/en/APF%20Application%20form%20(e3_b)_en_bis.doc)

See also:

<http://www.africahrst.org/stict/rgp/call2011.aspx>

Do INCO-NETs make a difference? EC evaluation says yes

Anne Louise Taylor

A report requested by the European Commission, provides a detailed examination of the role of various instruments, including INCO-NETs such as CAAST-Net, in making European research more open to the rest of the world.

The report is entitled *Interim Evaluation of International Cooperation Activities of the Seventh Framework Programme's Capacities Programme**. It covers the years 2007 to 2010.

"The International Cooperation Activities made great strides towards widening the ERA (European Research Area) and making it more open to the world by engaging a total of over 70 third countries in its various projects, and involving a broad range of third country organisations including policy-makers and research agencies," the report said.

The report writers acknowledged that international cooperation in science and technology "presents a huge challenge due to the differences in the state of readiness, scientific potential, capacity and willingness of the targeted countries to participate in collaborative research with the EU."

In many respects, the evaluation seems to support the activities of a project such as CAAST-Net, and events such as the CAAST-Net/IRD workshop on research agenda priorities for non-communicable diseases held in Cameroon in 2009.

"While compiling a catalogue or database of potential partners in third countries may prove useful to EU organizations seeking such partners, there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings," the report mentions in a section on achievements.

As a result, under the section on recommendations for partnership building, the evaluators were clear that the EC International Cooperation Directorate should "strongly encourage the allocation of project funds for travel grant schemes and organisation of or participation in brokerage and other networking events for researchers."

However, the report, more than 75 pages long, also identified challenges with transforming the input from meetings into policy shifts.

Therefore, the interim evaluation suggests, in a section on the utilization of identified research priorities beyond the Capacities programme, that the International Cooperation Directorate within DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission should spearhead efforts, involving all other DGs with responsibility for the Framework Programme, to develop a coherent strategy with regard to the identification and utilisation of common research priorities.

"The future undertaking of prioritisation activities in projects funded by the International Cooperation Activities should be tailored to the agreed process, and should include the participation of the relevant Programme Owners," the report reads.

The expert group which undertook the evaluation included Andrea Ricci, vice-president of the Institute of Studies for the Integration of Systems, in Rome, Italy. Ricci was responsible for the section evaluating INCO-NET and INCO-NCP activities.

Other members of the evaluation team included Lena Tsiouri, an economic sciences professor at the University of Athens in Greece and Raif Wilken, a senior adviser in science and technology in Germany. The rapporteur was Brian Warrington, the former head of the Malta Council for Science and Technology.

The report, which focuses on INCO-NET, BILAT, ERA-NET and Access4EU activities, was submitted in October 2010 to the EC.

The authors also note, in the section on Short-term Recommendations, that "training for third country Contact Points presents a major challenge given the magnitude of the task and the physical size of many third countries" and notes concerns regarding the duplication of efforts such as preparing training manuals.

The report suggests that the International Cooperation Directorate organises a consultation on the feasibility of centralising the training for third country Contact Points, and suggests that such a discussion might be a suitable debate for an INCO NCP meeting.

In the medium term, the report suggests, in a section on work programmes, that project funding need not be uniform but could be tailored to the tasks to be undertaken; at the same time, the evaluators suggest that if proposals focus strongly on the objectives stated in the work programme and avoid venturing into other territories, this should minimise overlaps between projects.

In a section on INCO-NETs, the authors noted that the need to establish a visible link between indicators and priority setting and suggested that "the ultimate utility of monitoring and evaluation activities should be further discussed with the INCO-NET participants in order to raise their level of motivation on this particular dimension."

Dissemination of information was highlighted as an INCO-NET issue, as "third country partners and stakeholders frequently expressed their desire for more information regarding opportunities for participating in FP7 as well as information on events (conferences, workshops, brokerage events, etc). A similar request relates to having access to results of previous or ongoing research projects."

Europe's "exceedingly complex and demanding" administration and financial procedures regulating international cooperation contracts came in for unanimous "strong criticism," the authors said, and might well encourage would-be partners to approach alternative sources of funding instead.

Under conclusions, the evaluators said that INCO-NET achievements are "mixed, with very positive results in some areas despite the challenges posed by the broad target region and heterogeneity of the partner countries."

"The large consortium size presents additional challenges," they noted, while also critiquing target countries as not always fully committed to providing FP7 contact point personnel.

"While the INCO-NET activity should be maintained, it is suggested that explicit provisions should be introduced in the relevant regulations to make sure that the mandate, scope and modus operandi of the projects evolve over time to accommodate the dynamics of the bi-regional S&T cooperation landscape."

In future, the report said, "there is much scope for additional INCO-NET activity, both in terms of continued efforts in the current projects, as well as new initiatives in geographical areas and countries which are not participating in current projects."

