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Address: A307 Gate House, Black River Park, Observatory, 7925, South Africa

Phone: +27 (0)21 447 5484 Fax: +27 (0)21 447 9152 Email: info@research-africa.net

Web site: www.researchresearch.com/africa

Research, Innovation to Remain on EU-Africa Policy Agenda

A message from the project coordinators



Dr Andrew Cherry
Project Coordinator



Dr Eric Mwangi
Africa Region Coordinator



In April just passed, the 4th Africa-EU summit of Heads of State and Government took place in Brussels. Its theme, Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace, reaffirmed commitment to the EU-Africa partnership.

**CAAST-Net Plus
and its support
for the bi-regional
STI partnership
remain therefore
as relevant now
as ever**

In endorsing a new roadmap for cooperation, our Heads of State set out a series of strategic priorities for cooperation over the period 2014-2017. While science, technology and innovation (STI) no longer appear as an explicit priority, as they did under the former JAES partnerships, investment in STI remains firmly embedded in the relationship. It is acknowledged as an essential and cross-cutting

domain for cooperation, contributing to partnership objectives, particularly around human development.

In fact, our STI partnership itself lives on, overseen by the Africa-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) whose governance role is recognised in summit outcomes. Indeed the STI partnership thrives, and most tangibly through the current

priority focus on food and nutrition security (FNS) agreed at the 2013 HLPD meeting. Only days after the summit, HLPD convened a joint Africa-EU expert working group (EWG) in FNS charged with building a roadmap for future cooperation. The EWG starts work immediately, asked to deliver its roadmap at the end of the year.

CAAST-Net Plus and its support for the bi-regional STI partnership remain therefore as relevant now as ever. We can take pride in the contributions already made

to debates and discussions that have helped shape the STI partnership and bring it to where it is today. In the last year CAAST-Net Plus and its partners have supported the STI mapping exercise commissioned by HLPD, the FNS side event to the HLPD meeting of December 2013, and the recent FNS debate at the EU-Africa Business Forum held in the margins of the summit.

CAAST-Net Plus' on-going analyses of bi-regional cooperation processes in FNS, as well as in climate change, and in health are helping to define joint priorities and to point out ways in which continuing barriers might be lowered to improve the quality and quantity of cooperation.

While we are particularly focussed on cooperation supported by Horizon 2020, the EU's new programme for research and innovation, its not an exclusive focus. CAAST-Net Plus is keen to add value to cooperation supported by national programmes too.

We're actively consulting now and looking forward to designing interventions together with our stakeholders that we intend be launching over the next couple of years. As well as the many dedicated events we're running to feed these contributions, we'll use this magazine and our social media accounts to communicate these and other activities more widely. If you'd like to get involved in any of our activities, and if you'd like to work with us, please do let us know.

Images are taken from our YouTube film *Introducing CAAST-Net Plus* available for viewing on our website's home page at www.caastr-net-plus.org.



A Bird's Eye View of EU-Africa Health Research Cooperation

Some issues and challenges arising from research-in-progress



Dr Eric Mwangi
MOEST



Dr Gatama Gichini
MOEST



CAAST-Net Plus is carrying out a quantitative and qualitative survey of funded health initiatives that have been supported through EU-Africa research and innovation cooperation programming. Our goal? To gather evidence that helps us to identify how future cooperative efforts might be enhanced.

A wide range of health issues are experienced across the diverse populations of Africa and Europe. These issues include, among many others, conditions associated with mental illness and ageing, to the range of infectious, parasitic and viral diseases. Both regions need viable solutions to these shared challenges (Box 1). As such, policy-makers from Europe and Africa have continued to emphasise health as an area for cooperation (Kalua et al, 2009; EU Council, 2010). Significantly, within the context of the joint Africa-EU strategic partnership, the important role of science, technology and innovation in addressing the shared priorities of the two regions was emphasised by heads of state and government in their declaration from April's fourth EU-Africa summit (see www.africa-eu-partnership.org).

In recent years, there have been a plethora of investments in bi-regional scientific and technological

cooperation activities to address areas of common interest within health. These investments have been made at different levels across the cooperation spectrum (Table 1). So what might we learn from these efforts that will help us to further improve our cooperation?

Box 1. Some common health challenges facing Africa and Europe

- + Metabolic diseases
- + Neglected diseases
- + Maternal and child health
- + Infectious, parasitic and viral diseases
- + Mental disorder-related health challenges
- + Age-related emerging diseases

Source: Various

Table 1. Health research cooperation programmes and funding mechanisms

Cooperation level	Examples of funding instruments/organisations supporting research
Bi-regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The EU's sixth and seventh framework programmes (FP6, FP7) + European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)
Multi-lateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + World Health Organization's Special Programme for Research and Training on Tropical Diseases (TDR) + African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States Science and Technology Programme
Bi-lateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Line ministry level
Non-governmental Organisation/Private-sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Wellcome Trust
African networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation + Consortium for National Health Research (Kenya)

Research goals

The overall objectives guiding our analysis are threefold. First, we have set out to review the outcomes and, where possible, the impacts of an initial sample of 154 projects. Second, we aim to identify systemic weaknesses within the cooperative processes involved in implementing these initiatives. Third, we hope to propose corrective strategies from the results arising from our analysis.

Our investigation is currently focused on available data from both completed and ongoing projects for the period 2006-2014. Projects were typically funded by the European Union's sixth and seventh framework programmes, as well as the ACP secretariat. Methodologically, we have used web-based desktop research and analysis, questionnaires, and key informant interviews with project coordinators from some of the projects in our sample.

The main cooperation themes identified in our analysis include terms such as health research, health innovation, health knowledge generation, epidemiology, disease control, health policy, health care access and planning. Major focus areas also included TB, HIV/AIDS, and research in tropical diseases, particularly malaria. Other high ranking areas included diagnostics and health information systems. As shown in Table 2, the activities undertaken by projects ranged from data collection to infrastructure development.

