



**6th Meeting of the Advisory Committee  
on  
Science and Technology for ACP Agricultural & Rural Development  
CTA Headquarters, Wageningen, The Netherlands  
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***“Advancing the ST&I Policy Dialogue: Increasing Performance and Impact”***

**Communiqué\***

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The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) convened the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee on Science & Technology (S&T) for ACP Agricultural and Rural Development from November 12 – 16, 2007 at its Headquarters in Wageningen, The Netherlands. The theme for this year’s meeting was *“Advancing the ST&I Policy Dialogue – Increasing Performance and Impact”*.

The overall objective of the meeting was to strengthen inter and intra-regional ACP and ACP/EU collaboration for directing the science, technology and innovation (ST&I) policy agenda to enhance agricultural performance in the ACP Group of States. Over the five day period, the Advisory Committee:

- Discussed ST&I developments and related issues which impact on the future of ACP agricultural and rural development and identified strategies for influencing the agricultural science technology and innovation (ASTI) policy processes. Intellectual property rights as a strategy for sustaining innovation was given special attention.
- Reviewed and made recommendations for finalizing the draft ACP policy briefs on Biofuels, Fisheries and Livestock, approved them in principle and developed strategies for their wider dissemination in the ACP region.
- Reviewed and approved proposals for operationalizing CTA's Science and Technology Strategies programme 2008 – 2010 including strengthening the Advisory Committee and redesigning the knowledge for development web portal <http://knowledge.cta.int/>

Presentations from the meeting are available on <http://knowledge.cta.int/>. A summary of the deliberations and the main decisions taken are presented.

### **Summary of Main Issues**

The Advisory Committee noted that:

- i. The culture of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and using it to support policy making in the ACP Group of States is weak. It further noted the work being piloted by IFPRI to identify cross-country indicators to determine how innovative agriculture in developing countries is and agreed that quantitative and qualitative indicators should be identified for each level and scale to determine the contribution of actors in the innovation system to enhancing the performance of ACP agriculture.

ii. The natural resource base for agriculture, more specifically land, water and biodiversity, is dwindling; conflicts are increasing because of competing claims on natural resources and ACP states are not effectively using geospatial technologies to support land and water resource management because of inadequacy in education and training, institutional capacity and funding. The AC further noted that, the ACP Group of States must invest in upgrading the physical and human infrastructure including the acquisition of computer hardware and software for improving the management and use of geospatial data in decision making.

iii. The advances made by the Caribbean region in finalizing the regional ST&I framework document and recognized that mechanisms were in place at the national level to coordinate and facilitate the stakeholder dialogues. The AC further noted that the process was lengthy and considered the regional policy document as a template that governments could use to derive their national ST&I policies and strategies.

iv. The three draft policy briefs on biofuels, fisheries and livestock are priority issues for ACP states and commended the work of the ACP experts and their EU counterparts in bringing the issues to the fore. The AC requested that the policy briefs emphasize that biofuels, fisheries and livestock are priority issues of ACP governments and stressed the need for linkages to be made between livestock and fisheries sub-sectors and other commodities – grains, root crops and other staple foods for meeting food security goals. The AC agreed to promote the three ACP policy briefs nationally, regionally and internationally using print and electronic media and the various communication platforms available to them.

v. The IPR system in ACP countries is weak and this limits their ability to take advantage of windows of opportunity under existing IPR agreements and instruments to spur innovation. The AC further noted that given the importance of IPRs in fostering and strengthening research collaboration and enhancing and

sustaining innovation that the ACP region must invest in building capacity – legal, judicial, governance, administrative and entrepreneurial.

vi. Public, private partnerships (PPP) can provide much needed funding for undertaking valuable research in addition to bringing the research results to the market. However, the weaknesses in both the public and private sectors in many ACP countries are hindering co-innovation. The AC further noted that the ACP region can learn lessons from northern and southern partners who have been able to navigate the IPR system and foster innovation to their agricultural sectors.

vii. Up-scaling participatory approaches for enhancing agricultural innovation requires changes in the institutional culture in universities, R&D organizations and government and between these actors, in addition to significant investments in time and resources. The AC cautioned that formal mechanisms for embedding participatory approaches within existing institutional arrangements must not override the spontaneous networking that exists and which continues to sustain agriculture especially at community level in rural areas.

