

The CAAST-Net Bulletin

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN

OF THE NETWORK FOR THE COORDINATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA-EU SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

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CAAST-Net concludes productive annual meeting

The second annual assembly revealed a shifting Europe-Africa S&T terrain. The imperatives for CAAST-Net are to adapt and deliver.



CAAST-Net consortium partners, advisory panel members, and invited guests gather outside the new headquarters of the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement in Marseille. **Photograph:** Andy Cherry.

Marseille. THE SECOND OFFICIAL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY of the CAAST-Net consortium took place between 16 and 18 June at the French Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD). The productive three-day meeting was attended by representatives from 16 of the 18 consortium partners, three members of the CAAST-Net Advisory Panel, and a number of invited guests who participated in a special meeting of project partners and stakeholders on the second day.

The first day provided the opportunity for partners to discuss matters internal to the project's implementation, including the possible expansion of the consortium. It also allowed for fruitful debate on CAAST-Net's relation to two key issues within a changing Europe-Africa S&T landscape: the implementation of the 8th Partnership of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, and the bi-regional S&T policy dialogue, which CAAST-Net's Work Package 3 is designed to support. While CAAST-Net has done especially well to establish itself, it will do even more to adapt to broader political changes and ensure it makes good on its promises.

Day two was convened by IRD president, Professor Jean-François Girard, the first half of which was comprised of six excellent presentations by high-level panelists: Dr. Patrice Cayré, of the IRD, who spoke on the 8th Partnership; Professor Crispus Kiamba of Kenya's Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology, on progress made by AMCOST under Kenya's chair; Professor Diran Makinde, on the New

Partnership for Africa's Development network of centres of excellence in biosciences; Funda Mpanza, on SADC; and CAAST-Net science officer at the European Commission, Gerasimos Apostolatos, who reflected on past and present developments in the EU's research cooperation activities with Africa. Each provoked debate relevant to the work of CAAST-Net.

During the day's second half, presentations were delivered by CAAST-Net work package leaders on progress in 2008 and 2009. Presentations resulted in lively discussion on the different facets of the project, from the analytical work of Work Package 1 in understanding the existing Europe-Africa S&T cooperation landscape, to the work of disseminating the project's outputs under Work Package 6. Each work package benefitted greatly from the insights of both partners and guests, who provided usable feedback on both operational and strategic challenges.

On the final day, the consortium heard from its Advisory Panel on project progress and challenges.

While CAAST-Net has succeeded in its ability to be "bold" (a suggestion given at the first Assembly in Kigali last July), it should more adeptly focus its energies on exploiting the synergies between its individual work packages, as well as synergies with other policy instruments for the mutual benefit of the African and European research communities. Effective communication would be critical to achieve the desired outcome, advised the panel.

Next year's assembly will take place in Africa. **GR**

Building Africa-Europe cooperation in energy research

CAAST-Net aims to foster improved bi-regional cooperation in science and technology by identifying researchable topics of mutual interest to European and African scientists. The hope and expectation is that this process will create more opportunities for up-take of joint Europe-Africa research projects under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7). In May of this year, a workshop focusing on renewable energy and rural electrification took place in Dakar, Senegal, in pursuit of this goal.

Dakar. THE HISTORIC CHEIKH ANTA DIOP UNIVERSITY played host to this first CAAST-Net thematic workshop on identifying research topics of mutual interest for future Europe-Africa S&T cooperation. The particular thematic focus: energy research.

This event was jointly organised by the Senegalese Ministry of Scientific Research and the French Institute of Research for Development. Both organisations are co-leaders of CAAST-Net's Work Package 4.

The two-day workshop was attended by a group of energy experts from Europe (1) and Africa (9)—in particular, specialists in renewable energy, bio-fuels and rural electrification. The CAAST-Net project coordinator, Dr. Andy Cherry, and a senior representative of the science and technology office of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Professor Diran Makinde, also attended the event.