Preliminary analysis

Our early analysis of the data collected has revealed at least two major areas of systemic weakness that are shaping the cooperation taking place. We discuss these areas briefly below.

Table 2. Focus areas of projects surveyed

Main activities	Number of projects engaged in this activity
Data collection	40
Human capacity building	38
Enhancing collaborative networks	20
Policy or framework conditions	40
Infrastructure development	16
Commercialisation	0
Total	154

1. Low level of private sector engagement

A total of only 49 private sector entities were involved in the sample of over 150 projects reviewed. The nature of companies ranges from traditional pharmaceuticals, biotech companies, and SMEs, among others. The regional or geographical distribution of these private project participants is reported as follows: Europe (42%), Africa (22%), and Other Regions (14%). The highest rate of European country private sector participation originated from France, Germany, UK, Italy and Switzerland (in that order respectively). With respect to Africa, the dominance participation was from South Africa and a low level of participation from several other African countries (Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia). No projects surveyed had a specific emphasis on commercialisation.

2. A plethora of cooperation challenges

Our research has so far revealed a large number of barriers to cooperation. These range from policy issues (funding and co-ownership, ethics) to infrastructural concerns, and are discussed very briefly below.

- + **Funding and co-ownership** — Many African governments have failed in their ability, and in their willingness, to co-fund health cooperation activities. It has also been difficult for project participants to acquire advance funding for EU-driven projects from national sources.
- + **Duplication** — A number of respondents reported that the same types of projects in similar areas had been funded by different donors in an uncoordinated fashion.
- + **Ethics** — Delays were reported in some consortium partners getting research ethics approval from their national governments for their projects. Ethics boards in some countries do not exist, which can delay or derail research where this type of approval is needed.
- + **Project and partner management** — Key issues related to project and partner management include the development of trust, language barriers among partners from different traditions, misunderstanding of project objectives, conflicts of interest, and a lack of interest among some partners after project initiation.
- + **Human capacity** — Respondents reported an inadequate skills base, within projects, which disabled implementation of the assigned project activities.
- + **Research infrastructures** — Respondents reported a lack of appropriate technologies and research infrastructures to implement health research and innovation development projects and programmes.
- + **Political** — Political unrest in some countries led to the scientist and/or health expert resignation or migration, resulting in discontinuity in project memory as well as data loss.
- + **Uptake** — It was reported to have been challenging to involve and engage national authorities, as well as civil society organisations, in the uptake or adoption of the project outcomes.
- + **Community engagement** — Difficulties were experienced in mobilising communities to participate in health policy data generation projects. Acquiring samples and clinical evidence from different affected population groups was also challenging.
- + **FP7 financial challenges** — Some partner organisations had particular difficulties understanding the pre-financing and re-imbursement procedures associated within FP7 grantmaking.

Next steps

Our work on completing this research continues apace and we hope to be able share the results in full before the end of 2014. At the same time we are developing three action clusters as a way of addressing the issues that are emerging through our research. First, we plan to consult with health and policy experts, within Africa and Europe, to identify ways to address some of the barriers identified through our research report. Second, we seek to identify future niches for private sector engagement, starting with a CAAST-Net Plus-led panel discussion to take place at the Seventh EDCTP Forum in Berlin this July. Third, based on our consultation we plan to deliver a series of recommendations to key stakeholders — the EU, AU, development aid actors, and private sector policy makers — on new potential areas of intervention.

To share your thoughts with us about this research, please write to Dr Eric Mwangi of Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (emwangi23@yahoo.com).

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Towards an EU-Africa Platform for Climate Change Research Cooperation



Dr Arne Tostensen
Research Council of Norway



Mike Kachedwa
NCST



CAAST-Net Plus is currently engaging a wide range of actors in Africa and Europe with an interest in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Our aim? To build a platform that supports bi-regional research and innovation on the climate change priorities that Africa and Europe have in common. As a step in that direction, CAAST-Net Plus hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop in Malawi to collect perspectives from the SADC region.

In co-organising this CAAST-Net Plus workshop with Malawi's National Commission for Science and Technology we had four ambitions: first, to take stock of research-in-progress on climate change adaptation in Malawi and elsewhere in the southern African region; second, to identify research gaps in the evidence-base on agricultural climate change adaptation; third, to assess the constraints to the uptake of existing technologies; and, fourth, to look for ways to overcome those constraints. This article summarises what our gathering achieved.

Taking stock

Participants at the workshop indicated that there had been research progress in a number of areas, from modelling the impact of climate change in crop production to the science-policy-investment interface (Box 1). Progress had also been made, according to participants, in areas such as drought risk management and weather insurance on targeted crops

CAAST-Net Plus is engaged in activities — such as brokerage events and information days — to bring together research communities in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa with a view to forging collaborative research partnerships that may lead the way forward

Box 1. Climate change research areas for the SADC region in which progress has been made

- + Modelling the impact of climate change in crop production
- + Climate resilience in the long-term
- + Climate-smart agricultural policies
- + Adaptation to climate change on access and use of water and forestry resources
- + Adaptive research associated with livestock and arable agriculture
- + Improvement of early warning systems to reduce impacts of climate change
- + Capacity building to integrate climate change into development plans
- + The science-policy-investment interface
- + Climate change and agriculture correlation and modelling studies
- + Climate change and indigenous knowledge
- + Interface of climate change and agricultural policies
- + Climate change adaptation strategies

The workshop's participants also revealed the existence of a series of strategic policy and research initiatives in climate change adaptation in agriculture within the Southern African Development Community. The SADC Secretariat, for example, has developed a protocol on environmental management for sustainable development. Though it is yet to be ratified by the SADC member countries, the protocol has a specific article on climate change. Article 11 addresses the negative impact of climate change on food security, water resources, health, and gender equality. It advocates measures to develop early-warning systems and disaster management strategies at the

country level. SADC members should participate in sub-regional and international climate change programmes in order to access the benefits related to technology transfer, financing and capacity building, the article also says.

