

Briefing note

CAAST-Net stakeholder conference on Africa-Europe S&T cooperation

November 2011, Senegal

Background:

As recognised in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, science and technology (S&T) plays an essential role in addressing global and developmental challenges, and in deepening the partnership between Europe and Africa on the basis of common interests and strengths.

The project CAAST-Net, co-funded by the European Commission under the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), has been developed as a high-level platform to advance international cooperation in science and technology between Europe and Sub Sahara-Africa for mutual benefit. Enhancing the policy dialogue among African and European stakeholders is one strategic activity of the CAAST-Net project.

As an activity of CAAST-Net, a first bi-regional stakeholders' conference was convened in Mombasa, Kenya, in November 2009 to pave the way for improved S&T cooperation between Europe and Africa through an examination of the nature and the role of cooperation processes. The conference was attended by approx. 150 participants from different stakeholder groups from both regions. As an output of the stakeholders' conference recommendations were prepared that provided substantial input to on-going cooperation dialogues, such as those taking place around the 8th partnership on Science, Information Society and Space of the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy, to give impetus to the bi-regional policy dialogue on S&T.

Scope and target groups:

Building on the results of the first stakeholders' conference, the stakeholders' conference proposed to be held in November 2011 in Senegal aims at supporting the emerging high-level S&T policy dialogue between Europe and Africa by facilitating a stakeholder dialogue around a policy topic of mutual interest that is considered important for the enhancement of S&T collaboration between Africa and Europe. Taking the existing S&T policies and frameworks into account, the conference will elaborate on good practice and on chances for synergies and coherencies in science and technology. It will provide common ground for joint policy recommendations and thus support the strategic S&T policy dialogue between Africa and Europe on all levels.

The stakeholders' conference will probably take 1 ½ to 2 days and is expected to bring together approx. 100 participants from different stakeholder groups from both regions, among others representatives from the EC, AUC, AMCOST, JEG8, African Regional Economic Communities, as well as high-level policy stakeholders and scientists from European and African Member States.

Associated CAAST-Net events:

Taking the Mombasa event as a model, CAAST-Net proposes to hold the stakeholders' conference in Senegal back-to-back with an FP7 Information Day, which would aim at raising awareness for the opportunities offered by FP7 for international cooperation and at fostering the participation of African scientists in FP7 projects. In addition, a networking event is also proposed to take place back-to-back with the stakeholders' conference with the aim of connecting international cooperation projects which are funded by the European Commission under the FP7 "Call for Africa".