The CAAST-Net Bulletin

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

Inside this issue:

S&T dialogue to open doors into the future

The CAAST-Net kick-off meeting in Entebbe, Uganda, earlier this year set in motion a fresh effort to enhance bi-regional Africa-EU cooperation.

CAAST-NET KICKED OFF IN FINE STYLE AT THE Imperial Resort Beach Hotel in Entebbe, Uganda, between 20-21 February. It was a long-awaited opportunity for members of the CAAST-Net consortium among others to gather and deliberate on the project, and to map the way forward.

But while the meeting officially marked the beginning of the four-year partner-ship between CAAST-Net's eighteen partner organi-sations from Europe and Africa, Andy Cherry, the project's coordina-tor, has empha-sised that CAAST-Net should not be seen as an exclu-sive "club." Rather it is a pro-ject that aims to represent regional interest for mutual benefit.

To achieve this status, it will be working closely with regional institutions in Africa – the AUC most importantly – to establish itself as an effective player in the S&T landscape. "Support from the AUC and NEPAD is absolutely vital to CAAST-Net's activities and their effectiveness," says Cherry.

"Without their involvement we would fail to align ourselves with Africa's priorities and we would not have or deserve the political support we currently enjoy."

Themeur Chaibi, the AUC-CAAST-Net Liason at the Human Resources, Science and Technology Department has echoed this sentiment. He sug-gests that CAAST-Net will be considered suc-cessful if it achieves its own objectives, while at the same time contributes to achieving the ob-jectives of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and the Africa Sci-ence and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action. Avoiding re-source wastage and replication of efforts would also be crucial to CAAST-Net's suc-cess, said Chaibi.

CAAST-Net kicks off at Entebbe   Photo by Leo Pekkala

INCO-Nets

CAAST-Net is sup-ported by the Euro-pean Commissions Seventh Framework Pro-gramme via the Directorate General for Re-search and Development. It is one of six INCO-Net's (or International Cooperation Networks) envisaged to foster bi-regional dialogue in sci-ence and technology. The five other INCO-Nets are WBC-INCO-Net (Western Balkans), INCO-Net EECA (Eastern Europe and Central Asia), MIRA (the Mediterranean), SEA-EU-Net (South East Asia), and EULARI-Net (Latin America).

The project timeframe is 2008 to 2011.- **GR**

Project Fact Sheet

Project Acronym	CAAST-Net
Website	www.caast-net.org
FP7 Theme	Capacities
Strategic Objective	International Cooperation
Project Duration	48 Months
Start Date	1 January 2008
End Date	31 December 2011
Total EU Funding	3 Million Euros
Number of African Partners	10
Number of European Partners	8
Grant Agreement Number	212625

WP6 READY FOR THE START WHISTLE

Work Package Focus examines some of the contributions to CAAST-Net of Work Package Six (WP6), and some of the stumbling blocks.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH. This is the official title of Work Package Six – a key link in the chain of CAAST-Net's seven work packages.

Unlike work packages 1-5, WP6 is lead solely by Research Africa, a Cape Town-based research management organisation.

Nine months into the life of the project, what have been some of the major WP6 contributions to CAAST-Net?

The production and launch of the official website is certainly the first (see Back Page). Close on its heels has been the effective organisation of the CAAST-Net website for project management, document sharing and online collaboration; while the launch of the CAAST-Net Bulletin makes another important contribution.

Some of the stumbling blocks WP6 has encountered include the uneven use of the website across work packages. This could hinder cooperation efforts if partners and the stakeholder community do not utilise the site in the ways that it has been intended.

Production of accessible, relevant, up-to-date information about CAAST-Net for the four readerships – the Public Understanding of Africa-EU S&T Cooperation, Policymakers and Public Officials, the Press, National Information Points – will be the next major hurdle to overcome before the end of the year.

This will require WP leaders to be forthcoming in submitting work done so that is may be given the right level of attention for the right level of dissemination.

What can be said in conclusion is that the pitch has been laid for effective online collaboration. It's now up to all partners and the stakeholder community to play ball.- WP6

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ONE CHANCE TO PROFILE YOUR WP...

WORK PACKAGE FOCUS (WPF) offers WP Leaders the opportunity each year to inform both CAAST-Net partners and the stakeholder community of WP progress.

With each new CAAST-Net Bulletin the partners of two work packages will be encouraged to work separately with the CAAST-Net Editor to represent work done.

The structure of the WPF is open for discussion by WP partners themselves. Contributions may vary and include a combination of written accounts and or visuals.

Since the Bulletin will be published four times in each year, Work Packages will have but a single yearly chance to contribute to the Work Package Focus. It's therefore something of an opportunity not to be missed!

The basic protocol for WPF will be as follows:

1. The CAAST-Net Editor will approach WP leaders via e-mail on the basis of a rota.

2. WP leaders will be asked for suggestions for their contribution to WPF. Leaders may ask their colleagues to contribute either an article, or a set of points which the Editor can use as the basis for an article.

3. A draft of the articles as they are to appear in the bulletin will be sent to the Work Package Leaders/authors for confirmation *prior* to publication.

4. Once WP Leaders are satisfied with detail, style and pitch, articles will be submitted for publication.

For information on WPF, contact the CAAST-Net Editor editor@caast-net.org.