Gaps

Although considerable progress was noted in a number of areas, many shortcomings and research gaps were identified by the participants (Box 2).

Box 2. Research gaps in the evidence-base on agricultural climate change adaptation for the SADC region

- + Water quality time series data under both wet and dry climate regimes
- + How livestock and problem animals, such as elephants, complicate existing climate change impacts on crop production
- + Interactions between climate change and other environmental variables, like soil fertility loss, crop pests and diseases
- + Development and validation of traditional early warning systems to climate change adaptation
- + Development of appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies with a focus on climate-smart agriculture strategies
- + Assessment of land use (forestry, agriculture, pastures) and current practices, and their impacts on climate change including greenhouse gas fluxes, and carbon measurement and monitoring
- + Climate change impacts, modelling and vulnerability of ecosystem services and livelihoods
- + Development of appropriate technologies in the livestock, energy, fisheries and aquaculture sectors for climate change adaptation and mitigation
- + Policy and legal framework analysis of climate change adaptation and mitigation with emphasis on economic efficiency, ecological effectiveness, gender balance implications, and legitimacy
- + Improving indigenous technologies for climate change adaptation and mitigation
- + Assessing the impacts of climate change on health, including HIV and AIDS, and designing appropriate technologies or interventions to enhance resilience
- + Crops, vegetation and livestock species responses to increased temperature
- + Quantifying nitrous oxide losses and nitrogen use efficiency in grain cropping systems on different type of soil types with contrasting soil carbon status and land management
- + Potential soil carbon sequestration in crop production and the impact on soil productivity and greenhouse gas emissions
- + Experimental studies that manipulate climate change variables (CO₂, temperature and rainfall) in order to fully understand the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector
- + Research into understanding the low uptake of small grains by communities living in areas with low or erratic rainfall
- + Studies on downscaling climate data from global datasets, and generation of locally relevant data

Issues and challenges

Addressing the shortcomings and filling the identified research gaps is not a straightforward matter. A number of challenges are routinely encountered, above all capacity constraints in terms of research staff and infrastructure, but also managerial constraints (Box 3).

Box 3. Some issues and challenges in filling the identified research gaps

- + Inadequate climate change data, information collection framework, and database management systems
- + Communication and knowledge management for climate change adaptation
- + Disaggregation of climate change adaptation knowledge so as to effectively deliver the required information to specific target groups at the grassroots level, and consequently enhance the uptake of research findings
- + Building of infrastructure to enhance regional and national capacities in climate change adaptation
- + Developing national frameworks for climate change management and adaptation that would enhance coordinated research
- + Nurturing gender equality in climate change adaptation
- + Indigenous knowledge systems in climate change that researchers and policy makers should take advantage of

Steps forward

The gaps identified provide scope for Africa-EU bi-regional research and innovation cooperation. However, the challenges highlighted also need to be overcome, which in some cases will take considerable time. There are no quick fixes to capacity constraints, be they infrastructural or of a human resources nature. Patience and perseverance is required.

Despite these formidable barriers, opportunities do exist within existing cooperation instruments. For example, Horizon 2020 (page 12-18) offers wide opportunities for bi-regional research and innovation based on mutual interest and benefit. In this regard, CAAST-Net Plus is engaged in activities — such as brokerage events and information days — to bring together research communities in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa with a view to forging new partnerships that may lead the way forward.

Perspectives from East Africa

CAAST-Net Plus organised a third consultative meeting on climate change in Kigali, Rwanda, between 28-30 May 2014. Co-hosted in collaboration with the Republic of Rwanda's Ministry of Education, the results of this meeting will inform CAAST-Net Plus planning toward establishing a platform for EU-Africa climate change research cooperation. For more information about this work-in-progress, write to enquiries@caast-net-plus.org.

Why Food and Nutrition Security Matters in the EU-Africa Partnership

An interview with Judith Ann Francis



Gerard Ralphs
Research Africa



Dr Judith Ann Francis
CTA



CAAST-Net Plus is conducting research into the impact of EU-Africa food security research collaborations. In this interview, Judith Ann Francis of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) outlines the research objectives and its intended impact.

Questions: Gerard Ralphs

Answers: Judith Ann Francis

Africa and Europe have a long history of cooperation in agriculture and rural development, as well as in science and technology (S&T). In this regard, several joint programmes and projects have been funded by the European Union that contribute to the attainment of food and nutrition security (FNS).

Through analysing this landscape, our research

goal is to provide a knowledge base that helps to catalyse a platform to address Europe-Africa joint food and nutrition security priorities. Critically, we also need to know where there are cooperation constraints, and then in collaboration with the relevant actors design interventions to overcome those constraints. Our research is ultimately about enhancing the conditions of cooperation and lowering the barriers to innovation.

Our research goal is to provide a knowledge base that helps to catalyse a food security platform to address Europe-Africa joint food security priorities

So in the first instance it is important to know what's going on at ground-level, and to acquire new insight. Key aspects that interest us include understanding the investments that have been made, who is contributing to and benefitting from these investments, and whether the outputs of joint research efforts are leading to innovation. We are asking: Are research results actually informing the policy processes — either in Africa or Europe, or both? Are farmers and other private sector actors, for example, input suppliers, using the knowledge and technologies generated by research to increase yields, produce new products, and expand market opportunities? And so on. It's important, and riveting stuff.

Sustainable agriculture and FNS are receiving an unprecedented amount of attention globally at the moment. What global actions will be important in this regard in the next decade to ensure this global challenge is addressed for the benefit of citizens in Africa and Europe?