viii. Ethics must underpin research collaborations including public private partnerships if they are to be successful and sustainable and stressed the need for partners to understand each other's motives whether they are profit oriented or serving the interests of the public when designing the cooperation agreements.

ix. The ACP region is losing its senior scientists through attrition and outward migration and that urgent attention must be paid to mobilizing and mentoring young scientists. The AC further noted the 2007 – 2010 strategic plan developed and approved by the African Youth Forum on S&T at their third African Youth Congress in Uganda in 2007 and commended the young professionals on the progress made.

x. The progress in bringing horticulture to the attention of policymakers, researchers and other stakeholder since initiating the CTA / ISHS collaboration at its meeting in 2005 and the launch of GHI in 2006. The AC further noted that the development of the horticulture industry in ACP countries remains a priority for food and nutrition security and wealth creation and stressed the need to conserve indigenous fruits and vegetables and enhance research efforts on these commodities to develop the nutri-foods and pharmaceutical sectors.

xi. The importance of CTA's strategic partnership with Wageningen University and Research Centre and Leuven University and by extension the Advisory Committee. The AC further noted the Wageningen UR cutting edge library and information centre and genomics facilities and the opportunities that exist for developing future partnerships between the EU universities and research organizations and ACP organizations.

xii. The strategic vision for European Agricultural Research for Development (EARD) in 2015 and beyond and the future focus of funding agricultural research on global issues. The AC further noted the five types of collaboration set out in the framework document but emphasized the continued need for greater integration of ACP priorities in setting the joint research agenda to be funded by the EU member states.

xiii. CTA priorities as stated in its strategic plan 2007 – 2010: agricultural diversification, value adding and differentiated strategies; bioenergy/biofuels; epidemics and pandemics; participatory geographic information system (PGIS); biodiversity and; climate change and natural disasters. The AC further noted that within CTA science and technology, youth, gender, HIV and AIDS, and ICM concepts are cross cutting issues.

xiv. The priorities identified during the AC 2006 e-consultation: coping with climate change and global warming; advances in technologies relevant to ACP

agriculture; the shortage of agricultural scientists and professionals; globalization, market liberalization and commercialization; biotechnology; knowledge management, information sharing and learning; food security; increasing levels of poverty; urbanization and the growing economy and market forces of Brazil, China and India and considered that these were consistent with CTA's priorities.

xv. The plans for the CTA S&T strategies programme 2008-2010 to consolidate and build on 2004-2007 achievements and expand outreach while maintaining three strategic focal areas; advancing the ST&I policy dialogue for agricultural and rural development; redesigning and expanding the S&T information management and communication dedicated resource – the “Knowledge for Development” webportal <http://knowledge.cta.int> to include user generated content and; mainstreaming the capacity building programme on understanding, analyzing and strengthening the agricultural, science, technology and innovation(ASTI) system.

xvi. The areas of emphasis for the 2008 CTA S&T strategies programme for expert meetings and policy briefs *inter alia*: New technologies, specifically the application of nanotechnologies in ACP agricultural development; Emerging issues of dry land agriculture and Women and youth in ST&I

xvii. The proposals made to mainstream the innovation systems approach by: publishing and disseminating the ASTI train the trainers manual; engaging regional networks of universities such as RUFORUM and ANAFE, national and international universities and national agricultural research organizations in participating and leading follow-up ASTI training workshops including embedding the innovation systems approach in university curricula; building the capacity of ACP scientists to influence policy processes; identifying indicators and mechanisms for measuring performance and impact and piloting the tool in selected ACP organizations.

