

## Upcoming CAAST-Net events

### Solar Energy Symposium to be held in September

A Solar Energy Symposium is currently being planned and facilitated by CAAST-Net in cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat. The SADC Secretariat has joined Botswana, Namibia and Malawi to coordinate arrangements in preparation for the symposium. The symposium will be held at the Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe, Malawi from the 20 to 22 September this year and will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Malawi.

Energy security remains a global challenge which requires that solutions are developed through international cooperation partnerships. The objective of the symposium is to provide a forum for exchange of experience between experts with a view to informing the development of a SADC solar energy research programme to support the provision of renewable energy supply.

The symposium aims to foster mutual understanding and advance the enhancement of renewable energy research, specifically in the solar energy field, in the SADC region. Another aim is to advance SADC-Europe cooperation in renewable energy research. Approximately 30 to 40 experts from the two regions and SADC member state representatives will attend the meeting. Additional participation from the host country and from the organising team has also been taken into account.

### Second Stakeholders' Conference to take place in Sénégal

CAAST-Net is in the process of organising the second Stakeholders' Conference on Africa-Europe S&T Cooperation, which will take place in Dakar, Sénégal. The conference will be hosted by the Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, des Universités et des Centres Universitaires Régionaux et de la Recherche Scientifique (Ministry of Higher Education and Regional Academic Centers and Scientific Research) and is provisionally scheduled for the end of November 2011.



*Participants at last year's Stakeholders' Conference held in Durban, South Africa, in May 2010*

Building on the results of the first Stakeholders' Conference, the event aims to support science and technology (S&T) policy engagements between Europe and Africa by facilitating a stakeholder dialogue around policy topics of mutual interest that are considered important for the enhancement of S&T collaboration between Africa and Europe. The thematic focus of the conference will be on "Europe-Africa cooperation to foster innovation processes for finding common answers to global challenges".

The Stakeholders' Conference is expected to bring together around 100 participants from different stakeholder groups from both regions, including representatives from the European Commission, the African Union Commission, the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology, the Joint Expert Group for the 8th Africa-EU Strategic Partnership for Science, Information Society and Space, and the African Regional Economic Communities as well as high-level policy stakeholders and scientists from European and African member states.

## Calendar

Event	Location	Date	Website	Contact
Solar Energy Symposium	Lilongwe, Malawi	20 to 22 September 2011	<a href="http://www.caast-net.org">www.caast-net.org</a>	Andy Cherry <a href="mailto:a.cherry@acu.ac.uk">a.cherry@acu.ac.uk</a>
CAAST-Net Stakeholder Conference on Africa–Europe S&T Cooperation	Dakar, Sénégal	November 2011	<a href="http://www.caast-net.org">www.caast-net.org</a>	Almamy Konte <a href="mailto:almamy.konte@recherche.gouv.sn">almamy.konte@recherche.gouv.sn</a> Birgit Wirsing <a href="mailto:birgit.wirsing@dlr.de">birgit.wirsing@dlr.de</a> Stefan Haffner <a href="mailto:stefan.haffner@dlr.de">stefan.haffner@dlr.de</a>



# Coordinator's Column

Dr Andy Cherry  
CAAST-Net Project Coordinator

With the European Union's (EUs) new research and innovation funding programme 'Horizon 2020' quite literally on the horizon, it seems everyone in and around the international cooperation landscape is talking about the focus on societal challenges, and on the research and innovation partnerships to deliver solutions to those challenges.

In a time of increasing austerity, a greater focus on societal challenges of common interest will serve to more effectively utilise precious resources for research and innovation partnerships, and particularly if this EU focus can be complemented and synergised by greater coordination among other multilateral and bilateral programmes supporting research and innovation. Moreover, with the intense public scrutiny of public sector finances only likely to increase in the near term, a focus on those key challenges and partnerships capable of delivering on priority policies of economic development, growth and capacity building will more likely be palatable to tax payers.

