

# businessnews



## EU supports top-end research with African counterparts

The European Union is working to help African science and research to advance by supporting the participation of African universities and research institutes in European high-end research projects.

This is done through Horizon 2020, launched in 2014 by the European Union, which makes nearly 80 billion available for research and innovation projects. Focusing on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges, the goal is to

produce world-class science, remove barriers to innovation, and make it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation. Horizon 2020 therefore fits in well with Botswana's Vision 2036 to use science, technology and innovation to propel Botswana towards a knowledge-based economy.

Horizon 2020 is fully open for participation from around the world, including Africa. With this new openness, Africa's research and innovation actors

have a better chance than ever to leverage the opportunities presented by Horizon 2020 for greater cooperation with European partners. However, despite this opportunity, African researchers have up to now not participated in great numbers. Reversing this trend can be at least partly achieved by increasing the understanding of Horizon 2020, and the opportunities it offers in Africa, and by increasing the number of trained National Contact Points (NCPs) located in

African countries.

It is with these goals in mind that the Delegation of the European Union to Botswana and SADC will hold a workshop for potential beneficiaries of Horizon 2020.

The workshop to be held in Gaborone the 15-16 May in Peer-mont Mondior Hotel aims to:

- Increase awareness of **Horizon 2020** and the opportunities particularly suitable for Africa-EU collaboration in Horizon 2020;
- Describe the rules for participation, how to submit a proposal, and how to identify partners for a proposal;
- Inform about National Contact Points and their role.
- Provide information and tools for new or potential National

Contact Points (NCPs) to better carry out the tasks to support their research community.

The first day is open to researchers, representatives of research and innovation offices, and current or potential NCPs. The second day is intended exclu-

sively for potential, nominated, or current NCPs, and will be a hands-on training in specific areas of interest for their work. The day will allow for discussion and the sharing of experiences between NCPs to foster mutual learning and development.

## Sub-Saharan Africa's modern retail stock grows in size, quality

The retail property sector has been a major focus for development activity within Africa over the last decade, causing the shopping mall concept to take root in increasingly wide range of major African cities.

Development has been driven by the growth of the continent's consumer markets and the expansion of domestic and international retailers, particularly the leading South African supermarket chains such as Shoprite, Pick n Pay and Game.

South Africa is by far the largest and most mature retail market in the Sub-Saharan region, with approximately 23 million sq m of shopping centre floor

highlighted in 2016 by the announcement that the UK-based emerging markets specialist Actis had raised US\$500 million for its third African property fund, Actis Africa Real Estate Fund 3.

This is the largest amount that has ever been raised for a private real estate fund focused on Sub-Saharan Africa outside South Africa, and it included a commitment from the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC). Actis' two previous funds, closed in 2006 and 2012, have been involved with some of Sub-Saharan Africa's most modern commercial property developments, in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania.