

# Transferring Knowledge into Solutions

## Africa-EU Strategies for Science, Technology & Innovation Addressing Societal Challenges

1st CAAST-Net Plus Stakeholder Forum

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Entebbe, Uganda



[caast-net-plus.org](http://caast-net-plus.org)

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

## Background

The generation and transfer of knowledge into solutions is influenced by the policy and regulatory environment within which knowledge is generated as well as the prevailing structures and systems that support its transformation and application.

### Policy Context

The context of Africa-EU cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI) has evolved over the years. Valuable experiences from bi-regional cooperation in STI since the Lisbon summit in 2007, where the first Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) was adopted, have been gathered and the ongoing progress toward implementing the JAES is promising.

The future of bi-regional Africa-EU cooperation in STI is currently being shaped by the outcomes of the 4th Africa-EU Summit in April 2014; the 5th EU-Africa Business Forum; and the discussions in the High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on bi-regional cooperation in STI. Based on the AU Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024” (STISA-2024) and the Europe 2020 strategy, both regions have highlighted in the common Africa-EU declaration of the 4th summit 2014, that investment in research, science, technology and innovation is fundamental to achieve sustainable development of our societies.

The Roadmap 2014-2017, also an outcome of the 4th Africa-EU summit, sets out five key priority areas<sup>1</sup> for joint actions at the regional, continental or global level in areas where Africa and the EU have mutual interests. The field of STI is related to all of the priority areas and in the priority area of Human Development, STI is highlighted as a key area of cooperation. The roadmap document also emphasizes the important role of women, youth and the diaspora within innovation systems. The document pledges support for investing in STI cooperation in these fields, in particular in Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (in short, FNSSA).

### Research and Innovation Uptake

The process of knowledge generation, and the transfer of this knowledge into products or services, is complex and multi-dimensional, and crucial for societal and economic development. Innovation systems therefore need supportive mechanisms for engaging knowledge generators and those that translate knowledge for practical societal uses, including commercial utilisation. Nowhere are these more crucial than in addressing global societal challenges, such as climate change, health, and FNSSA.

Here, it is important to bridge the public-private sector divide, to better link research and innovation. Furthermore, the need for a more coherent and sustained policies and programming actions<sup>2</sup>, combined with the need for further investments in R&D and innovation were two of the key messages that came out of the 5th EU-Africa Business Forum, which focussed on inclusive models in agri-food chains<sup>3</sup>.

CAAST-Net Plus is therefore holding a stakeholder forum to support the bi- regional dialogue on STI between Africa and the EU in the field of three interconnected global societal challenges, namely, climate change, health, and FNSSA, placing special emphasis on the transfer of knowledge into relevant societal and market-related solutions.

## Forums Structure and Expected Outcomes

The forum will take place over two days and be conducted in plenary, i.e. across the three thematic areas of Food and Nutrition Security, Climate Change and Health. The overall aim is to gather information and ideas on the experiences, mechanisms and options for ‘translating knowledge into solutions’, concerning research design, the involvement of business and civil society as well as government support and enabling frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> These priority areas are: (1) Peace and Security; (2) Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights; (3) Human Development; (4) Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Growth and Continental Integration; and (5) Global and Emerging Issues.

<sup>2</sup> High Level Round Table Debate “Innovation Serving Food and Nutrition Security in Europe and Africa” (1<sup>st</sup> April 2014):

<http://www.coleacp.org/files/documents/INNOVATION%20EABF%20Round%20Table%202014.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Key Messages of Roundtable 3 (31<sup>st</sup> March 2014): <http://paepard.blogspot.de/2014/04/vth-eu-africa-business-forum.html>

These ideas will then inform CN+ work in designing cross-thematic interventions, as the major substantive outcome of CN+. The discussions will focus on specific issues, drawing upon as many concrete examples of 'good practice' as possible, so as to minimise the risk of discussing issues in general terms only.

Listed below are key questions, divided into three consecutive plenary sessions. These questions build upon the analytical work conducted thus far by CN+, which will be summarised and shared with participants prior to the forum. As such, this forum aims to build upon the work of CN+, lead to concrete recommendations and actions. A session on Horizon 2020 will also be conducted as part of this form, to inform stakeholders about upcoming calls, and how to participate in a project.

### Questions for plenary sessions

- 1. How do the challenges of Climate Change, Food and Nutrition Security and Health affect each other and what, in this context, is the role of R&D in providing sustainable and appropriate solutions?**
  - a. What are the climate change issues related to FNS and health? Then, what is the role and what are the contributions of climate-change science to provide solutions to the practical challenges in the FNS and health sectors?
  - b. What are the FNS issues related to climate change and health? Then, what is the role and what are the contributions of FNS science to provide solutions to the practical challenges in the climate change and health sectors?
  - c. What are the health issues related to climate change and FNS? Then, what is the role and what are the contributions of health science to provide solutions to the practical challenges in the climate change and FNS sectors?
- 2. How can Africa-EU research collaborations strengthen knowledge creation that feeds directly into the development and/or patenting of new technologies?**
  - a. What are the 'good practices', from either Africa or Europe, of R&D outputs being translated into specific goods and services
  - b. What role do the outputs of research have in developing new products and services? Is this clearly understood? What are the key motivations for this, and how does it happen?
  - c. Which mechanisms may enhance private sector uptake of R&D outputs, for example knowledge sharing schemes, pre-commercialization subsidies, venture capital and financing, etc.?
- 3. What can be done to ensure that African and EU policy makers, private sector and civil society organisations are able to identify, fully understand and act upon relevant research projects?**
  - a. How can we ensure that R&D projects relate to and/or support objectives of national development plans in Africa and Europe?
  - b. Is there a need to better involve civil society and private businesses in the design and implementation of Africa-EU research collaborations?
  - c. If there is a need, then what specific actions can CN+ take to facilitate greater private sector engagement in R&D? What form could these interventions take, i.e. platforms or programmes?

### Participants

Participants will include experts and stakeholders representing the following actor groupings:

- Knowledge producers
- Consumers or users of products and services
- Producers and service providers (private companies, SME, etc.)
- Financiers or promoters (development banks, micro finance systems, government departments etc.)
- Regulators (legislators) (in the context of e.g. IPR, international standards, ethics, etc.)
- Policy-makers (science-, industry, sector-specific policy-makers)
- Business incubators or venture capitalists
- Representatives from Innovation Clusters and other interfaces