CAAST-Net's work has always sought to focus on topics and issues of common interest to Europe and Africa. As we go forward we can readily anticipate greater efforts by the project on

those societal challenges which are truly central to both regions policy objectives, such as food security, climate change and health, for example. Energy security is another shared concern and a challenge ripe for cooperation between the regions. Cooperation does not necessarily require that both regions have common policy objectives. Thus, for example, in Europe the requirement to meet carbon emission targets is a significant driver of research into renewable energy technologies, such as those for solar energy. In contrast, in parts of Africa it may be the need for rural connectivity which provides the more relevant policy driver for the research and innovation agenda than the need to meet carbon emission targets. Such differences in policy objectives can provide a rich cooperative environment because of the complementarity it engenders. Next week's symposium in Malawi on solar energy, discussed elsewhere in this Bulletin, is a good example of how CAAST-Net is encouraging a sharing of information, raising mutual awareness and learning, and encouraging partnerships.

The widely anticipated first senior officials' meeting of an Africa-EU Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Dialogue, planned to take place next month,

is indeed well timed, even if serendipitous, to perhaps start a high level debate on the priority areas of mutual interest for bi-regional cooperation. The meeting might provide a rich source of input for the shaping of future international cooperation strategies of both European and African research and innovation policies. CAAST-Net has maintained a keen interest in the shaping and emergence of the policy dialogue platform. We were honoured to have been invited by the Policy Dialogue Task Force, along with a range of other structures, to comment on a draft discussion paper being prepared and submitted to the first meeting of the Policy Dialogue.

This issue of the Bulletin presents updates on CAAST-Net's second Stakeholders' Conference, the ERAfrica Briefing Session and the last CAAST-Net Annual Assembly. It also includes an article on how to access the EUs Framework Programme Seven and another on HORIZON 2020, amongst others. We thank Dr Güliz Sütçü, Scientific Programmes Assistant Expert at TÜBİTAK, who has contributed a letter about science and technology for the development of the least developed countries.

## 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 (EUs) 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 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.

The CAAST-Net 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.

### Contacts:

Andrew Cherry (Project Coordinator): [a.cherry@acu.ac.uk](mailto:a.cherry@acu.ac.uk)  
Eric Mwangi (Africa Region Coordinator): [emwangi23@yahoo.com](mailto:emwangi23@yahoo.com)  
Sara Calamassi (Project Administrator): [s.calamassi@acu.ac.uk](mailto:s.calamassi@acu.ac.uk)

CAAST-Net is supported by grant agreement number 212625 of the FP7 of the EU. The CAAST-Net Bulletin is produced by Research Africa. Information contained in this document is provided "as is" and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any particular purpose. The user thereof uses the information at its sole risk and liability. • ISSN 2073-610X



CAAST-Net partner

# Science and technology for the development of the least developed countries

Dr Güliz Sütçü  
Scientific Programmes Assistant Expert



An effective science, technology and innovation (STI) approach is indispensable for welfare as a key driver to the development and sustainable growth.

The STI capabilities of the least developed countries (LDCs) are needed to be enhanced in order to increase the quality of life, find innovative solutions to societal problems, increase the competitiveness of the nation, and foster and diffuse science and technology (S&T) awareness in society. Indeed the challenges of economic development are not going to be addressed properly until S&T issues are better integrated into the basic economic development strategies of the LDCs. It is generally accepted that the lack of STI capabilities is both a cause and an effect of being the least developed countries.

This issue also became evident with the organisation of the Preparatory Event for the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries by TÜBİTAK. The theme of the event, which was held from 7 to 8 February 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey, was Science, Technology and Innovation: Setting priorities and implementing policies for LDCs. During the event it became clear that discussing STI for development in LDCs means first of all addressing much more fundamental, even imperative development issues, namely looking critically into development vision(s), development stages, resources, and the availability of knowledge and skills.

It indicates that development models must be people-centered and inclusive, based on local realities and must take advantage of local knowledge and innovation capacities based on the country's potential to solve global issues. In accordance with this, the South-South cooperation, in particular with the role that emerging economies in the South play, should also be promoted in supporting less-developed countries in constructing their pathways towards sustainability and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Furthermore, it is also important to challenge the conditions that exist in least developed countries for using STI for development. It is crucial for all development goals to build equity and equality into the effort, including STI. Reducing inequalities in both vertical and horizontal dimensions – that is, rich-poor gaps and gaps between culturally-defined groups such as gender, ethnicity, or religion – appears as a very crucial step to unleash the full development potential of an LDC. Accordingly, the effort to use STI for development needs to be immersed in the problems of everyday life of the population.