Proceedings were kicked-off with a morning of presentations to provide the context by exploring the EU's FP7 energy programme and NEPAD's priorities in renewable energy. Another paper, prepared by South Africa's energy National Contact Point, considered the potential for collaboration between Africa and Europe in energy research by mapping out the energy priority areas under FP7, the CPA (Africa's S&T Consolidated Plan of Action), the ICSU-ROA (International Council for Science, Regional Office for Africa), RCREEE (Middle East and North Africa's Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency), and REEP (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership). Existing barriers to bi-regional cooperation in energy research were also addressed, as were ways to accelerate collaboration in areas such as: First- and second-generation biofuels, solar-energy research, and energy-efficiency technologies, carbon capture and storage, and hydrogen and fuel-cell technologies.

Thereafter, discussions were organised around three themes taken from the FP7 2010 Energy Work Programme: Renewable electricity generation; renewable fuel production; and CO2 capture and storage technologies for zero emission power generation.

While experts tended to speak from their personal perspectives of national and institutional priorities, the challenge to CAAST-Net partners was to draw out researchable strands of mutual interest to European and African scientists, which could form the basis of joint research proposals. For example, while a number of African experts were particularly keen to research agronomic aspects of *Jatropha*, a topic of perhaps less relevance to European priorities, further expert debate arrived at a direct topic oriented towards efficiency of oil extraction processes and conversion to biodiesel, which would allow both regions to continue to focus on their priority crops while addressing a common researchable constraint.

Several such researchable topics were elaborated during a day and a half of intense exchanges.

Participants also focused their discussions on the content and



CAAST-Net thematic workshop in energy research, Dakar.
Photograph: Andy Cherry.

scope of the current Energy Work Programme, as well as joint research activities that could be undertaken to address the topics of the programme through Specific International Cooperation Actions, otherwise known as SICAs. SICAs are joint research projects addressing a particular subject area that are conducted by consortia of European and partner organisations from third countries (non-EU Member States or Associated States).

The workshop was concluded with a tree planting ceremony (see image below), which took place in the ornamental gardens in front of the university's new conference

centre. The ceremony was organised by the Green Africa Foundation, a Kenyan ecological and environmental conservation organisation, who also participated in the workshop. The event drew the attention of the local media [see www.lesoleil.sn/article.php3?id_article=46936].

A series of thematic workshops on different research priority areas are planned for 2009 and 2010. The next workshop to be held will focus on health and is set to take place in Cameroon in early September. Further workshops on transport and the social sciences and humanities are envisaged for later this year and early next year.

The next step...

A draft report that emerged from the workshop provided the basis of a subsequent meeting between CAAST-Net and the thematic directorate for energy at the European Commission, which took place in June to review the researchable topics raised by the experts at the workshop. The Commission was encouraged by the topics and is now keen to seek assurances that access to Africa's best energy scientists can be harnessed if and when these recommendations are translated into calls.



Tree planting ceremony, C.A.D University
Photograph: Andy Cherry.

CAAST-Net holds FP7 information day in Cape Verde

CAAST-Net conducted its first FP7 information day in Praia, Cape Verde on 5 June. Its purpose was to raise awareness about FP7 in West Africa.

Ille de Santiago, Praia. THIS FIRST CAAST-NET FP7 INFORMATION DAY was well-attended by CAAST-Net partners, researchers from the region and government representatives, including the EU ambassador to Cape Verde. Participants originated from the Cape Verde islands, Mozambique, Angola, Germany, Finland, Portugal and South Africa—a sum total of 48, of which 42 were drawn from Africa. The event was co-organised by the Cape Verde Directorate for Science (DGESC) and Portuguese Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Foundation for Science and Technology). FCT and DGESC are the co-leaders of CAAST-Net's Work Package 5.

The event was conducted with the intention of raising awareness about opportunities for collaboration under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), as well as to provide specific information to researchers in the region about the scope of African participation in FP7.

Proceedings were kicked-off by the welcome addresses of José Bonfim of FCT, and the Cape Verde Secretary of State of Higher Education and Science, Octávio Tavares.

In particular, Bonfim briefly contextualised the purpose of the workshop in terms of CAAST-Net's broader objectives, while Tavares emphasised the value of research cooperation in terms of providing, what he termed, "innovative responses to the challenges of development." Tavares also noted the importance of a strong relationship between research and business communities in terms of fostering innovation and competitiveness in Cape Verde. This was especially important given its "poor natural resources and climate

vulnerability," he said.

