

STAKEHOLDER FORUM REPORT

Africa-EU Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture

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Building Bi-regional Partnerships for Global Challenges



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INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of the Africa-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), in collaboration with a group of Africa-EU STI projects and initiatives, convened a stakeholder forum on 5 and 6 April 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss the implementation of the Africa-EU Research and Innovation (R&I) Roadmap on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).¹ The Roadmap on FNSSA was commissioned in 2014 by the HLPD Bureau, as part of the first priority area of the Africa-EU R&I partnership. The specific objectives of the Forum were to:

- Foster the engagement of key actors across the whole FNSSA value chain, including government, industry, civil society, and research organisations and to further stimulate the engagement of existing and new national, regional, philanthropic and private funders and their programmes/schemes in support of the FNSSA Roadmap;
- Present the short- to medium-term investments needed and to explore concrete long-term options for the implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap; and,
- Determine a long-term collaboration platform, including all relevant actors and existing initiatives, along the entire FNSSA innovation value chain – from knowledge generation to knowledge exploitation.

More than 100 representatives drawn from African and European Member States, as well as the African Union Commission, the European Commission, the Regional Economic Communities in Africa and a number of relevant sub-regional organisations attended the event. The mix of participants was highly cross-sectoral, including public sector, civil society and business representation. The Forum's structure comprised five plenary sessions, three of which included expert panel discussions, and one parallel session with three breakaway fora.² The Forum was structured in accordance with the Table below:

Plenary Session 1: State of the art in bi-regional cooperation on STI in promoting FNSSA and concrete impact.	Expert Panel: Context of the research agenda on the Roadmap.
Plenary Session 2: The Roadmap – research agenda, implementation, instruments and the future.	Expert Panel: The recommendations of the roadmap and lessons from practice.
Plenary Session 3: Multi-stakeholder collaboration for a broader engagement in the research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.	
Parallel Session 4: How to move forward – opportunities, challenges and next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fora 1: Partners – who are the partners and how to get them on board? • Fora 2: Resources – how can we pool the resources together for funding the partnership? • Fora 3: Inclusive research agendas – how to achieve local impact for end-users and consumers through

¹ For all forum background information, see <http://www.rinea.org/en/863.php>.

² For an archive of specific CAAST-Net Plus Twitter coverage from the forum, see <http://bit.ly/2c8be14>.

	inclusive research agendas?
Plenary Session 5: How to move forward – presentations of the summaries of the three fora.	
Plenary Session 6: Dimensions of a partnership platform.	Expert Panel: Concrete steps.

This report outlines the key decisions taken at the Forum with respect to (i) the priority areas including the short-, medium- and long-term actions for the HLPD, and (ii) the salient points and recommendations made during each of the sessions outlined above.

1. POTENTIAL R&I FNSSA FOCUS AREAS

The FNSSA Roadmap explicitly encourages overlap of different initiatives and the need to increase complementarity on parallel initiatives. Moreover, the Roadmap emphasises the potential of taking forward previous collaborations to co-owned, shared partnerships in the future. Research on food systems and consumer knowledge is also featured in the Roadmap. In making the Roadmap a mutually benefitting initiative, the following questions needed to be considered:

- a) To what extent is the Roadmap relevant and what are the challenges?
- b) What processes and instruments are needed to ensure its success?
- c) What is required to translate research outcomes to impact?

Food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture research between Europe and Africa faces some challenges and gaps that the Roadmap should consider when drafting short- to medium- to long-term plans, over and above the priority areas proposed by the Expert Working Group on FNSSA. Some of the current challenges within the bi-regional FNSSA research landscape include:

- a) Lack of linkages between forestry (related to tree management) and agriculture (concerning farmers, animal health, plant production, etc.);
- b) Preservation of natural resources and merging modern and traditional knowledge in agricultural research;
- c) Finding effective approaches to involve women and the youth in agricultural activities;
- d) A lack of transparency, trust, and flexibility between research partners;
- e) Involving all stakeholders within the value chain from the very start of the research process;
- f) Lack of cash contribution, substituted with in-kind contribution may threaten the inclusivity and success of the partnership; and,
- g) Communication of research and innovation to farmers is often weak, and research outcomes sometimes straddle between researchers and policy-makers.