In addition to the above, current data on the development of LDCs shows that there has actually been a de-industrialisation in the LDCs over the last decade. Much of the foreign direct investment (FDI) went into extractive sectors which are known for not leading to technology transfer and lacking value addition and local skills building. Also, their inclusion in global value chains has been inadequate and therefore has not resulted in sufficient diffusion of technology into LDCs. Moreover, it is also witnessed that official development assistance (ODA) backed support is weak and overall transfer of technology through the acquisition, diffusion and adaptation of STI has not taken place sufficiently.

In relation to it, for the LDCs there are several important steps to be made. Developing their own innovation systems and innovation friendly governance to achieve a structural transformation appears as one of the steps to take for the development of the LDCs.

Moreover, since developing innovation capacity within enterprises is the key to economic dynamism in the LDCs, aid for STI should go beyond traditional boundaries, and support enterprise based learning and innovation. This includes, for example, enterprise-centered training activities, the development of domestic business linkages and the development of STI-related international linkages, including scientific cooperation and commercial linkages.

Additionally, STI capability-building in enterprises for value-chain development schemes, cost-sharing partnerships with transnational corporations' subsidiaries investing in LDCs in order to forge new supply linkages with domestic firms and to strengthen the capabilities of existing suppliers, and supporting professional associations and non-governmental organisations to engage in specific technical training and capacity building at the local level are necessary for the LDCs achieving development.

Therefore, in this context, the need to recognise the vital role of STI for removing the barriers beyond the development of LDCs becomes clear. Considering above-mentioned aspects of the issue, the development goal of LDCs does not seem to be an impossible mission to be achieved but solely seems to be reviewed under the light of STI.

The full report, agenda and the participant list of the Preparatory Event for the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries with the theme Science, Technology and Innovation: Setting priorities and implementing policies for LDCs is available at: [www.tubitak.gov.tr/lpcs](http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/lpcs)

CONTACTS

## TÜBİTAK

### Contact:

Güliz Sütçü

### Address:

Tunus Caddesi No 80, 06100 Kavaklıdere, Ankara, Turkey

### Phone:

+90 312 468 53 00 or +90 312 468 20 10

### Fax:

+90 312 427 40 24

### Email:

[caastnet@tubitak.gov.tr](mailto:caastnet@tubitak.gov.tr)

### Website:

<http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/>

# Horizon 2020

Framework Programme Seven's (FP7s) successor, the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme, will be one of the world's leading sources of research funding when it begins on 1 January 2014. Horizon 2020's total budget is expected to be more than 80 billion Euros (about US\$ 109 billion), an increase of 46 percent from the 56 billion Euros (about US\$ 76 billion) allocated to the FP7 in the period covering 2007 to 2013.

The Horizon 2020 Framework Programme "will make participation in EU-funded research and innovation easier," according to an EU spokesperson in Brussels, Belgium. Consultations on Horizon 2020 "underlined the importance of a strong involvement of international partner countries," the spokesperson said. He recommended that African researchers establish a relationship with their national contact points in government, who can offer guidance in writing successful proposals and assist in linking them up with European researchers.

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the European commissioner for research, science and innovation, announced the new name for the next funding programme in June and said that Horizon 2020 will bring "together different types of funding" provided through the FP7 "in a coherent and flexible manner".

"It is the name for the new, integrated funding system that will cover all research and innovation funding currently provided through the Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development," Geoghegan-Quinn said in a statement. "In future, research and innovation funding will focus more clearly on addressing global challenges. Needless red tape will be cut out and participation made simpler," Geoghegan-Quinn added.

Already, Euro-Mediterranean partners aim to reduce the top sources of pollution in the Mediterranean through the Horizon 2020 Initiative. The Euro-Mediterranean partners dedicate themselves to increasing efforts to reduce the pollution in the Mediterranean by 2020 at the 10th Anniversary Summit of the Barcelona Process in 2005.

The most significant pollution sources come from industrial emissions, municipal waste and urban wastewater, responsible for up to 80 percent of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. A Horizon 2020 website has been created under the Mediterranean Environment Programme to provide updated information on the project.