The first set of presentations were conducted by representatives of Portugal's O Gabinete de Promoção do 7º Programa-Quadro de I&DT (the agency responsible for the promotion of FP7 in Portugal), via director Virginia Corrêa and

colleague Ana Mafalda Dourado. These presentations introduced participants to FP7, its main specific programmes (Cooperation, People, Ideas, Capacities), the function of National Contact Points (NCP) and NCP networks, as well as the process of responding to calls, finding partners, consortium formation and proposal writing.

In a supplementary presentation aimed at providing historical context, Bonfim outlined a brief history of participation of third countries, and particularly African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, in FP6. Bonfim also touched on barriers to cooperation, including mobility and communication. The importance of networking was also highlighted as a means of fostering the bi-regional research connections needed to facilitate the writing of joint proposals.

"What African researchers must bring to the table is what European researchers don't have," said Bonfim. "This is essential to a winning FP7 proposal."

The second set of presentations focused on the forthcoming calls under specific thematic areas under FP7 Cooperation: Health; fisheries, agriculture, and biotechnology; energy; the environment (including climate change); and, finally, the Marie Curie Actions, under the People programme. Dr. Anne Pflug of the Project Management Agency of the German Aerospace Center, briefly highlighted the proposed forthcoming "Coordinated Call for Africa" as a potentially worthwhile opportunity for researchers in Africa to participate in FP7 (see panel below).

"There are good opportunities for Africa under FP7," said Bonfim to participants at the event's close. "However success depends on the interest of individual countries. This workshop is intended to disseminate information to encourage the participation of African researchers." In his closing address, Arnaldo Brito, director of the DGESC, encouraged all participants to understand FP7 in order to optimise the possibilities for research cooperation under its various programmes. "We must know the FP very well and take advantage of the opportunities that exist."

Two similar events are envisaged for East and Southern Africa in the coming months.

The workshop's presentations will be made available online via the CAAST-Net Community Knowledge Management Platform [see www.caaast-net.org]. **GR**

Editor's note: A shortened version of this article appeared in the June 12 issue of Research Africa In Brief.

"What African researchers must bring to the table is what European researchers don't have. This is essential to a winning FP7 proposal."
José Bonfim, FCT

Next round of FP7 calls expected soon

Researchers and think tanks from Europe and Africa will do well to keep a sharp eye out for the forthcoming FP7 calls expected to be published next month.

Brussels. THE NEXT ROUND OF CALLS for the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) are likely to be published at the end of July 2009. While the details of the forthcoming calls remain confidential until published, it is anticipated that a significant number of additional opportunities may open up for African researchers and think tanks under a so-called "Coordinated Call for Africa".

This proposed call is set to coordinate bi-regional research collaboration activities under FP7's health, food and environment themes through a series of Specific International Cooperation Actions (SICAs) targeted at Africa. Its aim will be to tackle some of the objectives of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy that fall under the arm of "Science and Technology," such as health, water, and food security.

Full details on the research topics to be addressed by the SICAs will be released in the published call. However, African researchers are encouraged to explore ways to participate in the forthcoming calls as

a means to broaden their networks, gain access to state-of-the-art research facilities, and augment their expertise through international collaboration opportunities.

FP7 is worth a total of EUR 50 billion for the period 2007 to 2013, a portion of which is available for researchers and research projects of demonstrable scientific excellence from third countries (non-EU Member States or Associated Countries), which includes countries in Africa. The central aim of FP7 is to increase European competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.

The opening of opportunities for non-European entities is a part of a more general trend within FP7 to expand the international dimension of the European Research Area.

CAAST-Net looks forward to working with this raft of new SICAs for Africa, and will also play a role through its FP7 information dissemination and training activities to assist European and African researchers to participate in the coordinated call. **GR, AC, DDT**

Bridging the S&T—development divide

The much-heralded CAAST-Net Work Package 2 workshop on synergies between S&T and development in a Europe-Africa context took place on 23 and 24 April in Kampala.

Kampala. THIS TWO-DAY WORKSHOP was attended by a number of CAAST-Net partners, as well as representatives from various regional and international organisations and bodies: The Southern African Development Community, the East Africa Community, the Regional Office for Africa of the International Council for Science, the African Union's Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, as well as the African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development, among others.