*Interim Evaluation of International Cooperation Activities of the Seventh Framework Programme's Capacities Programme

http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/other_reports_studies_and_documents/fp7_interim_evaluation_expert_group_report.pdf

Upcoming event CAAST-Net Annual General Assembly

CAAST-Net expects to hold its annual general meeting in London, UK, in July 2011.

Further details about the event will be provided in the next issue of the CAAST-Net Bulletin and the CAAST-Net website.

CAAST-Net's Cameroon health priorities workshop a "valuable contribution" - journal

Anne Louise Taylor

Continued from page six...

"Research in Africa can draw from different environmental and genetic characteristics to understand the causes of the disease, while economic and social factors are important in developing relevant strategies for prevention and treatment. The suggested research needs include better methods for description and recording, clinical studies, understanding cultural impacts, prevention strategies, and the integrated organisation of care," they write.

"Although the European Union's Seventh Framework Research Programme prioritises biomedical and clinical research, research for Africa should also address broader social and cultural research and intervention research for greatest impact," they concluded.

"Research policy leaders in Africa must engage national governments and international agencies as well as service providers and research communities."

"Health is the second best-resourced of the thematic calls within the Capacities programme, distributing around seven hundred million Euros a year," the article notes in its analysis of the EC FP7 programme.

However, the authors observe, most resources are currently channeled towards infectious diseases, such as HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, as well as health system development.

The problem is that non-communicable diseases already cause more than half of all deaths worldwide.

Over the next ten years, the World Health Organisation predicts a 17 percent increase in non-communicable diseases globally, with a staggering 27 percent increase in Africa, according to the article.

However, the paper points out that there is limited literature on non-communicable disease research priorities in developing countries.

In the area of heart disease, the authors noted, "there is an urgent need for more comprehensive and representative data to define better this burden across Africa and for studies on disease control."

In oncology, they cautioned, "while there is much interest in the links between genetics and cancer, Africa has a diverse gene pool, limiting the feasibility of epidemiological studies. Moreover, as yet no-one has identified human protein markers, and proteomics is beyond the financial resources of most African countries.

"There is an urgent need to improve diagnostic services, including the evaluation of diagnostic innovations such 'telepathology' (as there are very few pathologists in Africa) and to improve treatment services, including the provision of common anti-cancer drugs and morphine for palliation."

The researchers also noted problems with the understanding of diabetes

in Africa, stating: "a critical issue for epidemiological studies is in defining standards for diagnosis. Reference values from western countries may not necessarily be the same for Africa."

The researchers encouraged a collective approach to research across the non-communicable diseases, "since they share common risk factors, interactions, and similarities in approaches to prevention and care."

Aside from issues such as smoking, obesity, alcohol and high blood pressure which contribute to all three diseases, encouraging a cross-sectoral research approach, the authors also noted that "since important social and cultural perspectives may be relevant across different non-communicable diseases (NCDs), studies of prevention and clinical management should address NCDs as a group. This can be more efficient, avoiding duplication of effort: for example, developing a standard approach to registration and follow-up of patients, and developing policies for prevention based on shared risk factors." Both Stéphanie Crespo and Xavier Garde from the IRD as well as Andrew Cherry, the CAAST-Net coordinator from the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Maurice Doubé from the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation in the Republic of Cameroon, were thanked by the four authors of the article for their assistance.

For a more detailed analysis, a link to the journal article is listed at the end of this article.

Seventeen abstracts were considered at the Cameroon meeting, which provided a detailed overview of the research situation in regard to non-communicable diseases.

Participants included, among others, Jean Albergel, Nireesh Bhagwandin, Joris Delanghe, Florence Fournet, Stéphane Hogan, David Korpela, Ousmane Ly, Estelle Tiphonnet and Zoe Vaillant.

WEBSITES

Developing the agenda for European Union collaboration on non-communicable diseases research in Sub-Saharan Africa
<http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/8/1/13>

Afrocancer
<http://www.afrocancer.org/>

Africa-EU heads of state approve action plan to build Africa's science

Deborah-Fay Ndhlovu

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The ICT plan seeks to help countries create ICT policies and regional ICT observatories.

An AU and European Commission information society dialogue will be created to help achieve the goals of promoting economic growth through ICT and implementing ARAPKE.

The third priority action will be to enhance cooperation on space applications and technology. "[The] objective [is] enhanced cooperation in the use of space application and technology to support

Africa's development," said the heads of state.

Some of the expected benefits of the space applications and technology portion of the project could be within telecommunications, Earth observation satellites and telemedicine.

A secretariat for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa (GMES and Africa) will be created to help achieve the outcomes.

Mohamed Ben Amor, the president of the Joint

Expert Group for the 8th partnership, said the GMES and Africa secretariat will be based at the African Union Commission offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

GMES is an EU-led initiative which seeks to "combine ground- and space-based observations to develop an integrated environmental monitoring capability."