The aforementioned challenges were identified with the aim of informing and ensuring that the Roadmap addresses some of the already existing challenges and experiences that stem from current and previous FNSSA-related partnerships. As a response to these challenges, the following areas were discussed by Forum participants as key steps in advancing the R&I Partnership in FNSSA between the EU and Africa.

1.1. LINKING FARMERS TO VALUE CHAINS AND INNOVATION

The Roadmap should ideally address issues relating to connecting end-users/farmers to the market. Farmers should also be linked with the wider business and private sector, and likewise, a fresh

approach is necessary in getting the private sector to engage with smallholder farmers. A focus on utilisation and distribution is also necessary in that smallholder farmers need information and access to innovation that can assist them in their agricultural practices.

1.2. CLOSING THE SCIENCE AND POLICY LOOP

Policies relating to food security and agriculture should be well-informed and 'related to what is felt on the ground', and in contrast, research should not be driven by political interests as that may hinder the effectiveness of the research on communities of practice, and in this case, it may affect the progress and success of the research partnership. The Roadmap could be seen as a framework for policy development in the field of food security wherein research uptake and knowledge transfer is prioritised.

1.3. ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EQUAL EFFORT

The effort of all stakeholders involved in a research partnership should mean that partners contribute equally with the aim of making it work for all that are involved. However, the term 'equal' can be left to interpretation within various partnerships. In a research partnership, an agreement can be reached to ensure that partners do not become silent, but remain active by participating and contributing according to their respective capacities. In some instances, those who do not have the financial means to contribute towards research activities can provide in-kind contributions; however, in some partnerships, this has come with some challenges. Funding for research is a major challenge for a number of African states, an R&I partnership on food should aim to fill this gap. In essence, partnerships should be characterized by co-ownership, convergence and co-investment.

1.4. LEARNING FROM SCALABLE RESEARCH AND GOOD PRACTICES

The Roadmap should consider the lessons learnt from EU-Africa projects that not only focused on food security related issues, but projects focusing on various elements of environmental, health and other global challenges and thematic programmes. Africa-EU STI projects, such as the European Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), Platform for African European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD), agricultural research programmes such as the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (JPI-FACCE), the European Agricultural Research towards Greater Impact on Global Challenges (ARCH), and the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI), could all offer valuable lessons to inform and guide the structure of the Roadmap to heighten its success and effectiveness.

2. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The following specific conclusions followed from each of the Forum's plenary and parallel session groups:

SESSION 1: BI-REGIONAL COOPERATION ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN PROMOTING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND CONCRETE IMPACT

- a. Attention must be given to the entire value chain in agriculture to ensure maximum impact.

- b. The inputs and involvement of key stakeholders on the ground must be considered and such stakeholders must include farmers and end-users. In addition, the social context must be taken into consideration.
- c. Due consideration must also be given to the African agricultural heritage in the development of future policies. Furthermore, issues of Intellectual Property Rights must be addressed to protect indigenous knowledge and patents.
- d. Partnerships should prioritise impact, i.e. how the partnership will change society or address common challenges.
- e. There are different expectations from different actors in a research partnership.
- f. Researchers are expected to produce scientific results.
- g. The private sector is expected to create business opportunities and fund research.
- h. Policymakers are expected to implement evidence-based policies and to an extent, finance research activities.
- i. Regardless of these expectations, each actor bears the responsibility to contribute and fulfil their role to ensure the partnership is a success.
- j. In most cases, STI partnerships between representation from a variety of stakeholders has led to more success than each stakeholder would have achieved on its own. One example being the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity.
- k. The EDCTP initiative provides new lessons in Africa-EU food research and innovation partnership:
 - A clear research agenda is imperative;
 - There must be some kind of bi-regional governance for coordination purposes; and,
 - Long-term finance instruments.
- l. Publications in joint research should also be prioritised as these can indicate where funding for research is most needed and it further contributes to knowledge production and information sharing. More importantly, co-publications with African institutions is encouraged – there is a wealth of knowledge on the continent in FNSSA research themes that could transform agenda setting and inform policies beyond Africa's borders.
- m. There should be a focus on technology, data and business models to guide Africa-EU R&I partnership on FNSSA.
- n. Lastly, a move away from traditional criteria for setting the agenda should be favoured, these may include:
 - Mutual contemporary challenges;
 - Mutual capacity and enabling environment for STI partnerships;
 - Scalability of research and research uptake processes; and,
 - Complementarity with existing initiatives.