Africa-EU S&T in brief (Jan-Sep)

AFRICAN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION INDICATORS INITIATIVE (ASTII)
The first training workshop for the ASTII took place in Gauteng, South Africa, earlier this year between 10 and 14 March 2008. "Delegates noted that the workshop provided a means for sharing knowledge about R&D and innovation surveys and about other measures and indicators of science, technology and innovation (STI). However the process was just beginning," the workshop report concluded. Several focal points in the 19 countries identified to be part of ASTII have since been established, *Research Africa* reported on 23 September 2008.

ERA EXPERT GROUP REPORT CONCLUDES INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION KEY
"[T]he international dimension is an integral component in the making of genuine European Research Area and will be increasingly so in the coming years," wrote the European Research Area Expert Group in a report released in July 2008.

INCREASED BANDWIDTH TO SPEED INTO EAST AFRICA SOON
Harvard University professor and CAAST-Net Advisory Panel member, Calestous Juma, told *Guardian* reporter Xan Rai in August that fibre optic bandwidth for East Africa would radically alter the flow of knowledge, from 5kmph – "walking pace" – to the speed of light. The impact on business in the region would be "phenomenal" Juma said.

BULLETIN NOTICE BOARD

For our online readers, click on any of the underlined points you would like to find out more about and you will be directed to the relevant page on the CAAST-Net website.

- CAAST-Net participates in IST Conference, Namibia (Partners only)

- Advisory Panel Members announced

- Terms of Reference for the CAAST-Net Advisory Panel under evaluation - August-October

- Consortium Agreement ready for signing (Partners only)

- CAAST-Net establishes relations with AU-HRST (Partners only)

- WP7 meet with Thematic Directorates in Brussels (September/October 2008) (Partners only)

- Add a contact to the CAAST-Net Stakeholder Community (Partners only)

- Comment on the CAAST-Net website (Open to the Stakeholder Community)

- Job Opportunity: Programme Officer (Partners only)

- Writing a CAAST-Net report? Need a template? Click here

Calendar: Oct-Dec '08

DATE (2008)	EVENT	WHERE	HOST ORGANISATION	CONTACT
24 October	Coordinator and Africa Region Coordinator to meet Permanent Secretary, Kenya Ministry of HE, S&T	Nairobi, Kenya	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology	Dr. Andy Cherry Dr. Eric Mwangi
7 November	CAAST-Net Presentation at INTERLINK Workshop	Brussels	INTERLINK	Dr. Andy Cherry
1-3 December	National Contact Point (NCP) Workshop	Pretoria, South Africa	INCONTACT/CAAST-Net	Dr. Mmboneni Muofhe Mabatho Ndwandwa

Letters to the Editor

A CALL FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM ALL CAAST-NET PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS!

Please e-mail or post all letters to: editor@caast-net.org or; The CAAST-Net Editor, Research Africa, Level Six, The Bandwidth Barn, 125 Buitengragt Street, Cape Town, South Africa, 8001. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters to meet space requirements.

CAAST-NET: 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 though other instruments of international cooperation, and though 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.

CONTACT THE PROJECT COORDINATOR DR. ANDREW CHERRY AT COORDINATOR@CAAST-NET.ORG,
THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR SARA CALAMASSI AT ADMIN@CAAST-NET.ORG,
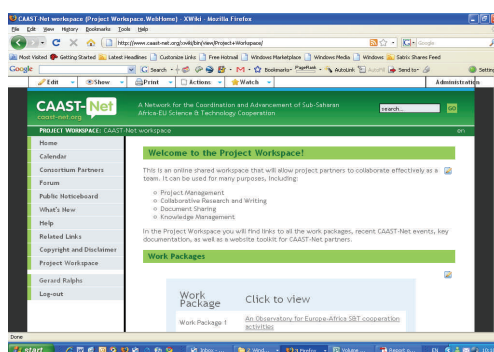OR THE AFRICA REGION COORDINATOR, DR. ERIC MWANGI AT EMWANGI23@YAHOO.COM

Websites? Wikis?

Wiki is becoming an increasingly popular tool for building websites. What's behind wiki technology, and why will it be useful for CAAST-Net?

ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2008, WP6 launched the final official CAAST-Net website, after many months of continuous testing and revision.

The website has been built using wiki technology. For those familiar with Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, the principle is exactly the same: users can add, edit and update content bypassing the complex coding (for example, HTML) typically used in the construction of websites.

For CAAST-Net, this means that all partners and members of the stakeholder community can read about and comment on the work of the project. Partners can also edit sections of the site to add or update content, allow-

A screenshot from the new CAAST-Net website.

ing the site to be used for collaborative research and writing, document sharing, and knowledge management.

The website is an online office, news service, forum, library and archive all in one!

Stucture

The website is split into two sections: an internal interface and an external interface. The internal interface, otherwise known as the Project

Workspace, is where project partners get down to the business of CAAST-Net – producing the documents relating to the project deliverables, and so on. Partners have editing rights on this section. The external interface on the other hand is the public face of CAAST-Net, providing information for anyone who accesses the site.

Importantly, the long-term function of the external interface will be that of a window into the project through the different readerships, including dissemination of the findings. These readerships are currently being established by Work Package 6 with an increased flow of CAAST-Net project outputs expected in the coming months.- **GR&MA**