It was organised specifically to discuss and debate two CAAST-Net reports, which focus on mapping the path for greater synergies to be sought between science and technology cooperation instruments and approaches (such as FP7) on the one hand, and development instruments and approaches (such as the EDF) on the other.

However the purpose of the workshop was not only to invite critical comment on the content of both reports, but also

to further develop a series of recommendations offered by the reports for bridging the S&T—development divide. As principal authors Ismail Barugahara and Arne Tostensen contend: "The inter-relationship between science and technology, on the one hand, and innovation, outreach and application for development, food security and poverty reduction, on the other, is a very complex one. These divergent types of activity tend to be

compartmentalised and to interact only rarely, or at best occasionally, because their evolution seems to move on separate tracks. Bridging the gap between these endeavours is therefore a challenging task."

Efforts to bridge the S&T-development gap will not occur without financial backing, the author's argue. "Ideas and recommendations will remain castles in the air if they are not accompanied by funding mechanisms. While governments will ultimately be the principal funding sources, the donor community will continue to play a supplementary role."

Dr. Peter Ndemere, Executive Secretary of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, who opened the workshop, emphasised the importance of the event in terms of what he termed "scaling up" cooperation efforts between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe in science and technology. "We believe, as a continent, probably more so than ever before, that science and technology should be in the driving seat of socio-economic transformation," said Ndemere.

"Our continents have cooperated for a very long time, but in science and technology the African continent is lagging behind. We believe this should not go on any longer."

In a speech read on behalf of Uganda's Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development responsible for science and technology, Professor Ephraim Kamuntu, the minister recognised the importance of the meeting in building cooperation in science and technology between the African continent and Europe. "Let me also reiterate the importance that the government of Uganda attaches to science and technology: as a tool for societal transformation, modernisation, and development," read the minister's speech.

The minister also articulated the importance of the workshop and its reports. "Having studied and looked at the objectives of CAAST-Net project, and the resultant (sic) Work Package 2 reports, which form the basis of this meeting, there is no doubt that CAAST-Net is tackling issues that are critical not only to (sic) strengthening (sic) Africa-European Union science and technology cooperation, but also the uplifting of African countries that are yet to harness their science and technology development potential due to various factors that are well articulated in these reports."

In addition to the workshop's primary deliberations, presentations were also heard from Hamisi Nguli of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), and Aloysius Chebet of the East African Community's Secretariat. Nguli shared lessons learnt through COSTECH's participation in the IST-Africa project, while Chebet

reflected on the developments within the EAC in promoting science and technology for development.

Professor Sospeter Muhongo, executive director of the International Council for Science's Regional Office for Africa, said the workshop had been "well organised and well planned." Muhongo also had encouraging comments on the workshop's reports: "I would say that these reports are fundamental to shaping the upcoming FP8 and other initiatives because the two reports firstly recognize the competence that is in Africa and in Europe, and then the two reports recognize the

weaknesses in Europe and in Africa, and they come up with solutions, so I would say the reports are very good and we should use them for future partnerships between Africa and Europe.

"African and European partnerships cannot be successful if the partnership is driven by politicians only or if it driven by governments only on the highest level.

"One of the benefits of this programme, CAAST-Net, is that it is actually bringing about the interaction between the Europeans and the Africans at the grassroots level...the success of CAAST-Net is to promote the interactions between African and European grassroots scientists and technologists and policymakers."

Dr. Botlhale Tema, formerly a director at the African Union's Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, said that it was important to understand the context in which science and technology can contribute to development in Africa. "One of the important things that came out as a recommendation was that science and technology should form part of the poverty reduction strategies of countries.

"People are still mopping up the effects of their wars. If you understand that, then you will have more patience and you will be more supportive."

The workshop's reports and, more importantly, their recommendations will be disseminated in the coming months to stakeholders in Europe and Africa.

For more information on the workshop or the contents of the reports presented at the workshop, contact Dr Arne Tostensen (Arne.Tostensen@cmi.no) or Ismail Barugahara (inbaruga@hotmail.com). **GR**



Participants at the CAAST-Net Work Package 2 workshop in Kampala in April.
Photograph: Event photographers.



