



Lessons learned from building Africa-EU research and innovation partnerships for global challenges¹

Increasing the quantity and quality of the cooperation in research and innovation (R&I) between the EU and Africa will require concerted effort by actors from across sectors, disciplines and regions. In this Policy Brief CAAST-Net Plus shares its proposals for building *enduring* partnerships that address global challenges.



What are the catalysts that can enable the formation of Africa-EU R&I partnerships?

- + **Mobility opportunities:** Actors from Africa and EU R&I communities network and exchange ideas. Policies and funding mechanisms are in place to enable the mobility of actors.
- + **Multi-stakeholder forums:** Researchers, policymakers, business people, community-based organisations and technologists from Africa and the EU set priorities together addressing shared concerns and mutual interests. Purpose-built forums create spaces for R&I relationships to be developed.
- + **Funding calls:** Researchers and innovators from Africa and the EU build projects together. Funding calls are carefully designed to support joint work.
- + **Human and institutional capacities:** Researchers and their institutions add tangible value within partnerships. Partner capacities and competencies are complementary.
- + **Intellectual property regimes:** Countries and organisations ensure that partners from Africa and the EU involved in joint R&I projects share benefits. Knowledge, data and resources are the fruits of collaboration.



What are the values and practices through which Africa-EU R&I partnerships can become sustainable?

- + **Equitability:** Sharing of costs, risks and rewards builds trust. Co-financing leads to co-ownership.
- + **Strong leadership and management:** Robust governance encourages good performance. Democratic decision-making leads to full participation.
- + **Clear purpose and composition:** Goal-oriented partnerships are intelligently directed. Partners add value based on their comparative advantage.
- + **Transparent communication:** Information flowing freely between partners creates an open environment for joint work. Effectiveness and efficiency drive outcomes and impact.
- + **Robust interpersonal relationships coupled with strong institutionalisation:** Mutual understanding builds enduring friendships. Institutional partnerships transcend individual practitioners.
- + **Capacities of all partners are built:** Working together is learning together. New partnerships challenge old ideas about what it means to build capacity.
- + **Long-term investment:** Global challenges require innovative and dynamic collaborations. Partnerships live on beyond the life of individual project or programme investments.

¹ Over a period of nearly a decade, the CAAST-Net (2008-2012) and CAAST-Net Plus (2013-2016) projects have studied the conditions shaping research and innovation cooperation between Africa and Europe. This Policy Brief brings together CAAST-Net Plus learning about bi-regional partnership-building. Drawing specifically on CAAST-Net Plus research and a workshop held in Montpellier, France, in March 2016, the Brief has been produced for the Stakeholder Forum held in association with the European Union-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on Science Technology and Innovation held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 5 and 6 April 2016. Comments and questions to enquiries@caast-net-plus.org.



How do Africa-EU R&I partnerships make a difference?

- + **Understand the R&I cycle(s):** Research and innovation is delivered through continuous cycles of planning and orientation, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation. Potential exists at each stage for new ideas and approaches to be explored.
- + **Consider societal and ecological needs:** At each stage in R&I cycles the changing needs of human communities and global and local ecosystems must be carefully considered. The SDGs provide an important framework outlining what needs should be addressed, now.
- + **Identify and involve the right actors:** The private sector (farmers' associations, SMEs, multi-nationals, global corporations), communities, development actors, and governments are integral actors in R&I cycles. Participatory approaches that bring these actors together are essential to making a difference!



The CAAST-Net Plus Montpellier workshop was hosted by CIRAD (Agricultural Research for Development) and CGIAR (A Global Agricultural Research Partnership).
[Image credit: *Research Africa]



What support mechanisms should Africa-EU R&I partnerships build into their work?

- + **Continuous assessment of Africa-EU R&I:** The quantity and quality of the cooperation should be continuously assessed through a set of key performance indicators. Existing observatories and tools, such as the African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation and the COHRED Research Fairness Initiative, could serve to support and strengthen continuous assessment.
- + **Incentives for partners to collaborate in the pre-award phase:** Schemes to encourage researchers and innovators from Africa and the EU to work together on proposals to programmes such as Horizon 2020 are essential in drawing actors together at critical points in the partnership building phase.
- + **Joint EU-Africa PhD and capacity development programmes:** Bi-regional partnerships should endeavour to build the capacities of doctoral researchers. Supervision of doctoral students by joint supervision teams can be achieved through twinning universities in the EU and Africa. In this context it is essential that curricula are developed for technicians and non-specialist research staff adapted to the needs of labour markets.
- + **Communities of long-term EU-Africa collaborators:** Initiatives with R&I practitioners that have long track records of developing new knowledge together could be mapped and connected to form a community of practice. The community should adopt approaches clearly oriented to the societal challenges of the EU and Africa, aspiring to produce long-term, equitable, balanced and sustainable partnerships that build capacity.

Further reading

CAAST-Net Plus (forthcoming, 2016). *Framework Conditions for Bi-regional Cooperation in the Field of Food and Nutrition Security*, Report of the CAAST-Net Plus project prepared by CIRAD.

CAAST-Net Plus (2016). *Africa-EU Research Collaboration on Health: A Critical Analysis of the Scope, Outputs and Potential Outcomes* [Online] Available at: <http://l.caast-net-plus.org/hW>
(Accessed: 31 March 2016)

CAAST-Net Plus (2015). *Africa-EU Research Collaboration on Food Security: A Critical Analysis of the Scope, Coordination and Uptake of Findings* [Online] Available at: <http://l.caast-net-plus.org/hX>
(Accessed: 31 March 2016)

CAAST-Net Plus (2014) *Africa-EU Research Collaboration on Climate Change: A Critical Analysis of the Scope, Coordination and Uptake of Findings* [Online] Available at: <http://l.caast-net-plus.org/hY>
(Accessed: 31 March 2016)

European Union (2014). *Mapping of Best Practice Regional and Multi-country Cooperative STI Initiatives Between Africa and Europe: Identification of Financial Mechanism(s) 2008-2012*, Prepared by the team of experts from HTSPE – EuroTrends [Online] Available at: <http://l.caast-net-plus.org/hZ>
(Accessed: 31 March 2016)



Participants at the CAAST-Net Plus Montpellier workshop on framework conditions in Africa-EU research and innovation partnerships.
[Image credit: *Research Africa]



CAAST-Net Plus is funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 311806. This document reflects only the author's views and the European Union cannot be held liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

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Produced by *Research Africa, CIRAD and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.
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