I would highlight two 'action areas': First, national institutions must be enabled to address the global FNS challenge and its impacts at the individual and household levels. Ownership is key. Why? To ensure that there is adequate nutritious food and equal access to resources. Hence, coherence between global, regional and national policies, programmes and actions is necessary and must be pursued. Second, multi-disciplinary research and multi-sectoral approaches are necessary. This must be emphasised in global platforms, mainstreamed in global processes and reproduced at regional and national levels. For example, farmers and farm families must be consulted in a meaningful manner because they are the major producers, especially in developing countries. They are also the guardians of our natural resources (land, water and biodiversity). Though the importance of smallholder farmers is recognised, and their participation in decision-making processes endorsed at the highest policy levels, they continue to be side lined when major decisions are being made on the future of agriculture and food. Hence at global level, demonstration of the vital role of smallholder farmers in research and policy processes must, must, must go beyond pronouncements.

A number of events focussing on FNS have been arranged in recent months, for example, the high-level round table debate on the margins of the EU-Africa Business Forum. In your view, what is the general direction of EU-Africa research and innovation cooperation on food and nutrition security?

Politically-incorrect as it may sound and apologies in advance, I say: more action, less talk. The evidence shows that Africa continues to be challenged in meeting the FNS needs for a significant proportion of the population. If we go by this metric then joint cooperation efforts and investments by other major players, including national governments, are not meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Hence, efforts aimed at setting indicators for measuring future success in terms of any of the four-plus-one FNS pillars (availability, accessibility, utilization, stability and ecological sustainability) are to be lauded.

What are some of the innovative actors, organisations, projects or partnerships operating in this space now? What are they doing differently?

The Platform for African European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development, or PAEPARD, is piloting various initiatives for enhancing collaboration between African and European actors. One of PAEPARD's successes is that it has been able to mobilise research users — particularly African farmer organisations — to lead multi-stakeholder research projects that actually respond to their needs (the so-called user-led process). Another success of PAEPARD lies in its ability to build the capacity of innovation facilitators. These facilitators provide invaluable support to multi-stakeholder research teams in their efforts to access research funding and implement joint activities. In this space, PAEPARD is a platform to watch as it may provide valuable learning

for engaging farmers in setting research agendas and participating in the process!

Another major development is joint funding instruments. These mean that African governments are just as committed to investing in the success of the cooperation efforts. The ERAfrica Project is exemplary in this regard. This should give comfort for the future of African-EU research partnerships.

Tell our readers about the Technical Centre for Rural and Agricultural Cooperation?

The CTA is a joint international institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union. Its mission is to advance food and nutritional security, increase prosperity, and encourage sound natural resource management in ACP countries. We provide access to information and knowledge, facilitate policy dialogue, and strengthen the capacity of agricultural and rural development institutions and communities.

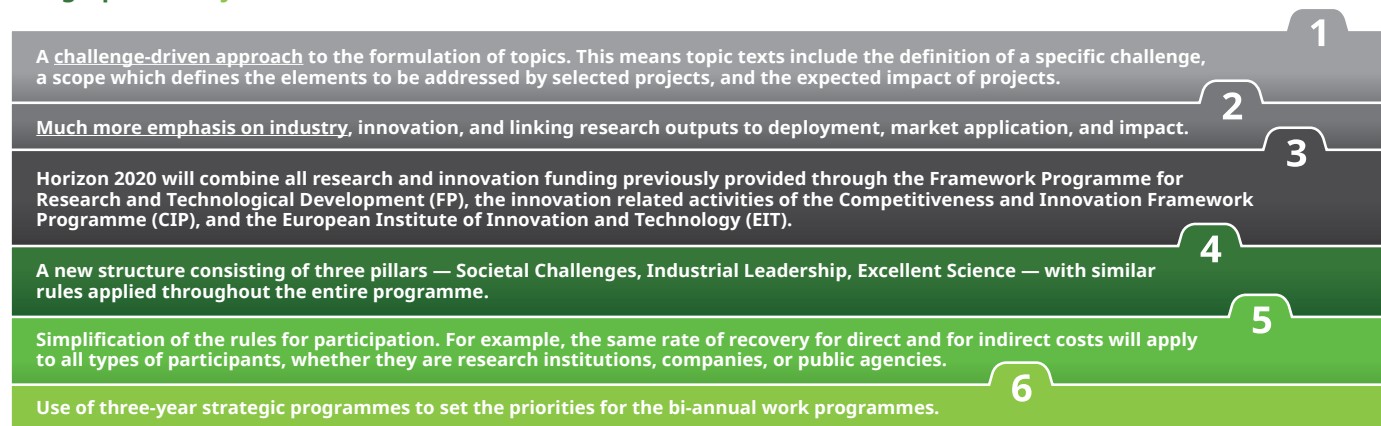
What role does CTA play within the CAAST-Net Plus network?

CTA is one of the network's 25 project partners. We play a lead role in the project's work on analysing the impact of food security research cooperation between Africa and Europe. We also contribute to several other areas of CAAST-Net Plus, for example, bridging the public-private sector divide for greater impact on food security, strengthening intra-EU coordination of support for bi-regional food security research co-operation, the framework conditions for bi-regional cooperation, and the development of a sustainable EU-African platform for food security. Readers interested in engaging with CTA on their work can email enquiries@caast-net-plus.org.