UNIVERSITIES

**National Contact Points**  
[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/third-countries\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/third-countries_en.html)

**Horizon 2020**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/horizon\\_2020\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/horizon_2020_en.htm)

**Horizon 2020 Initiative – to depollute the Mediterranean by the year 2020**  
<http://www.h2020.net/>

**New name for the future EU funding programme for research and innovation**  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/435&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**Horizon 2020 Press Release**  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/435&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## How to access the world's biggest source of research funding

Next year, the European Commission (EC) will spend 7 billion Euros (about US\$ 9 billion) funding research collaborations. Universities, research organisations, industries and small businesses will be among more than 16,000 estimated funding recipients in 2012.

African researchers can access the European grants if they partner with colleagues in Europe. Many African researchers have found that complying with European audit requirements and detailed paperwork makes it easier to administer future projects, regardless of the source of the funds.

So you could consider applying for European funding as a benchmarking process in which you harmonise your institution's research management with international standards, as well as an effort to access funds: that way, even if your funding application is not successful next year, you will still have instituted policies and procedures (such as mandatory and regular timesheets) which will improve your chances with other funders.

The money is allocated through Europe's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which ends in 2013 but will be replaced by Horizon 2020, the next funding arrangement. So even if you fail to win a grant this time around, it is worth persevering, because Europe is the single biggest source of research funding in the world.

As most FP7 themes focus on solving problems, it tends to be a good fit for engineering, health, marine, earth sciences, chemistry and physics research. It does have an interest in socio-economic sciences and humanities, but does not fund literary studies, linguistics or more arcane branches of the humanities.

### First stop: the Participant Portal website

It was once recommended that you spend time familiarising yourself with the FP7 section of the European Commission's Community Research and Development Information (CORDIS) website, so that you can see where your research interests and European research priorities overlap.

However, it is important to note that a few months ago the publication of

calls for projects was officially switched from CORDIS to the Participant Portal. FP7 calls are no longer published on CORDIS. So you need to update your bookmarks and re-register, because CORDIS email notifications will end in the near future.

Additional services such as RSS feeds, deep linking and email notifications are provided, which spare you from having to check the website every day. It is a very good idea to sign up for these services on the Participant Portal and to go through the "are you a new user?" feature.

In addition, it is an excellent idea to register your institution on the Portal with the Participant Identification Code (PIC), as this simplifies matters later.

All of this can take time. There are more than 186 EU-funded energy research collaborations, for example. Reading about successful applications can give you a very good idea of how to structure your involvement.

If you are interested in working with researchers from a particular country, the website can break down research projects by country, as well as by topic. The tiny island of Cyprus, for example, is involved in 194 different EU-funded collaborations, ranging from interconnected transport networks to reducing marine pollution from shipping, from nanomedicine to engineering earthquake-resistant buildings.

The FP7 is not interested in funding projects which are only run by African academics, even if they are in different countries, so your project must include researchers in Europe.

Setting up a collaboration from scratch can be very difficult for researchers in Africa, unless they already have close links with European researchers via their studies or other joint research projects. The easiest way to do this, at the beginning, is to offer some contribution to an existing research collaboration with a strong African component.

EAMNet, which started last year after being approved in 2009, is the Europe Africa Marine Network. GARNET-E, which stands for Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) for Africa: Regional Network for Information Exchange and Training in Emergencies, uses satellites to detect natural disasters.

But there are many more existing projects for you to discover on the Participant Portal website.

Even if you don't have a specific project in mind, attend as many FP7 conferences and information days (announced on the Participant Portal) as is humanly possible. This provides you with an excellent platform for meeting potential partners from Europe and can often open up new and unexpected directions for research.

You need to be prepared for a long wait, and during this period, you should familiarise yourself with the section called themes. Themes are announced prior to the specific call for proposals.

At present, the European Commission has ten themes. Four of them cover health, energy, space, and security – all issues of importance to African researchers. Others are more detailed: food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology; information and communication technologies; nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies; the environment (including climate change); transport (including aeronautics); and socio-economic sciences and humanities.

Again, these are themes of great importance to African researchers and policymakers, which is one of the reasons why you are encouraged to apply for European funding.