SESSION 2: THE ROADMAP: RESEARCH AGENDA, IMPLEMENTATION, INSTRUMENTS AND THE FUTURE

To ensure the Roadmap addresses the current vacuum in FNSSA-related research challenges experienced both in Africa and Europe, a set of guidelines taken from existing initiatives and FNSSA research policies were shared. Although there are various issues in FNSSA partnerships, not all of which can be addressed singlehandedly by the Roadmap, some key issues the Roadmap should take into consideration are listed below:

- a. Environmental goals cannot be detached from nutrition goals – there are many overlapping areas between the two that should be taken into consideration when setting the research agenda.

- b. Using the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) and technology platforms as examples, the future of rural farmers must be taken into account when structuring cooperation with researchers and mobilising funds.
- c. Drawing on flexible platforms for research collaboration, such as ERA-Net-Cofund, Belmont Forum and JPI-FACCE, could be the key to the success of the implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap.
- d. Whilst defining the research agenda, it will be important to evaluate and consider the economic, social and cultural context and the impacts thereupon of the underlying research objectives.
- e. Relevance of the research domain to African and European priorities for resilient agricultural and food systems. Converging food systems in Europe and Africa are driven by urbanization, trade and climate change.
- f. The end-users in the agro food chain (including input providers, farmers, processors, market operators, advisors, etc.) must be involved in shaping the implementation approach.
- g. Improved impact of research for beneficiaries through co-designed research agendas and multi-actor approaches.
- h. Scalability of research and innovation impact should be prioritised both at national and regional level.
- i. There must be complementarity to existing bilateral and multilateral collaboration, this also minimises the duplication of processes and models.

SESSION 3: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION FOR A BROADER ENGAGEMENT IN THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP ON FNSSA

The granting approach must focus on co-funding, complementarity, ownership and a multidisciplinary approach and for which the establishment of networks must be a key consideration. Existing initiatives, such as ERAfrica, must be built upon to provide strategic instruments that help bring together European and African science granting councils, ministries and other funding partners and actors in the field of STI to support a co-owned competitive, quality oriented approaches to research. There is a need to move to a common funding instrument that will allow for the cross border flow of funds to support research and innovation where it is needed.

SESSION 4: HOW TO MOVE FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Three breakaway fora took place to tackle issues relating to:

- a. partnerships;
- b. resources; and,
- c. inclusive research agendas.

These issues were to be addressed with a view towards unpacking the opportunities, challenges and next steps. For the outcomes of these parallel breakaway discussions refer to Session 5.

SESSION 5: REPORT BACK ON BREAKAWAY DISCUSSIONS – SHORT-, MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS

Presentations from the breakaway discussion focused on:

- a. Driving the implementation of the Roadmap,
- b. Establishing an appropriate knowledge management system,
- c. Improving communication between all stakeholders,
- d. Launching concrete actions to strengthen capacities.