Six Horizon 2020 Infographics

What you need to know

Infographic 1: Major Features of Horizon 2020



Source: South Denmark European Office and creaDK (2014) *The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Horizon 2020 Questions and Answers* <http://bit.ly/1hNa1qL>

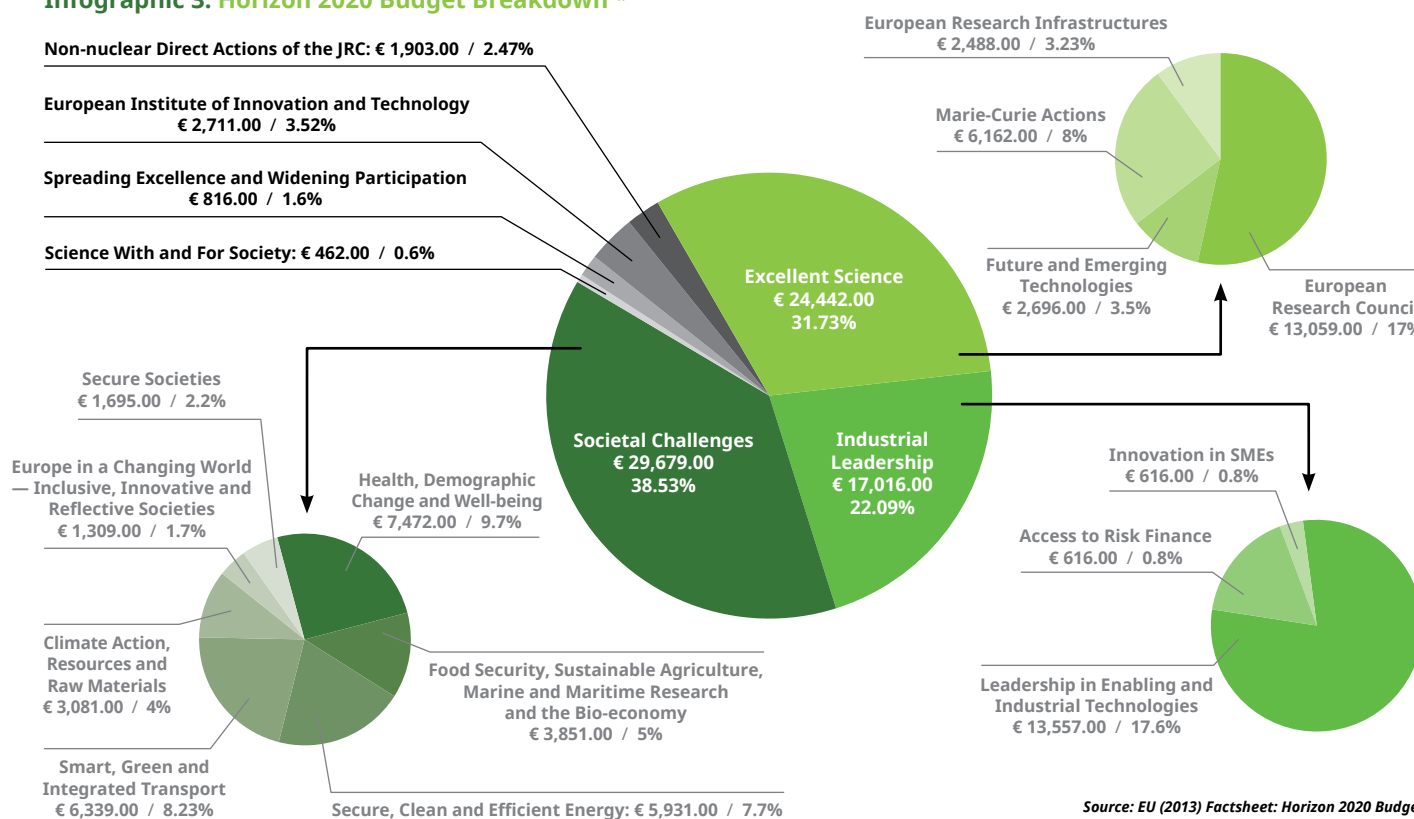
Infographic 2: Horizon 2020 Programming Cycles



What is a Strategic Programme? The Strategic Programmes set the direction of Horizon 2020 programming over a three year cycle.

What is a Work Programme? The Work Programmes commission the work to be done through specific calls for proposals over a two year cycle.

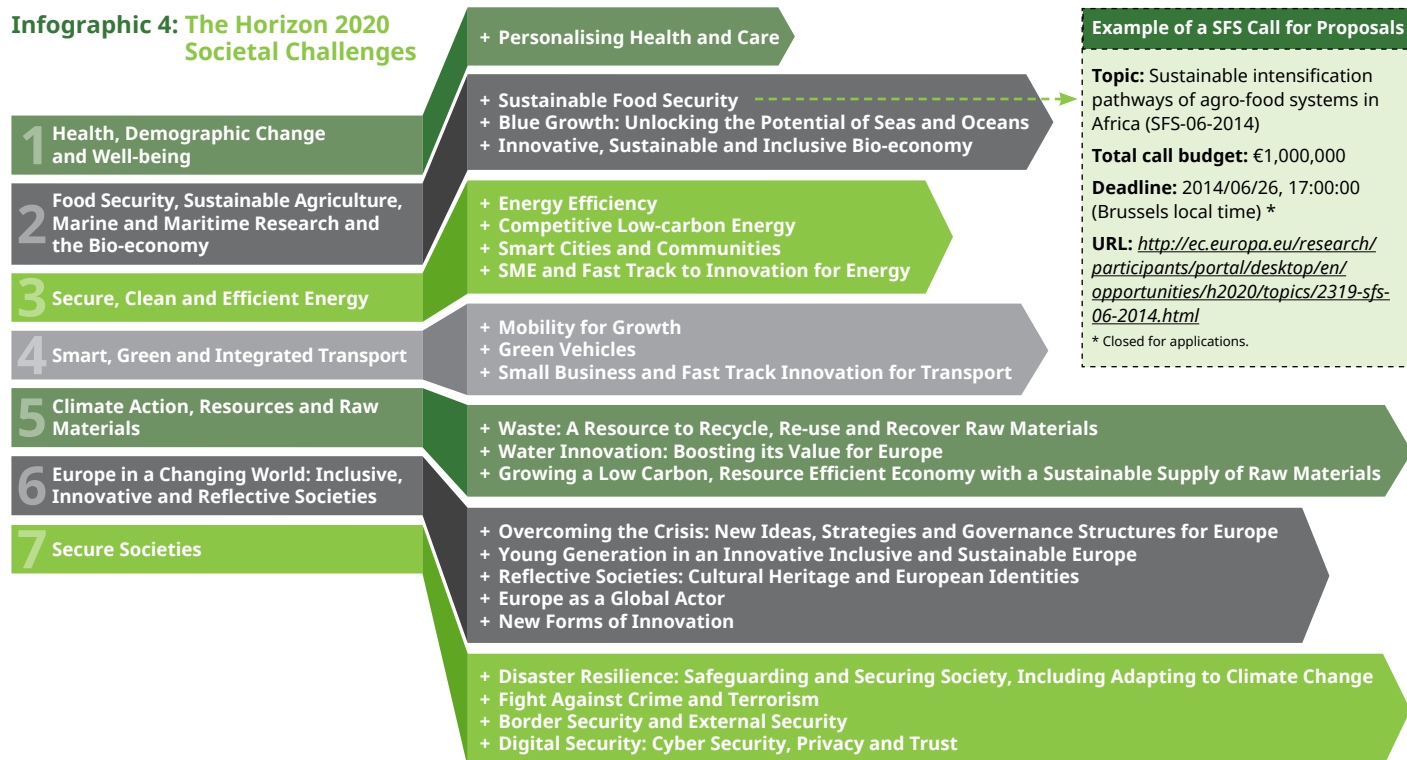
Infographic 3: Horizon 2020 Budget Breakdown *