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Events: July to September 2009

DATE (2009)	EVENT	WHERE	HOST(S)	CONTACT
9-10 September	WP4 Thematic Workshop—Health and WP5 FP7 Information Day (combined)	Yaounde (tbc), Cameroon		Jean Jacques Roubion (jean-Jacques.roubion@ird.fr)
September (date tbc)	WP3 Stakeholders Conference	Nairobi, Kenya (tbc)		Birgit Wirsing (Birgit.Wirsing@dlr.de)
7-8 July	INTERLINK Workshop on the Environment Theme of FP7	Pretoria, South Africa	INTERLINK	Renee Le Roux (renee@nrf.co.za)
8 September	INTERLINK Information Day on FP7 Environment 2010 Call	Minsk, Belarus		Dr. Olga Meerovskaya (meerovskaya@fp7-nip.org)
16-17 September	Networking Event: Water Management and Sanitation Europe-Africa-EECA	Vienna, Austria	INTERLINK	Susanne Meissner-Dragosits (susanne.dragosits@ffg.at)

URL Calendar <http://www.caast-net.org/xwiki/bin/view/Main/Calendar>

Letters

Editor's note: This issue we include in our letters section additional comment from attendees at CAAST-Net's recent workshop on S&T and development in Kampala (23-24 April, 2009—see also page 4).

Reducing the gap between S&T and development

...African and European partnerships cannot be successful if the partnership is driven by politicians only or if it is driven by governments only at the highest level. One of the benefits of this programme, CAAST-Net, is that it is actually bringing about the interaction between Europeans and Africans at the grassroots level. These are the people who are actually implementing projects and programmes within the Framework Programmes, and so we would say that the success of CAAST-Net is to promote interactions between African and European grassroots scientists, technologists and policymakers. The other advantage is that Europeans may have ideas but may not know Africa's positions and perspectives. So CAAST-Net is successful in actually taking the opinions and ideas from Africa to Europe and bringing ideas and perspectives to Africa. So it figures more or

less like a clearing house, it is more or less like a bridge between Europe and Africa and it seems to be doing this work successfully...

...I should comment that the Seventh Framework Programme is one of the many vehicles that will help Africa to deploy science, technology and innovation in its pursuit of reducing poverty on the continent. However, the gap between science and development is still wide because most of the African institutions, especially the universities and research organisations and institutions, are doing research and then they stop at a certain point where they should actually apply their research products and findings. This is where they don't go into the innovation domain; and the reasons are known: This is partly because there is a very weak linkage between research and innovation in Africa, and this is the gap we should work very hard to bridge and make smaller.

Prof. Sospeter Muhongo *Executive Director, Regional Office for Africa, International Council for Science*

SADC and CAAST-Net

This was a worthwhile workshop in the sense that we managed, as the SADC Secretariat, to

participate and to get a general idea of what CAAST-Net is all about. I should mention that as a region we are looking at finding out what opportunities exist for us to participate, but more importantly what benefits as a region we are going to extract out of our participation...

....Over a period of two days (the workshop) gave us an opportunity to get an idea of what CAAST-Net is trying to achieve, especially because it is directed toward sub-Saharan Africa, and how Europe and sub-Saharan Africa can work together in terms of pushing forward issues related to S&T but more importantly the issues of development. You can appreciate the fact that SSA is still grappling with the issue of development.

Funda Mpanza *S&T Desk, SADC Secretariat*

Funding crucial

...The issue of funding is very important, that is funding of science and technology...CAAST-Net and everything will fail if (African) Member States cannot create an enabling environment for their scientists and help them to go to meetings in Europe... So every country (in Africa) has to have such funds.

Dr. Bothale Tema, *CAAST-Net Advisory Panel (and Independent S&T Policy Consultant)*

Coordinator's Column

By Dr. Andy Cherry (with input from Dr. Eric Mwangi, CAAST-Net's Africa Region Coordinator)

London. CAAST-NET IS NOW 18 MONTHS OLD and partners have just returned to their desks after last month's excellent second Annual CAAST-Net Assembly, hosted this year by the French Institut de Recherche pour le Développement in Marseille.

