

**The Role of Science Academies in  
Providing Evidence-Informed Advice in  
Bi-Regional Policy Dialogues and in Implementing the  
Africa-EU Roadmap on FNSSA**

**Concept**

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**Building Bi-regional Partnerships for Global Challenges**



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Authors: Tinyiko Mushwana, Refilwe Mashigo and Stefan A. Haffner

Organisation Names: DST and DLR-PT

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### Background

The Africa-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), serves as a platform for regular exchanges on research and innovation (R&I) policy and aims to formulate and implement long-term priorities to strengthen bi-regional (i.e. Africa and Europe) cooperation on STI. The HLPD Bureau consists of African and European member states represented by ministries of science and technology as well as national research and development institutes which have a transnational STI cooperation mandate. Members of the HLPD Bureau play a key role in jointly conceptualising the policy imperatives of the bi-regional policy dialogue of the Africa-EU Research and Innovation (R&I) Partnership.

It is essential that the policy priorities adopted by the HLPD within the governance sub-structures of the Bureau and the HLPD Senior Officials' Meeting, which takes place biennially, address societal grand challenges that are common to both Europe and Africa. In this instance scientific knowledge has a crucial role to play in informing pertinent policy decisions of societies today. Scientific knowledge and science advice are assuming a rapidly evolving and prominent role. This is partly because global grand challenges such as climate change, food security, disaster risk management and the majority of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals require scientific and global responses and solutions.

### Rationale of Workshop

Embedding science in policy requires that policy developments should systematically identify gaps in knowledge, invest in multidisciplinary mechanisms to provide timely access to usable scientific knowledge and establish long-term relationships with knowledge providers. Effective synthesis of current knowledge on particular policy issues is, more often than not, required to reflect a consensus among scientists. This is something which academies of science in the north and south have built into their policy advice practices.

The role of CAAST-Net Plus within this context is to promote bi-regional dialogue among stakeholders in order to gather and disseminate informed opinion and experience about the bi-regional cooperation process and formulate it in a manner which promotes its consideration, uptake and or adoption within the formal bi-regional STI policy dialogue and where relevant the R&I Partnership. Given this context, the proposed workshop to be held with science academies will in essence, offer a platform through which mechanisms of dialogue between policy makers and science academies can be instituted to support the Africa-EU HLPD as well as implementation of the R&I Roadmap on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

### Objectives

National science academies from both Africa and Europe as well as their regional and global networks and groupings, have increasingly played a strategic role in informing dialogue on the type of multidisciplinary policy interventions required to address the critical challenges faced by humankind. This workshop provides a crucial opportunity to identify mechanisms that will facilitate the integration of science academies and their regional and global networks as key actors within the bi-regional policy dialogue structures of the Africa-EU R&I Partnership. Given the vast experience of science academies in providing policy-makers with relevant, credible, legitimate and timely evidence to inform policy-making, the workshop will interrogate the following questions with an aim of coming out with a policy brief and action plan to be presented to decision and policy makers:

- How and through which potential mechanisms can science academies and their respective continental networks play a role in providing evidence informed policy advice for the bi-regional Africa-EU Partnership, particularly the HLPD Bureau in the short, medium and long term?
- What kind of environment is required to promote dialogue between science academies and policy makers to enrich the bi-regional partnership between Africa and Europe?

- What role have continental networks of science academies in Europe and Africa played in providing evidence-informed advice to multilateral governance institutions such as the European Commission and African Union Commission? What lessons can be learned from the respective experiences and practices which would be useful within the context of the Africa-EU R&I Partnership?
- How can science academies and their networks play a role in the establishment of an Africa-EU Knowledge Management and Communication System (KMCS) as part of implementing the Roadmap on FNSSA?
- How can European and African networks of science academies establish a community of practice that will contribute to the development of bi-regional policy priorities and positions with the aim of enriching the bi-regional R&I Partnership and strengthening bi-regional policy positions on common issues of global significance?

### Workshop structure

The workshop will take place in the afternoon after the Network of African Science Academies' (NASAC) General Assembly on 9 November 2016 and will continue until 10 November 2016. It will consist of two key focus areas, namely the role of science academies and their continental networks in the bi-regional policy dialogue of the Africa-EU Partnership as well as the role of science academies and their networks in implementing the Roadmap on FNSSA particularly the Africa-EU KMCS.

### Expected outputs

The proposed workshop aims to generate stimulating and frank discussions between key actors that will participate in the deliberations. Ultimately the aim is to ensure that the discussions generate the following outcomes:

- Mechanisms outlining the measures required to facilitate the integration of science academies and their continental networks in the bi-regional policy dialogue processes and structures in STI;
- Mechanisms outlining the means through which science academies and their networks can become a part of the Africa-EU KMCS;
- Steps that can be undertaken to develop a community of practice between policy makers and science academies with the aim of enriching the science-policy-society interface; and
- A policy brief outlining the major themes of the workshop and recommendations with an action plan for presentation to the HLPD Bureau

### Participants

- National Science Academies from Europe and Africa and Young Academies of Science
- The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), Network of African Science Academies (NASAC), European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC)
- The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)
- African Academy of Sciences (AAS)
- European Commission (EC) and African Union Commission (AUC)
- Southern African Network for Biosciences (SANBio)
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- African Regional Economic Communities
- Policy makers
- Researchers
- Government officials
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)