If you are familiar with the FP7 themes, you can establish links with research consortia and draft a proposal while you wait for the call for applications. 235 calls for proposals were released in just two days in July 2011, so there is much to read.

Remember that proposals cannot be submitted before the call for applications has been published, and the EU will not accept incomplete proposals or proposals which come before or after their application deadlines.

## Second step: national contact points

National contact points are the first people you should speak to when trying to obtain European research funding. Some represent countries, some represent particular research interests, and some represent groups of common interests which spread across national borders.

Kenya has only one national contact point, Eric Mwangi, from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. He can be contacted by email at emwangi23@yahoo.com.

Uganda is the most advanced country in East Africa when it comes to national contact points, with ten specialists, all based at the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. They are all coordinated by Maxwell Otim-Onopa, who can be emailed on the CORDIS website or phone on +256 414 705 552.

If your country does not have a national contact point for FP7, it is worth lobbying for one. It may also be worthwhile speaking to another national contact point in Europe or elsewhere in Africa. You can still apply for funds without a national contact point, but much of their work is devoted to assisting researchers to navigate the bureaucracy of applying.

For example, if you work in health research and you want to work with researchers in the United Kingdom (UK), the health national contact points in the UK are Victoria Brewer of the Medical Research Council, in London, and Graham Hughes of the private company Beta Technology, in Doncaster.

Some of the research fields, like energy, are subdivided. You need to know which national contact point is appropriate for your research priorities.

For example, Germany has a dozen specialist national contact points in the field of energy: Iris Bernhardt represents water, soil and waste technologies; Christian Bodensteiner and Stefanie Pietsch do sustainable land use, environment and health; Dagmar Bley and Rainer Matthias Sotke share responsibility for climate change and biodiversity; and Susanne Fretzdorff focuses on natural hazards and earth and ocean observation.

A detailed list of European national contact points is available on the European Commission's CORDIS website and should be available soon on the Participant Portal.

African national contact points are also available on the CORDIS website, under the heading of "FP7 contacts in third countries," by which they mean countries that are neither members nor associates of the European Union.

For example, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology has Angela Atero as the energy national contact point; Julius Ecuru for nanosciences and nanotechnology, materials and new forms of production; Edward Jurua for space; Bashir Kagere for transport, and Deborah Kasule for environment. Still in Uganda, Ruth Mbabazi Tugume is the national contact point for biotechnology, Loi Namugenyi for information and communication technology; and Leah Nawegulo for health. Edward Tujunirwe is responsible for both security, and social sciences and humanity.

## Third step: how to write a proposal

Marion Tobbler, the Swiss national contact point for environment and space, and Cristina Pinto, the South African national contact point for legal and

financial issues, addressed three workshops in different parts of South Africa this year to equip researchers scientists with skills for writing proposals. They offer sound advice on how researchers can improve their chances for winning an FP7 grant. Researchers must first check if they have the capacity to write the lengthy grant proposal and time-consuming grant proposal process, Tobbler said.

Once you are confident that you have the time to write the proposal, you must also consider if you have the time to conduct your part of the proposed collaboration should your joint application be successful. If you successfully submit a proposal, and then back out because of teaching loads or other personal commitments, this really harms your chances of accessing European funding in the future. The EU staff invest an enormous amount of time and energy considering proposals, and they don't want to waste their efforts on chancers. In addition, such behaviour negatively affects your colleagues, as it damages the reputation of your institution.

Once you have committed yourself to applying for a FP7 grant, discuss your idea with a critical colleague. "We researchers are in love with our research so discuss with a colleague to see if it's the best idea," Tobbler said. Researchers must also check on the CORDIS and Participant Portal websites to see if a proposal with a similar topic has not already been submitted. Then you should meet with your relevant national contact point to assess if your ideas are feasible or not. This can be brutal. Tobbler looks for ideas that are innovative, unique and relevant to the call for proposals.

Do not despair if you are rejected at this point. This is a learning curve, and the EU considers only a small percentage of the initial applications. Focus on what you can learn from the experience, and do not invest your emotions in the process. You are not being ranked or graded on your excellence as an academic, but on whether your research ideas hold potential for collaboration in a very specific set of circumstances.