Source: EU (2013) *Factsheet: Horizon 2020 Budget* <http://bit.ly/1f6ElbZ>

* billions of Euros

Infographic 4: The Horizon 2020 Societal Challenges



Infographic 5: Horizon 2020 Grantmaking



Infographic 6: Horizon 2020 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Science and Technology Quality	Implementation	Impact
+ Clarity of the objectives of the study	+ Management structure and procedures	+ Contribution to expected impacts outlined in the Work Programme
+ Methodology	+ Relevance and quality of participants	+ Innovation capacity/new knowledge
+ Innovation potential	+ Quality of consortium as a whole	+ Effectiveness of proposal to disseminate or exploit results
+ Soundness of concept (including transdisciplinary considerations)	+ Allocation of resources	

To Apply, or Not to Apply

We answer your frequently asked
Horizon 2020 questions



Refilwe Mashigo
Research Africa



Melissa Plath
JYU-UNIPID



Horizon 2020 proposal development requires a substantial investment of time, network capital and financial resources. Our advice to prospective applicants? Fill up on information, share the risks and rewards with your partners, and always, always exercise rigour in your proposal execution.

Horizon 2020 is, is not?

Horizon 2020 is the European Union's funding programme for research and innovation. Its value, in crude monetary terms, is almost €80 billion, which is to be spread over a seven-year period (2014-2020). Its goal? To enable the EU to become an innovation union, whose citizens, economies and ecologies are able to thrive because good ideas are put to work. More specifically, Horizon 2020 funding aims to enable the EU to deliver excellent science, industrial leadership, and to tackle its societal challenges. "Horizon 2020 funding is designed to foster new research and innovation and is very competitive," says Melissa Plath of the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. "It is not a development aid fund."

*By its design,
Horizon 2020
supports
international
cooperation*

Am I eligible to apply to Horizon 2020 if I am based at an institution in Africa?

Horizon 2020 funding calls generally have unique eligibility requirements. Some calls even seek participation by particular countries. For example ISSI.5.2014.2015 (Supporting structural change in research organisations to promote Responsible Research and Innovation) is particularly interested in attracting partners from North American, BRICs and Asian countries. It is important to remember that the Horizon 2020 programme is open.

"African partners are eligible to apply in most of the calls, not only those where Africa is mentioned," says Plath. "All the information you need to apply is available on the CORDIS website."



CORDIS = Community Research and Development Information Service

Horizon 2020 calls appear to the research community in the form of "work programmes". Work programmes are accessible via CORDIS on the Horizon 2020 website (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/>).

How do I explain the strategic benefit of my Horizon 2020 application investment to my seniors?

Masahudu Fuseini of the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute in Ghana says Horizon 2020 collaboration is about mutual growth and exchange. "It will afford both continents the opportunities to learn and share knowledge, from both ends." Teaming up may also result in capacity strengthening and improved research productivity. "Africa and the EU have the opportunity to support and strengthen their research capacities and output by joining forces," says Constantine Vaitsas of the FORTH/PRAXI Network in Greece. "Research should not be fragmented in any case, and the EU funding instrument for research and innovation [Horizon 2020] has been designed to support cooperation with international partners."



Masahudu Fuseini
CSIR-STEPRI



Constantine Vaitsas
FORTH/PRAXI Network

What key requirements should I pay attention to in developing my proposal?

Strong partnerships matter

A proposal must originate from a robust consortium of partners. "It is very important to remember that three partners from three different EU countries is a basic requirement for most calls," says Plath. "Consortia will be judged on the partnership itself: Can the particular grouping of partners do what they say they're going to do? Can they achieve what's required to deliver impact? And so on. Knowing your strength as a partner ensures that you understand and can make an argument for why you, in particular, should be part of the consortium." Vaitsas echoes the important role of individual partner organisations. "The consortium may be evaluated as a whole, but every partner must have a clearly defined role that adds value to the project."



'Trust your gut'

Forming a Horizon 2020 proposal writing partnership from scratch can be extremely challenging. "In general, African researchers hoping to prepare a proposal would benefit from working with partners who are already familiar with the EU funding frameworks. This may mean joining a pre-existing consortium or it may mean contacting such a partner directly," says Plath. She adds: "Partnerships work best if there is trust between the partners. This trust is formed from previous experience. I would advise prospective applicants to consider working with partners they already know and trust. This is of course not to say that new and fruitful partnerships cannot be formed during the application process."