We've been reflecting on what we've achieved, on where we are going, and what we need to do and change to get there. To help us, we were joined by a small panel of independent, senior African and European scientists. This time last year we had only just got off the ground and we were feeling our way in the EU-Africa cooperation landscape. Expectations were high but achievements were few. It took us a long time to really build confidence and cohesion but today we are a strong consortium, expectations are more realistic and contextualised, and significant achievements are appearing.

We were also lucky to be joined in Marseille by a number of esteemed guests representing the African and European science and technology communities—notably the SADC, AMCOST, the NEPAD, and the European Commission, among others.

A real highlight is the series of thematic workshops we have embarked on to define researchable topics of mutual interest to European and African scientists which will expand the scope for Africa participation in the EU's framework programmes (see this issue, page 2).

Over the last year we've adapted to the appearance of the Joint Africa-Europe strategy and its 8th partnership around science, information society and space, and in that context we are modifying our role in support of a high-level EU-Africa S&T cooperation policy dialogue platform.

At the same time, we face some interesting issues which continue to challenge us: Internally, the management of a consortium of high level partners, and externally, we have the challenge of optimally positioning ourselves in the space between the often mal-aligned research and development cooperation domains., we are looking at how to engage more actively with a wider spectrum of partners from the two regions, and build association with Africa's regional economic communities.

As we approach already towards the mid-point of our project, so much remains to be done. But momentum is building and there is every reason to believe CAAST-Net will more than live up to expectations.

Dr. Andy Cherry (a.cherry@acu.ac.uk).

Networking critical for more joint health research projects under FP7

Cape Town. HEALTH-NCP-NET in conjunction with ESASTAP hosted an FP7 brokerage event at the Lord Charles Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa on 9 April. FP7 (the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development) is the European Union's €50 billion research and technological development platform spanning seven years from 2007-2013.

The event was attended by various members of the South African and the African health research communities, representatives from the European Commission, as well as partners in health research-related projects funded under either FP6 and FP7. It was an opportunity for HEALTH-NCP-NET to draw attention to FP7, the opportunities for research collaboration in the health thematic priority area of the Cooperation Specific Programme, as well as the roles and responsibilities of National Contact Point networks in facilitating bi-regional research partnerships.

The day's proceedings were kicked off by Dr. Ole Olesen, the EC's Scientific Officer for Neglected Infectious Diseases in the Directorate for Health Research. Olesen provided a brief overview of the EC, FP7 and the structure of funding under its various programmes, as well as the nature of specific international cooperation actions (SICAs), which are international research collaborations focused on a particular subject or focus area.

Olesen's presentation was followed by short

presentations from Professor Iqbal Parker of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and Dr. Sabine Steiner-Lange of the German Aerospace Center. Both highlighted the function and importance of NCP networks and the necessity of strengthening these networks—in South Africa and Egypt.

Steiner-Lange also emphasised the critical role of NCPs in communicating with local scientific communities in order to foster better participation in FP7 projects. NCPs are nominated by national governments and play an advisory role to potential and existing participants. They are also increasingly referred to as ICPC-CPs (Contact Points in International Cooperation Partner Countries).

The final presentation was delivered by Professor Christian Doerig, who shared personal experiences of his role as an FP project coordinator. Apart from the non-negotiable component of scientific excellence expected of all FP projects, Doerig stressed the value of strong human relationships amongst consortium members as one essential pre-requisite a successful project.

CAAST-Net was represented in the workshop's closing address by Mabatho Ndawandwa of South Africa's Department of Science and Technology.

For more information on HEALTH-NCP-Net visit healthncp-net.eu/ or contact Dr. Sabine Steiner-Lange (Sabine.Steiner-Lange.dlr.de). **GR**

News from the Africa-Europe S&T landscape

Launch of new South Africa-EU FP7 coordination and support action—AeroAfrica-EU

A launch presentation was held at the South African Mission to the European Union of AeroAfrica-EU, a project aimed to identify areas for cooperation in aeronautics and air transport. The project consortium consists of partners from France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and South Africa.

EDCTP announces funds for TB research

A call for proposals in tuberculosis diagnostics has been published by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership. €8,000,000 is available under the call. The deadline for applications is 24 July 2009.