If this is insufficient information for you, perhaps you should consider approaching your regional research management association or your university's research office to ask them to formally invite some of Europe's national contact points to deliver a workshop in your region.

The national contact point can help you to identify potential partners for FP7 calls which interest you. A minimum of three partners is recommended in order to successfully navigate the call for proposals. A consortium is always coordinated by a European partner. Tobbler said it's important to choose the "right coordinator" with strong management experience.

"Management has to clearly show how you will tackle difficulties, how well everything is organised, how will decisions be taken and how problems will be solved," she said.

Consider partners who have previous experience with FP7 projects, or at the very least have been involved in previous Framework Programmes. For the coordinator, this experience is a must. It is a distinct advantage if you already have a research track record with these partners, so begin now to set up even very small collaborations – perhaps co-authoring a publication, for example, or working together on an editorial board, or as external examiner or peer reviewer – can lead to greater things.

Essentially, partnerships and collaborations should not be initiated at the time of preparing grant proposals. They could be started earlier focusing on other research issues and evolve into a research team that could span across consecutive research projects. Research teams with prior experience of working together stand high chances of winning grants and delivering the quality results as they have less challenges that are associated with formation of new teams. Nevertheless, the research teams need to have the flexibility to allow the entry of new team members in ways that strengthen the research team.

Tobbler said researchers have to consider if their consortium is balanced before they submit proposals. The consortium should include female researchers, who are sometimes overlooked. "The European Commission takes gender seriously," Tobbler said. If possible, the consortia should include not just academics but representatives from the small and medium-sized enterprises, as the EC is strongly in favour of research making an impact through entrepreneurial activity.

Partners should bring distinctly different skills to the proposed research project. Partners with little internet connectivity or who are often out of telephone range because their field work takes them into remote regions are not encouraged, as the EC wants individuals who are quick to respond to requests for information. Pinto agreed, saying that the specific role of each partner must be stated in the proposal.

This is not an ideal time to focus on capacity-building or to build relationships with colleagues. The FP7 programmes are the equivalent of the Olympics for many researchers, and the process is designed to get rid of applicants. "Avoid partners with limited experience in the field or whose expertise is weak," Tobbler warned.

She also said that it was not necessary to include your senior researchers, such as your head of department, in the proposal itself. "Partners must be excellent scientists in the field. You can use the top shots as members of

an advisory board," she said. The number of partners is also important in ensuring the success of a project. "Too many partners can make a project weak," Tobbler said.

## Proposal submission and evaluation

You cannot submit a paper application. Documents have to be downloaded and material must be scanned in and submitted online at the electronic proposal submission service, available at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/welcome.jsp>. A help desk is available during office hours.

Tobbler said scientists must have a clear, concise and well-written workplan. "Don't think the evaluator knows what you are talking about. Tell it like you are talking to someone who has no idea what you are talking about," she said, advising scientists to use summaries throughout the proposal and to avoid being technical.

Proposals must have achievable goals. You must also outline alternatives if the project doesn't work out as expected. "Don't promise to do too much," Tobbler warned.

Proposals should be kept within the prescribed word limit. "A shorter proposal may be read first," Tobbler said. The project title must also be catchy, short and appropriate.

Acronyms are not mandatory. The successful AfricaBuild consortia, which began on 1 August 2011, stands for Building sustainable capacity for research for health in Africa. The Waterbiotech consortia, which began at the same

time, stands for Biotechnology for Africa's sustainable water supply.

Many consortia do use acronyms, of course. SAGA-EO stands for Support Action to GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) Africa on Earth Observation, which tackles satellite monitoring from a global approach, and began last year.

Proposals must also contain pictures, tables and graphs to make them more appealing to the evaluator. Pinto said projects are assessed by a minimum of three independent evaluators. The criteria: scientific quality, implementation and management, and impact. Project partners must give details on how they intend to popularise or communicate their results.

Please feel free to share this article with interested colleagues and stakeholders.

WEBSITES

### FP7 calls

<http://ec.europa.eu/fp7calls>.