Melissa Plath

Proposal rigour is essential

Horizon 2020 proposals must stage their arguments extremely convincingly. "Some of the main challenges proposal writers face is that they fail to understand precisely the specific requirements of the call, or fail to make a strong case to support the technology argument, scientific excellence argument,

or the potential impact of their proposed work," says Vaitsas. "The pre-requisites of each call must be followed religiously, and failure to meet these requirements *will* lead to the disqualification of an application," Fuseini adds.

Innovation, uptake are key

"Horizon 2020 has a strong challenge-based approach with emphasis on innovation with continuous support for R&D," Vaitsas says. "Researchers have considerable freedom to come up with innovative solutions, but proposals must show **how** they bring together different technologies along the entire innovation chain," he adds. But it is also about uptake. "The relevance of a technology to potential users is critical to articulate in your proposal," says Fuseini.

Submit your application and ALL the needed documents on time



Other key terms

Impact: Pay attention to expected impact in Research and Innovation Actions (RIA) and especially in Innovation Actions (IA), where this must be precisely addressed. The expected impact is outlined in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme for each topic.

Technology Readiness Level: In the Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges pillars of Horizon 2020, the proposed project idea must begin from a Technology Readiness Level, or TRL, of 3-4, and **not** from the concept stage, as in FP7.

Constantine Vaitsas

Parting thought

Good luck!

The Right Information Matters

Spreading the word about Horizon 2020



Gerard Ralphs
Research Africa



Constantine Vaitsas
FORTH/PRAXI Network



A specific goal of CAAST-Net Plus is to share accurate information about Horizon 2020 widely across the sub-Saharan Africa region. Over the past 18 months we have hosted information sessions in nine countries, interacting with over 650 stakeholders, including researchers, innovation specialists, NCPs, and policy-makers.

Questions: Gerard Ralphs

Responses: Constantine Vaitsas

This year marks the start of the new Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. How is Horizon 2020 different to its predecessor, the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)?

NCPs in Horizon 2020 will play a pivotal role in disseminating important information about the available opportunities, and the rules of participation, at the national level

Horizon 2020 is different, in many ways, when compared to FP7. But three key differences come to mind: First, Horizon 2020 has a clear focus on research and innovation and, what I call, “closer-to-the-market” activities. These activities, which might involve prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, scaling-up, are activities that will enjoy much more attention in Horizon 2020 than in FP7. Second, Horizon 2020 focuses closely on industrial leadership and the societal challenges the EU faces, such as health, clean energy and transport (see pages 12-13).

Third, Horizon 2020 represents a great effort to achieve coherence: its single set of participation and financial rules, and its simplicity, really stand to benefit all participants that previously have found programme framework red tape difficult to wade through.

It is an exciting time for many individuals and organisation as there are many new Horizon 2020 funding opportunities for collaboration on offer. What has CAAST-Net Plus been doing to ensure these opportunities are shared widely among interested potential collaborators from Europe and sub-Saharan Africa?

A key focus area for CAAST-Net Plus is raising awareness about these very opportunities among research institutions and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in sub-Saharan Africa. Since January 2013, CAAST-Net Plus has led information sessions in Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Mauritius, and Rwanda, some of them in collaboration with the European Commission and the IST-Africa project. We have enjoyed excellent participation by and interaction with all of our information session audiences.

In FP7, which ran from 2007-2013, National Contact Points (NCPs) were appointed by many national governments across the globe. They provided valuable in-country information to research communities

about the FP7 thematic areas, but also legal and financial aspects of participation in the programme. Is the same approach advocated by the European Commission in Horizon 2020?

I should say upfront that NCPs in Horizon 2020, like in previous framework programmes, will play a pivotal role, at the national level, in disseminating important information about the available opportunities and the rules of participation. NCP activities are extremely important to country success in terms of fostering engagement and forming cooperation with counterparts across borders in Horizon 2020 calls.

A key element of CAAST-Net Plus activities is to inspire and enhance the national NCP networks in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, a number of dedicated workshops have been organised alongside our information sessions to showcase the costs and benefits of creating and maintaining NCP networks. It is with great pleasure that we are already seeing a number of sub-Saharan African countries establishing their networks and building the capacities of their NCPs.

What are some of the potential barriers to Horizon 2020 collaboration for researchers and innovators from sub-Saharan Africa?

In my view, there are three potential barriers. First, the lack of awareness about the specific opportunities available to research institutions and SMEs within the first Horizon 2020 round of calls specifically is a cause for concern. However, as I suggest above, this is being mitigated by the actions of the CAAST-Net Plus project. Excellent information is available through publicly accessible web-platforms such as www.caast-net-plus.org, as well as from the European Commission.

Second, the level of simplification that has been achieved by the Horizon 2020 programme is not yet well understood by many applicants from around the world. There is still a perception that it is a “complex” programme, which is not the case if compared to FP7.

Third, a key factor that might hinder participation from sub-Saharan Africa is the lack of networking of research institutions and SMEs with European counterparts. While those that have enjoyed previous cooperation are investing in maintaining their ties with the EU, new applicants find it difficult to get networked and introduced to new project formations. Readers of this magazine should remember that CAAST-Net Plus offers some spaces for this networking to happen, such as our information sessions, consultative workshops and multi-stakeholder conferences.

What advice do you have for researchers and innovators from sub-Saharan Africa and Europe about Horizon 2020 participation?

I have strategic and practical advice. Strategically, I would simply advise readers that Horizon 2020 is open! That means researchers and innovators from around the world can participate in the programme. This is a tremendous opportunity. More practically, participants from the so-called “third countries” (non-EU member or associated countries) should remember three things: First, carefully review the call that you wish to respond to. A successful proposal requires considerable investment (see page 14-15). Be sure you wish to go down the road. Second, partner with leading, experienced and high-calibre institutions from Europe and elsewhere to form a robust consortium. This will help you to secure the foundation of a strong proposal. Third, provide justified evidence of the project’s ability to orient itself to innovation and market-related activities. And do not forget about sustainability and impact!