New science minister for South Africa

South Africa's newly elected president, Jacob Zuma, has appointed former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, as the new Minister of Science and Technology. Pandor replaces the outgoing minister, Mosibudi Mangena, and will be supported by Deputy Minister Derek Hanekom, who also served under Mangena.

EU Parliament adopts first review of the Joint-Africa EU Strategy

On 24 March 2009, the European Union Parliament adopted its Commission's report on the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, the Parliament's press office stated. The JAES was adopted at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007.

INTERLINK International Workshop

"A Dialogue between Europe, Africa and EECA on Networking and Cooperation" will take place in Vienna on 16 and 17 September 2009. The international workshop, in the frame of FP6 project INTERLINK, aims to disseminate the project's results, and to facilitate networking with R&D and development cooperation players from Member States, Associated Candidate Countries, African and EECA Countries with a focus on water management and sanitation.

African Union Scientific Awards

The closing date for the African Union's Regional Women Scientists Awards has been extended to 31 July 2009. Two awards, worth \$22,000 each, are available. The African Union's Continental Award is open to both outstanding male and female African scientists. The closing date is 9 September 2009.



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Fostering better bi-regional research connections

Zethu Mkhondo, project coordinator for ST-EAP, the Science and Technology Europe-Africa Project, filed this report on a recent workshop held in Nairobi.



Participants gather at the ST-EAP workshop in Nairobi in March.

Photograph: Zethu Mkhondo

Nairobi. THE AFRICAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE (AAS) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)—lead consortium partners in the ST-EAP project—organised a networking and information workshop, which was held on 26 and 27 March, 2009 in Nairobi. The Science and Technology Europe-Africa Project (ST-EAP) is a Europe-Africa project funded under the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The workshop ran over the course of two days and was attended by over 100 academics, researchers and government officials. Participants were drawn from 20 countries: Kenya, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritius, Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco, Sudan, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda, among others.

The objectives of the workshop were threefold: To raise awareness among African researchers about the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), as well as to examine the challenges of participating in FP7; to provide a basis for networking between African researchers in order to promote cooperation and coordination between African countries as a means to promote African participation in FP7; and to increase awareness about the role of science and technology in the Framework Programmes.

In the opening session, Titus Katembu, a European Union

representative based in Nairobi, read a speech sent to the workshop's delegates from the European Commission.

"S&T cooperation with Africa is not driven by philanthropy, but by common interests and common benefits...The global S&T context is calling for a strengthened cooperation between Europe and Africa. Our S&T cooperation with Africa should follow two routes: One, there is a need for building a basic S&T infrastructure, and, two, there is a need to pursue (sic) strategic research."

The workshop's speakers were researchers and scientists who have participated in Framework Programme projects, and who have developed a clear

understanding of how the FP works. Topics covered included the following: Tips and guidelines to prepare an EU FP proposal, Examples of African FP7 proposals, and, the Relationship between EU and Africa S&T.

The last item on the programme, which the participants found to be most interesting and challenging, were group discussions held according to particular thematic interest areas. Groups were encouraged to discuss possible thematic topics for FP7 proposals, and to demonstrate how these topics could be of benefit to the bi-regional research community.

By the end of the workshop, close to 50 participants had registered as ST-EAP community members, half of whom have since inquired about current open calls within FP7. As a project, ST-EAP will be measured and evaluated by the number of African researchers who participate in FP7 over the duration of the project.

Zethu Mkhondo (NMkhondo@csir.co.za).

"S&T cooperation with Africa is not driven by philanthropy, but by common interests and common benefits."
Titus Katembu, EU representative on behalf of the EC

FP7 tips: A rough guide to the proposal cycle

Step 1: A Call for Proposals is published

This takes place via the Cordis website (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7>).

Step 2: Interest and clarification

Queries and questions should be directed to the relevant authorities at the European Commission or the National Contact or Information Point at your disposal. Issues of clarification should be ironed out as soon as possible after the call is published.

Steps 3-5: Partner search, proposal writing, proposal submission

Scientists interested in applying for a call need to act quickly, says Dr. Anne Pflug of the German Aerospace Center. "The applicants have to be fast in formulating their proposal—and they have to do everything at one time: to look for the right partners, to write the proposal, to be in contact with the administration of their institution to get all financial and administrative information for their proposal."