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/fp7\\_calls](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/fp7_calls)

### The Participant Portal

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal>

### CORDIS

<http://cordis.europa.eu/>

# The 4th Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research

Press Release

## 4th EuroAfrica-ICT Cooperation Forum on ICT Research

Cape Town, South Africa  
November 14-15, 2011

Teaming up for a strengthened and coordinated approach to foster Euro-African cooperation on ICT Research



Anyone with an interest in Euro-African collaborative research on ICT should consider attending the 4th Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research.

The forum is taking place on the 14 to 15 November 2011 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in South Africa.

This event is the fourth of a series of very successful conferences organised by the EuroAfrica-ICT initiative under the aegis of the European and the African Union Commissions.

It has been organised within the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and will be hosted by the government of South Africa through the South African Department of Science and Technology.

Over 300 delegates from various institutions, national and international companies, small and medium enterprises, academia and research

institutes are expected to attend the event.

These events have traditionally provided an indisputable focal point for all Euro-African stakeholders in the public and private sectors involved in collaborative ICT research and ICT for development, with a specific emphasis on networking-opportunities, knowledge-sharing and consensus-building.

This year there will be a significant focus on how to support efficient and innovative ICT public-private partnerships.

The 4th Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research will aim at strengthening and supporting the development of cooperation on ICT research between Africa and Europe by:

- i) allowing European and African stakeholders involved in the development of cooperation on ICT to get together;
- ii) allowing participants to exchange views, share

information, and identify synergies in order to increase the impact of their activities;

iii) further supporting policy dialogues, apprehending medium-to long term perspectives and agreeing on an overall and coherent vision;

iv) increasing the number of African organisations involved in EU/FP7 collaborative projects on ICT research thus enhancing the development of Euro-African collaborative projects in the field.

Online pre-registrations as well as the agenda are available on the EuroAfrica-ICT website: <http://euroafrica-ict.org/events/cooperation-forums/2011-cooperation-forum/>

Should you be interested in being involved in the event as a sponsor or associated organisation, please don't hesitate to contact Euro-Africa at [info@euroafrica-ict.org](mailto:info@euroafrica-ict.org)



## CAAST-Net Annual Assembly

This year's CAAST-Net Annual Assembly was held in London, United Kingdom, from the 12 to 14 July. At this critical and last stage of the CAAST-Net project, the board meeting ran over two days to provide time for extensive internal discussions. These were predominantly on the project's tasks and goals which have been met, still require completion or are no longer relevant. From the discussions, solutions, strategies and streamlined procedures for the next 18 months of the project were put into place.

One of the highlights of the assembly was the presentation given by the newly-formed strategic support to implementation of the FP7 Coordinated Call for Africa work package and its achievements so far. Another highlight included a presentation on socialise scientific and technological research collaboration between Kenya, India and Europe, by Dr Alfonso Alfonsi, the scientific coordinator of the SET-Dev (Science, Ethics and Technological Responsibility in Developing and Emerging Countries) project, on the final day of the assembly. It gave CAAST-Net the opportunity to exchange and share ideas with another Framework Programme Seven project. (See more on the SET-Dev project on page eight.)

Advisory panel members Dr Bothhale Tema, Dr Tomas Kjellqvist, Professor Sospeter Muhongo and Dr Erika Kraemer-Mbula, who acted as observers at the board meeting, provided valuable feedback and guidance on the discussions and strategies concerning the future of the project.

The advisory panel discussions, which took place on the third and final day of the gathering, provided valuable input and direction, much of which will be taken into account in future. CAAST-Net was also fortunate enough to have the advice and participation of Dr Gerasimos Apostolatos, from the European Commission scientific office, throughout. His insights into the future of the project and beyond its lifetime were particularly pertinent.

A positive side-effect of the assembly was the opportunity for members from most of the 23-member countries from Africa and Europe to spend time with each other. This was especially important for CAAST-Net partners and others involved in the planning of the Solar Energy Symposium, which will take place in Lilongwe, Malawi from the 20 to 22 September 2011, and the Stakeholders' Conference, which will be hosted in Dakar, Sénégal at the end of November 2011, to discuss the upcoming events.