Tell our readers about the FORTH/ PRAXI Network and your organisation's involvement with CAAST-Net Plus.

The FORTH/PRAXI Network started working on international cooperation activities back in 2003, and our dedicated Unit for International Cooperation was launched in 2007. Since then we have both managed and participated in innovation projects in countries around the world, including BRICS and the Gulf countries. Among the services we provide to the global research and innovation community are twinning and staff exchange schemes, as well as training for National Contact Points (NCPs).

Within CAAST-Net Plus, the FORTH/PRAXI Network is part of a team that looks at increasing Horizon 2020 awareness within European and African research and SME communities. We also aim to inspire and strengthen the networks of NCPs in the sub-Saharan Africa region.

At FORTH/PRAXI, we work with a dedicated team of CAAST-Net Plus partners, including the University of Jyväskylä in Finland and the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute based at Ghana's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

If our readers would like to contact your organisation for more information, what is the best way to get in touch?

Please write to me: Constantine Vaitsas, Innovation Management & International Cooperation, PRAXI Network (vaitsas@help-forward.gr). I can also be reached by telephone (+30 210 36 11 095 or +30 210 36 07 690).

Dr Hassan Mshinda of Tanzania's Commission for Science and Technology in conversation with the European Commission's Stéphane Hogan during the CAAST-Net Plus and IST-Africa Horizon 2020 East Africa Roadshow (20-24 January 2014). [Image credit: IST-Africa]



Participants from the Uganda event on 22 January 2014. The Roadshow aimed at raising awareness among researchers and the research management community about the EU's new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. [Image credit: IST-Africa]



Policy Support Through Strategic Communication and Networking

Three ways CAAST-Net Plus can enhance the bi-regional policy dialogue on research and innovation



Gerard Ralphs
Research Africa



CAAST-Net Plus work at the policy level has been designed, in part, to be flexible and responsive. This means we can learn from discussions taking place within existing policy fora — such as the High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation (HLPD) — and aim to generate evidence-based outputs that will be of value within these spaces. The nature and configuration of our consortium, which consists of many of the national authorities that are members of this formal policy dialogue, supports this outreach work.

The CAAST-Net Plus project exists to improve the quantity and quality of research and innovation cooperation between Europe and Africa. To achieve this goal, we undertake a wide range of activities, such as catalysing networking situations that bring our regions' researchers and innovators closer together, conducting impact analyses on bi-regional collaborations in order to identify cooperation constraints and potential solutions, as well as engaging with the relevant public officials at national, sub-regional, regional and bi-regional levels. All of these activities have been designed in such a way as to provide meaningful evidence but also practical help — at the level of the researcher right through to the level of the policy-maker — in the cooperation process.

At the policy level, specifically, we are especially well-placed to continue to develop strategic communication support actions that help to foster networking, share new data and analysis, and that make the most of our partners' positioning to leverage synergies.

1. Networking

CAAST-Net Plus can facilitate the participation of both mid- and high-level European and African policy-makers in our project's activities, such as our regional consultations as well as our multi-stakeholder forums. In 2013 and 2014, for example, we convened governments and research institutions in West, Southern and East Africa to discuss the important role of collaborative research and innovation in contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation as well sustainable agriculture.

2. Data and analysis

Our data and analytical outputs are being designed to strengthen and enliven the discussions that are taking place within the HLPD, but also discussions taking place at the national level. We aim to do this through delivering reliable evidence and fresh insight. In 2014, for example, we will be releasing three new studies — and associated shorter policy briefs — that address the impact of bi-regional cooperation in research and innovation across three global societal challenge areas, namely, food security, health and climate change (pages 4-11).

3. Synergy

A number of CAAST-Net Plus network members are, too, members of the HLPD, as well as represent their national governments in various other bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation activities. This means that, through a natural synergy, our project outputs can interact with and hopefully enhance both formal and informal policy processes. For example, we leveraged this proximity successfully by supporting a side event on food and nutrition security, which was held alongside the HLPD meeting in November 2013.

We have welcomed the participation of both the European Commission and the African Union Commission, as well as the range of national and sub-regional partners, at previous CAAST-Net and CAAST-Net Plus events. We look forward to further such engagement.

Research Africa is co-leader of the CAAST-Net Plus work package on communication and dissemination.

Pin it to CAAST-Net Plus

Events | Links | Opportunities

+ CAAST-Net Plus Horizon 2020 Information Day

When: **10 July 2014**
Where: **Maputo, Mozambique**
Contact: **Maria Maia**
(Maria.Maia@fct.pt)

+ Revolutionising Finance for Agri-Value Chains

When: **14 – 18 July 2014**
Where: **Kenya School of Monetary Studies, Nairobi, Kenya**
Contact: **For more information and to register**
(<http://bit.ly/1qNOZkm>)

+ 2014 Globelics Conference: Partnerships for Innovation-based Development

When: **29 – 31 October 2014**
Where: **African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**
Contact: **Conference Organising Committee**
(globelics2014@globelics.org)

+ Opportunities and Challenges for Greater Involvement of Private Sector in Health Research Cooperation: A Joint EDCTP and CAAST-Net Plus Panel Discussion

When: **2 July 2014**
Where: **Berlin, Germany**
Contact: **Katharina Kuss**
(katharina.kuss@gmx.de)

+ Climate Change and Vector-borne Diseases Conference

When: **18 – 20 November 2014**
Where: **Nobleza Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda**
Contact: **Theophile Niyonzima** (t.niyonzima@ur.ac.rw)

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enquiries@caast-net-plus.org