Below is a brief elaboration of the presentations:

Focus of presentation	Actions	Task	Timeline
Driving the implementation of the roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated joint EU-AU team that will report to the HLPD Bureau is necessary. This team would ideally build on existing initiatives and should focus on two key funding initiatives in the mid-term, namely, the ERA-Net-Cofund and the AU Research Grant. The team will also be tasked with establishing a process for further defining the research agenda for the Roadmap, clarifying the mechanisms for collaboration, and soliciting the support from projects such as RINEA and CAAST-Net Plus. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee should also be established to advise on a proposed Stakeholder Conference that is to be linked to the major initiatives that have linkages with the implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap, such as ERA-Net-Cofund and the ERAfrica Initiative. 	The HLPD Bureau is tasked to approach potential investors such as the RECs with the support of initiatives such as CAAST-Net Plus and RINEA.	To be established within the next 6-12 months, i.e. May 2016 – May 2017.
Establishing an appropriate knowledge management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active communities of practice (for example on M&E, up scaling and multi-stakeholder approaches) must be created and sustained. Lessons learnt on innovation brokering must be facilitated through a workshop to be scheduled in 2016. 	The HLPD Bureau must drive the knowledge management system, with the support from the various projects and initiatives.	Process to be completed within a year, to be completed by mid-2017
Improving communication between all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communications strategy must be developed, which is to target national decision makers and potential investors. The expected benefits of and incentives for the FNSSA Roadmap must be identified. An analysis must be conducted on the coherence/synergy of the FNSSA Roadmap with national priorities. 	The HLPD Bureau should drive the implementation of the Communications Strategy.	Strategy should be drafted within the 6-12 months, should commence in 2016 and completed in mid-2017.
Launching actions to strengthen capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for multidisciplinary skills, partnering capabilities and linking research to impact must be taken into account during the implementation phase. A stock take of initiatives must be conducted and related decisions must be made on what to expand, sustain or new initiatives to be developed. 	The HLPD Bureau , in consultation with the relevant projects and initiatives , must discuss the issue of strengthening capacity.	Activities to strengthen capacities should take place for a year, i.e. May 2016 – May 2017.

SESSION 6: DIMENSIONS OF A PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM

The above conclusions provide intellectual direction regarding the key steps and appropriate timelines in maximising the potential impact of the Roadmap and the establishment of research and innovation agendas that are inclusive. However, the following specific needs were elaborated by the Forum's participants with respect to the evolving architecture of an Africa-EU partnership on FNSSA:

- a. The science and technology needs for adding value to African agricultural resources must be identified.
- b. Research in FNSSA must be embedded in national and regional systems of innovation.
- c. Innovations, other than those arising directly from academic research, must be stimulated – for example from farmer innovation, agro processing innovation, etc.
- d. Mechanisms to integrate innovation from start-ups and newcomers must be elaborated.
- e. The potential of innovative ICT to create new data products to improve the agricultural value chain must be exploited.
- f. The innovative usage of previously available research data and the dissemination and sharing of such data must be explored.
- g. The infrastructure to protect African IPR on indigenous food technologies must be reinforced.
- h. A flexible network of stakeholders and partnerships, with clear rules of engagement and interaction between the partners, must be created.

CONCLUSIONS

The Forum represents the first such bi-regional engagement to bring together a multiplicity of actors within the Africa-EU FNSSA landscape. One of the key milestones achieved through the Forum was the platform created for key actors, which are not common to such engagements, to actively participate in and inform discussions aimed at identifying tangible mechanisms for implementing novel measures aimed at addressing a societal grand challenge of mutual interest right across national and continental boundaries.

Through the Forum, the formal bi-regional R&I partnership interacted with FNSSA industry representatives such as end-users, small scale farmers, agribusiness, private sector, philanthropies and R&D funders openly and jointly discuss with policy makers, government officials and STI practitioners, pragmatic steps in setting up a platform to which will lead the short, medium and long-term implementation of the Roadmap.

The actions in this report aim to propose the establishment of a knowledge management and communication system as well as a dedicated EU-AU team in steering the implementation of the Roadmap. This should ideally be done by coordinating research and innovation cooperation networks, promoting the translation of research results into evidence-based policy advice, as well technological innovations and improved access to and uptake of these technologies as recommended above.