*Participants at the CAAST-Net Annual Assembly held in London, United Kingdom from the 12 to 14 July 2011*

## A presentation at the CAAST-Net Annual Assembly



## The SET-DEV project

In the interest of sharing experience and knowledge, CAAST-Net invited Dr Alfonso Alfonsi, the scientific coordinator of the SET-Dev (Science, Ethics and Technological Responsibility in Developing and Emerging Countries) project, to make a presentation at its Annual Assembly held in July this year in London, United Kingdom.

SET-Dev, a trilateral project between Kenya, India and Europe, ran from March 2008 to May 2011.

One of SET-Dev's key aims was to socialise scientific and technological research collaboration between Kenya, India and Europe, both vertically and horizontally through the public, science sectors and civil society bodies. SET-Dev's other key aim was to create multilateral dialogue among its partners, who were equally represented in all three regions, as well as among a variety of private,

governmental and nongovernmental sectors.

SET-Dev encouraged the process of socialisation between society and the science sector in order that they are better able to engage and communicate with each other. It also worked to enhance local science, technology and innovation (STI) capacity and ties with users and beneficiaries of the project. SET-Dev also focused on developing policy guidelines for creating best practices in ethics within the Indian and Kenyan research systems.

In his presentation Dr Alfonso Alfonsi said that the risk of a technological drift "when a society lags behind in innovative research and increasingly depends on science and technology produced elsewhere, is inappropriate for national development". He also pointed out that the multi-

sectorial and polycentric approach "reflects a new dynamism in the way in which knowledge is produced and circulated. There is a shift from a western hegemony to a plurality of centers of elaboration and scientific imagination".

The SET-Dev project, a project funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme, produced manifestos entitled The African Manifesto on Science, Technology and Innovation and Knowledge Swaraj; an Indian Manifesto on Science and Technology as well as policy guidelines on the socialisation of STI.

The Italian Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR or National Research Council) were responsible for coordinating the project and ten other partners from Kenya, India and Europe were involved in the development of the project activities.



## Press Release

## ERAfrica European Briefing Session

21 October 2011

ERAfrica, the latest European Union ERA-Net (European Research Area Network) project aimed at promoting a more integrated approach to research collaboration between Europe and Africa, will host a briefing and consultation session in Brussels on 21 October 2011. Following on the heels of a similar and highly successful event in Mombasa, Kenya that united representatives from 17 African countries and a number of pan-African organisations, the meeting in Brussels is aimed at provoking similar interest from the European nations.

As was the case for the Mombasa session, the aim in Brussels will be twofold: firstly, to introduce the project to potential European stakeholders and other interested parties, and secondly, to gain insight into the needs and expectations of European funding agencies with regards to collaboration with Africa. This latter objective is particularly important as ERAfrica enters its preparatory stage for the joint funding of eventual research projects and related activities, the final decisions in this regard to be taken at a broad stakeholder meeting in January 2012 in Alexandria, Egypt. At that time the project facilitators, a consortium of 13 agencies from 12 European and African

countries will identify not only the topics and activities to be funded, but also the funding partners who will be participating in the implementation of this new and significant intercontinental cooperative venture. As such the briefing session in Brussels, like its Kenyan predecessor, will also seek to convince attendees of the value of investment in ERAfrica.

As the global economic outlook grows increasingly precarious and resources become more and more limited, few countries and institutions can afford to maintain extensive portfolios of bilateral agreements, programmes and projects, while no one can operate in a relational vacuum. As a result, the worldwide tendency is toward a consolidation of efforts and the pooling of means, tackling the world's problems as part of joint consortia and widespread partnerships all working together towards the same, common goal. In this regard ERAfrica stands at the forefront of innovation, drawing together partners from two continents in order to promote the common good in a collaborative and sustainable manner. ERAfrica is the future, and the future is now.



Please contact the Editorial and Production Coordinator:  
Anne Taylor  
Address: A307 Gate House, Black River Park,  
Observatory, 7925, South Africa  
Phone: +27 (0)21 447 5484  
Fax: +27 (0)21 447 9152  
Website: [www.research-africa.net](http://www.research-africa.net)

Unless otherwise specified, Research Africa has written the articles published in this issue of The CAAST-Net Bulletin. Research Africa's offices are based in Cape Town in South Africa.

If you would like to contribute an article to the CAAST-Net Bulletin, please email [at@research-africa.net](mailto:at@research-africa.net)