## Recommendations

The Advisory Committee made the following recommendations based on the deliberations during plenary and working group sessions. The AC:

i. Recommended that priority be given to developing the capacity of ACP organizations to capture, interpret and use data at the community, national, and regional levels to support informed decision-making and measure the contribution of ST&I to enhancing the performance of ACP agriculture. The AC further recommended that the indicators and mechanisms be developed in a participatory manner and piloted in selected ACP organizations as a matter of urgency to build capacity and ensure sustainability.

ii. Recommended that:

- Regional organizations improve access to satellite imagery through bulk purchase and provision of grants to member countries;
- Governments enhance and where possible establish regional and technical training facilities and award graduate scholarships and;
- The use of GIS technologies and participatory GIS be widely promoted at all levels to enhance the policy-decision making processes for improving the management and use of natural resources for agriculture, reducing conflicting claims on natural resources and mitigating the risk to natural disasters including floods.

iii. Recommended that the three policy briefs on biofuels, fisheries and livestock be finalized within one month, translated into French, published and circulated widely using the various communication platforms available to the AC members.

iv. Recommended that ACP governments honour their commitments to increase investments in public research and ensure that mechanisms are put in place so that publicly funded research addresses food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and wealth creation.

v. Recommended that research organizations and universities in ACP countries singly or collectively invest in establishing technology management offices and building in-house capacity on IPR issues. The AC further recommended that links be established between the CTA and WIPO to provide guidance to the Advisory Committee on IP strategies for enhancing research collaborations within and across the ACP regions and between the ACP and northern and other southern partners.

vi. Recommended that ACP researchers should not compromise research quality for profit but seek to achieve a balance for mobilizing funding to sustain research and ensure that partners establish and maintain boundaries and respect each partner's mandate – public good vs profit.

vii. Recommended that the innovation systems approach be mainstreamed and serve as the guiding principle for enhancing agricultural innovation and improving the performance of ACP agriculture.

viii. Recommended that there be continued focus on addressing gender imbalances and the intergenerational vacuum to increase the participation of youth, young professionals and women in influencing ST&I policy processes within the ACP region as a core strategy for enhancing innovation and agricultural performance.

viii. Recommended that there be continued focus on horticulture including urban horticulture and the conservation and promotion of indigenous fruits and



vegetables for food and nutrition security and wealth creation and for using ST&I for improving market access for ACP fresh and processed fruits and vegetables and other niche products.

ix. Recommended that the ACP governments and regional bodies be encouraged to build on existing initiatives or establish centres of excellence in biotechnology, genomics and other emerging sciences to enhance research and innovation capacity in the ACP region.

x. Recommended that the ACP States take advantage of the opportunities provided by the improved coordination of agricultural research for development in the European Union in ways that are consistent with their own agendas and priorities.

xi. Recommended that the Advisory Committee be strengthened by: maintaining core membership approved in 2003 but with renewed institutional mandates; formalizing the participation of co-opted members - ANAFE, RUFORUM and YPARD; formalizing EU and international representation e.g. CIRAD, Wageningen UR and; extending representation to include additional ACP and EU organizations, regional policy bodies such as AU-DREA, CARICOM, PIFS and representatives of the European Commission and ACP Secretariat.

xii. Recommended that the CTA S&T strategies programme enhance the participation of youth and women by: strengthening the regional youth forums AYFST, CYFST, PYFST; building on the African women in science network established in 2006 and include the Caribbean and Pacific regions and; implementing the young professionals and women in science competitions for Africa in 2008, and expanding the competitions to the Caribbean and Pacific regions in 2009/2010

xiii. Recommended that the CTA S&T strategies programme continue to convene the Annual meeting of the AC and ACP/EU expert meetings on priority themes identified by the Advisory Committee and which are consistent with CTA's and national priorities to prepare ACP policy positions for wide dissemination..

xiv. Recommended that the outreach of the CTA S&T strategies programme including the Advisory Committee be expanded by building on established strategic alliances among AC members; developing new partnerships with ACP, EU and international organizations and enhancing and widening the usage of the Knowledge for Development (K4D) web portal.

### **Conclusion**

The Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for ACP Agricultural and rural Development concluded that the objectives of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting had been met and approved the CTA S&T Strategies Programme for 2008 - 2010. The AC thanked CTA for hosting the meeting and its continued support and committed to supporting CTA in its efforts to increase efficiency and expand outreach for improving impact and enhancing the performance of ACP agriculture.

November 30, 2007

\*Approved by the Advisory Committee on S&T for ACP Agricultural and Rural Development