NB! Some calls are one-stage calls, to which the above guideline applies. For two-stage calls, a short concept document is first submitted to the EC, following which successful concepts are invited to propose in full.

Step 6: Evaluation of proposals

A deadline date and time is set for proposal submission, which must be strictly adhered to for proposals to be considered. Proposals are typically evaluated by 3-7 independent experts in the field. Certain key criteria must be met for proposals to achieve the required points.

Step 7: The EC informs applicants about the outcome of evaluation

"If they are positive," say the EC, "contract negotiations will begin."

Step 8: A grant is negotiated with winning consortium

This takes place between the successful applicants and the EC. An EC scientific officer is also assigned to the project for its duration.

Step 9: Project kicks-off

A grant agreement is brought into force by signature. Consortium partners are also encouraged to sign a "consortium agreement" which is a set of guidelines to enhance the collaboration among partners.

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The project at a glance

CAAST-Net's goal is an increase in the quality and quantity of bi-regional cooperation in science and technology between Europe and Africa, targeting areas of mutual interest and benefit through greater use of instruments under the FP7, as well as through other instruments of international cooperation, and through lobbying for greater synergy between R&D and development instruments. In support of its goal, CAAST-Net has a range of activity clusters aiming:

- To support and inform existing Europe-Africa S&T policy dialogue and cooperation processes.
- To identify and prioritise common research areas of mutual interest and benefit, especially for inclusion in the thematic priorities of the FP7 Cooperation Programme, harnessing cooperation to address specific problems faced locally and regionally within Africa, as well as common problems of a global nature.
- To promote synergy between Europe-Africa S&T partnerships and development cooperation instruments in order to enhance the creation and application of new knowledge in support of achieving the MDGs, poverty alleviation and economic growth.
- To undertake specific activities dedicated to strengthening of the participation of African countries in the Framework Programme through a series of events aimed at raising awareness, providing information, brokering partnerships and optimising synergies.
- To monitor the performance and impact of Europe-Africa S&T cooperation under the Framework Programme to inform future cooperation policy.

Many of CAAST-Net's activities, such as brokerage events, conferences, information days and thematic discussion platforms are open to participation by interested parties. CAAST-Net has an "open-door" policy to its wider stakeholder community and is dedicated to continued dialogue and networking with our stakeholder community. We strongly encourage engagement with the project by all stakeholders to share information, and to be kept informed of opportunities.

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South Africa and Uganda sign bi-lateral S&T agreement

On 16 April 2009 former South African science minister, Mosibudi Mangena, and Uganda's finance, planning and economic development minister, Professor Ephraim Kamuntu, signed an S&T bi-lateral agreement. Here's what's in store for the two countries.

Pretoria. SOUTH AFRICA AND UGANDA's new S&T agreement marks a commitment by both countries to utilise science and technology to address national, regional and continental sustainable development goals, according to a press release issued by the South African Department of Science and Technology. "The agreement between South Africa and Uganda is one of many deliberate efforts to position science, technology and innovation as drivers of development in Africa," the release states.

In a release by the Ugandan Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the importance of the agreement is outlined in similar terms. "The signing of this Agreement intensifies existing collaborations between Ugandan and South African scientists and technologists, and creates new opportunities for cooperation in important areas such as information and communication technologies, health, education, manufacturing, value addition, energy, indigenous

knowledge systems, materials science and engineering, biodiversity conservation, among others."

The agreement provides for researcher exchanges, the sharing of knowledge and information, the organisation of bi-lateral events in areas of common interest, and the identification of key

S&T problems to shape future collaborative activities between the countries.

"With the signing of this agreement, which signals our countries' joint commitment to the advancement of our science, technology and innovation agendas, we are entering into a new era," said outgoing South African science minister Mosibudi Mangena at the signing ceremony. Mangena also called relations between the two countries "visionary and effective."

The implementation of the agreement is the responsibility of the Uganda

National Council for Science and Technology and the South African Department of Science and Technology. Both UNCST and DST are CAAST-Net partners. **GR**

"The agreement between South Africa and Uganda is one of many deliberate efforts to position science, technology and innovation as drivers of development in Africa."

**Department of Science
and Technology,
South Africa**