

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES FOR AFRICA-EUROPE COOPERATION

**Third CAAST-Net stakeholders' conference
on Africa-Europe S&T cooperation
in cooperation with PAERIP
Monday 3rd to Tuesday 4th
of December 2012, Accra, Ghana
La Palm Royal Beach Hotel**

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

The 2007 Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES) formalises a new Africa Europe political relationship and recognises the mutual interest and benefit arising from bi-regional cooperation based on equitable partnerships for addressing global and developmental challenges. The Second JAES Action Plan (2011-2013) adopted at the 2010 Summit focuses amongst others on the Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space. Within the priority action 1 on S&T capacity building for the implementation of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) it is required to explore all possibilities for Africa to support the deployment of regional, global and high quality research infrastructures.

Set against the background of a global consensus on the vital contributions of scientific and technological research, development and innovation to addressing global challenges, and of the common policy goals of increasing investment in Science and Technology (S&T) capacity, the two continents are forging an ever closer relationship in scientific and technological Research and Development (R&D), addressing issues of common interest.

In 2011, the first senior officials meeting of the Africa-EU-Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in Addis Ababa highlighted the role of capacity building and research infrastructures (RI) for fostering research cooperation. In the specific context of bi-regional S&T cooperation partnerships for addressing global societal challenges, the role of RI have however, until recently, received little attention apart from individual initiatives, as part of broader S&T cooperation.

The forthcoming stakeholders' conference has been conceived therefore as an opportunity to enrich and strengthen the Africa-Europe STI cooperation through providing a forum for exchange of opinions and mutual learning on the role of RI for the cooperation between Africa and Europe. The conference will explore a range of issues related to the role of RI and policies in the context of bi-regional cooperation, with a view to enhancing the contributions of R&D to providing solutions to global challenges.

OBJECTIVES

1. Sharing of opinion and mutual learning on the role of RI and related policies for enhancing the value of bi-regional cooperation.
2. Drawing on conference exchanges, to formulate evidence of good practice in RI and related policies for informing STI authorities at different levels and enriching the formal bi-regional STI policy dialogue.
3. Fostering exchange and networking among bi-regional RI stakeholders, particularly around strategies for the establishment and development of RI as well as for the operation and cooperation between different RI.
4. Raising public understanding and awareness on the importance of investing in RI especially at the policy level
5. Exploring options for enhancing and especially funding RI cooperation between Europe and Africa
6. Providing input into the bi-regional policy dialogue on RI
7. Forming partnerships and creating synergies with relevant stakeholders and similar initiatives

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Improved mutual understanding of the perceptions, roles and success factors of policies related to RI in Africa and Europe.
- Scenarios for enhancing the outcomes of Africa-Europe cooperation partnerships through the preparation of financial instruments (e.g. MFF 2014-2020¹) for joint activities in the field of RI for addressing the needs of scientific and technological R&D for global societal challenges.
- Conference proceedings and a peer-reviewed policy paper on RI and bi-regional STI cooperation partnerships.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

- **A two-day stakeholders' conference consisting of:**
 - 3 Key note speeches on the role of RI in bi-regional research cooperation;
 - 4 Good practice examples for fostering the establishment and development of, as well as the cooperation between RI and the reciprocal access to those. (Presentations are related to 4 core challenges: Health, Food Security, Environment and Basic Sciences)
 - Parallel workshops related to RI on the issues:
 1. Health
 2. Food Security
 3. Environment
 4. Basic Sciences
 - Presentation and panel discussion on the outcomes of the workshops;
 - Parallel poster sessions for Africa-Europe cooperation RI projects.
- **Participation will be by invitation only for approximately 100 experts and stakeholders from both regions including representatives from some or all of the following groups:**
 - Policy stakeholders
 - Private sector and Civil society
 - Financial and legal experts
 - Academics and research scientists
 - Bi-regional RI cooperation projects
 - Implementing governmental agencies
 - International organisations
 - African diaspora organisations and organisations of returnees
 - Mass media

¹ MFF is the multiannual financial framework of the EU that is a spending plan that translates the EU priorities into financial terms