



CONCEPT PAPER

CAAST-Net - MIRA Workshop on Innovation

Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel

Cairo – Egypt

22-23 November 2012

I. Introduction

The CAAST-Net project (www.caast-net.org) is a joint Africa-Europe platform supported by the European Union's framework programme for research and technology development (FP7). CAAST-Net was conceived against the background of a global consensus that capacity in S&T is essential to economic competitiveness, sustainable development and poverty reduction. CAAST-Net's consortium of partners, comprising nationally mandated S&T authorities from across Africa and Europe, work together in support of the project's goal of enhanced cooperation in science and technology between Africa and Europe, particularly, but not exclusively under the EU framework programme. A central pillar of CAAST-Net's strategy for promoting Africa-Europe cooperation is to facilitate dialogue between Africa's regional economic communities and European parties around research and innovation responses to regional and global challenges of mutual interest.

The Mediterranean Innovation and Research coordination Action "MIRA" (www.miraproject.eu) is a dialogue and action platform encouraging scientific and technological collaboration between the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC's) and European Countries since 2008. MIRA is an INCO-Net type project funded by the 7th EU Framework Programme for RTD supported by the Monitoring Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean S&T Cooperation in RTD (MoCo). MIRA aims, among others, to create a dialogue platform, which will enable the discussion between relevant stakeholders from both sides of the Mediterranean to improve the S&T cooperation and foster the participation of Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) in the Framework Programme. Bringing together senior official representatives from the Mediterranean Partner Countries, EU Member states and Associated Countries, The MoCo Forum acts as Steering Committee for MIRA and enhances ability to access expert communities.

II. Rationale

CAAST-Net and MIRA are bi-regional partnerships, which both encourage scientific and technological cooperation and exchange between Europe and Africa. Both projects aim to strengthen the Joint Africa-EU Strategy's 8th Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space through convening events and activities that provide opportunities for mutual learning and awareness raising of regional research priorities and policies, for developing scenarios for future cooperation, as well as providing practical support and information to new and on-going partnerships.

Innovation and the linkages between research and policy are high on the agenda in both MIRA and CAAST-Net. Innovation policies and systems are key to the translation of R&D outputs into novel technologies, goods and services, but innovation is also seen a major driver for economic growth. At the same time, research outputs and innovations can have an impact on the formulation of better policies. The role of innovation and research both for fostering the knowledge base of societies and economies and for addressing global societal challenges is evident.

Within MIRA, support for bi-regional cooperation around scientific and technological innovation is being addressed through a number of activities and analytical reports. Gaps and opportunities on policies and strategies for technology and knowledge transfer have been investigated, inventories and observatories on linkages between the academic and business community have been set up and models such as Research Driven Cluster Initiatives – bringing together most of these innovative elements - have been tested. MIRA operates in a policy environment which is supported by tools such as the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Investment, the Euro-Mediterranean industrial cooperation programme, and the Neighbourhood policy..MIRA aims to build on existing work in the Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Space (e.g. ESTIME and Medibtikar) and works in parallel to ERAWIDE and BILAT projects.

CAAST-Net's activities are undertaken within the political framework of continental priority programmes, such as Africa's S&T Consolidated Plan of Action, and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Innovation, research, and policy are addressed within CAAST-Net through undertaking activities which serve to support the development, dialogue or promotion of these. In particular, activities such as the 2nd Stakeholder's Conference on *Steps to Innovation: Conference on Africa-Europe Partnerships for Global Challenges* and its accompanying paper (currently in preparation), *CAAST-Net Policy Paper on Innovation to support the bi-regional STI dialogue between Africa and Europe* address

innovation within the Africa-Europe sphere. Research prioritization workshops, analytical works, and input papers contribute to the research and policy support activities of CAAST-Net. Amongst other activities, CAAST-Net is also working to provide strategic support to the projects funded under the 2010 Coordinated Call for Africa. Jointly, these projects contribute to the articulated African priority areas of water and food security and better health for Africa. Support is needed for these projects to better address their strategic objectives, through for example linking them to appropriate experts and S&T leaders, as well as to similar initiatives and programmes. North Africa plays an essential role in this process. Linking the projects to MIRA activities to the Mediterranean framework ensures a bi-continental approach to the priority areas they are addressing.

Both MIRA and CAAST-Net have experience supporting cooperation and encouraging dialogue on issues such as innovation and policy within their respective regional areas. What has yet to be undertaken, however, is a joint workshop exploring the differences, similarities, and opportunities between these contexts for mutual learning and benefit. Therefore, CAAST-Net and MIRA propose a joint workshop to examine the linkages between research outputs and innovations and policy.

III. Background

- MIRA 1st Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Space Forum, 1-2 December 2011, Casablanca-Morocco. (<http://www.miraproject.eu/workgroups-area/workgroup.wp7/workgroup-documents-library/thematic-forum>)
- 2nd CAAST-Net Stakeholders Conference and the accompanying Workshop for Coordinators of Projects funded by the FP7 Coordinated Call for Africa. (<http://www.caast-net.org/index.php/publiclibrary/category/steps-to-innovation-2nd-stakeholder-conference-senegal>)

IV. Workshop Objectives

This workshop will aim to address following areas for both regions: (1) the policy context for research and innovation, (2) the ways in which research outputs can have a meaningful affect on policies and (3) the dynamics of how innovation policies can strengthen the uptake of research results.

The workshop will be an opportunity for both projects to reflect on and analyse innovation tools/projects and their roles within their regional context, but also to think

about how these tools can link into a wider strategic thinking. Both the North African and the Sub Saharan African context provide different tools and frameworks which aim to impact policy making.

Additionally, this workshop may serve as a networking opportunity for experts and policymakers from Africa and Europe.

V. Workshop Overview and Methodology

During this workshop, representatives from the African Union Commission, MoCo (or relevant MED high level), and the European Commission will outline the existing frameworks for scientific and technological research, innovation, and policy cooperation. North African and sub-Saharan African experts from academia (project representatives) will present existing tools, processes and approaches: e.g. CAASTNet, MIRA, ERAWIDE projects, BILAT projects – outlining how these projects support and feed into policy frameworks.

On the second day the practitioners (project representatives) and policy representatives are encouraged to discuss the dynamics between outputs and implementation.

VI. Participants

- Senior Officials from Europe and Africa (NEPAD, AUC, AMCOST, EC)
- CAAST-Net and MIRA Consortium members
- Projects representatives (Africa Call Projects, ERANETs, ERAWIDEs, BILATs, African Union projects...)
- Regional and International donor/funding organizations (EIB, ADB, World Bank, other UN and African organizations ...etc)
- Potential Business partners
- Potential researchers

VII. Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes of this workshop might include, but not limited to, are recommendations and mutual learning on research uptake in policy, as well as potential areas for collaboration between North and sub-Saharan Africa.