

January 2009

This email newsletter highlights the latest additions to the site Knowledge for Development.

Developments**ACP Science and Technology Programme**

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8490>

The Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP - Secretariat) is pleased to announce the launch of the Call for Proposals of the 'ACP Science and Technology Programme' and invites interested parties to participate herein. This Call for Proposals is open to all 79 countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the 27 EU Member States, the 3 EU Candidate countries, and the 3 European Economic Area -European Free Trade Association (EEA EFTA) States. The deadline for submission of project proposals is 27 February 2009 at 16:00 hours (Brussels time).

AU takes controversial lead in African S&T programmes

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8465>

The African Union (AU) is taking a controversial lead in coordinating large science and technology programmes on the continent. Although the move has been broadly welcomed, critics fear that too tight a hold by the AU may stifle progress.

Deepen the UWI debate

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8585>

The University of the West Indies (UWI) has responded to the Jamaica Gleaner suggesting a realignment of Jamaican government subsidies to the university to promote study in disciplines such as engineering and agriculture and to lessen the emphasis on social sciences and the humanities. In Jamaica's case, 75 of the 3,276 UWI graduates last year were from the social sciences and humanities faculties, where, like all students, they had 80 per cent of the cost of their education subsidised by taxpayers.

The TWAS-AAS-Microsoft Award for young scientists

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8524>

Microsoft Research, in partnership with TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world, and AAS, the African Academy of Sciences, has established the TWAS-AAS-Microsoft Award for young scientists for the three-year period 2009-2011 to recognize young scientists working and living in Africa whose research in computer science has had, or could have, a positive impact in the developing world. Deadline: 15 May 2009.

East Africa: even fish heads are now unaffordable

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8506>

Illegal trade and overfishing in Lake Victoria have led to fish scarcities in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Large quantities of illegally traded unprocessed fish, especially Nile perch and tilapia, may be finding their way to export markets in the European Union (EU). The depletion of the most traded fish from the lake, the Nile perch, is also driving up prices locally, which threatens the livelihoods of close to 40 million people in East Africa.

Mali sets up biofuel development agency

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8510>

Mali has established the National Biofuel Development Agency (ANADEB). The agency will centralize, coordinate and harmonize actions in the area of biofuel and set technical and quality standards for biofuel products.

World first for Tanzanian biofuel nut project

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8512>

A revolutionary new development project in Tanzania is set to make biofuel from nuts - a first for Africa. It'll also be the first time in the world that environmentally friendly fuel is manufactured using the oil from the fruit of the Croton tree, a plant indigenous to East Africa. The goal of the initiative is to replace up to 10 percent of Tanzania's oil requirements by 2018, through the production and sale of cheaper vegetable oil as bio-diesel.

African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) Fellowships

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8522>

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID, G&D is implementing a comprehensive yet flexible program designed to build up the talent pool of promising African women in agricultural science. The heart of AWARD is its series of competitive two-year fellowships designed to fast-track the careers of African women in agricultural R&D in sub-Saharan Africa. Participating countries include Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The second round of the AWARD fellowships is scheduled for announcement in February 2009.

Focus on... African banana - on an upward curve

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8469>

The most popular fruit in the world, the banana stands out from other fruits for a multitude of reasons, not least its unusual curvaceous shape. The fruit is also traded in greater quantities than any other fruit - US\$5 billion annually. And, in developing countries, banana is the fourth most valued food after rice, wheat and milk. But bananas have much more to give. In Uganda, for example, 10 million tonnes of bananas are produced each year, but up to 40 per cent rots and goes to waste. Few African bananas are sold more than 80km from where they are grown, and only ten per cent of global production ever reaches international markets. This issue focuses on progress being made across Africa to provide clean planting material to farmers, developments in processing and marketing, and the ongoing fight against pests and diseases.

Rural innovation policies: shaping the enabling environment for agricultural innovation systems

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8472>

Improving agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability requires innovation. For many years, support for innovation tended to focus mainly on strengthening agricultural research. Innovation, however, is the result of interaction among stakeholders rather than a result of research. It is therefore important to involve farmers' organizations, the private sector, and even policy-makers, as full-fledged partners for enhancing rural innovation. This dossier focuses on the role of policies and policy-makers in stimulating agricultural innovation. The different steps in rural innovation policy development are discussed to give the reader a clear view of how the enabling environment for innovation can be shaped by public policy-making.

A fruitless campaign

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8467>

An editorial in Nature criticizes the fact that the AU report Freedom to Innovate: Biotechnology in Africa's Development, has not yet officially seen the light of day, even though it was published more than a year ago. The African Union should have the courage of its convictions and give the report its formal endorsement. It should use the report as a model for ongoing attempts to address the food crisis.

Sweden to fund more research in East Africa

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8494>

Sweden plans to fund more scientific research to boost food security and the management of natural resources in East Africa. The fund was meant to develop a critical mass of scientists as early as in primary school. Researchers are called upon for translating their output into development by integrating all actors into the system from the level of production to consumption.

SH4 billion earmarked for Ugandan agriculture research

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8496>

A total of sh4b has been earmarked to boost non-core research in agriculture. The funds, accessible under the National Agricultural Research Organisation's (NARO) competitive grant fund, will be distributed under a public-private partnership.

Selected publications

Agricultural strategy development in West Africa - The false promise of

participation?

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8530>

By Danielle Resnick and Regina Birner, Discussion Paper No. 844, December 2008.
Participatory approaches are an increasingly prominent technique for designing agricultural strategies within Sub-Saharan Africa. However, such approaches are frequently criticized for either not involving enough stakeholders or limiting the scope of their participation. By analyzing the role of stakeholder participation in the formulation of agricultural and rural development strategies in West Africa, this paper finds that a lack of broad-based participation in these strategies was not a major problem. Rather, the real challenge lies in transforming the outcomes of participatory processes into policies that can be feasibly implemented.

Local impacts of a global crisis - Food price transmission and poverty impacts in Ghana

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8532>

By Godsway Cudjoe, Clemens Breisinger, and Xinshen Diao, Discussion Paper No. 842, December 2008.

This paper takes a local perspective on global food price shocks by analyzing food price transmission between regional markets in Ghana. It also assesses the impacts of differential local food price increases on various household groups. Taking the recent global food crisis as an example, we find that prices for domestic staples within all regional markets are highly correlated with prices for imported rice. However, price transmission between pairs of regional markets is limited; it is complete for local rice and maize only when more rigorous co-integration analysis is applied.

Higher fuel and food prices - Economic impacts and responses for mozambique

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8534>

By Channing Arndt, Rui Benfica, Nelson Maximiano, Antonio M.D. Nucifora, James T. Thurlow, Discussion Paper No. 836, December 2008.

Rising world prices for fuel and food represent a negative terms-of-trade shock for Mozambique. The impacts of these price increases are analyzed using various approaches. Detailed price data show that the world price increases are being transmitted to domestic prices. Short-run net benefit ratio analysis indicates that urban households and households in the southern region of the country are more vulnerable to food price increases. Rural households, particularly in the northern and central parts of Mozambique, often benefit because they sell more food goods than they consume (i.e., net seller). Long-term analysis using a computable general equilibrium model of Mozambique indicates that the fuel price shock dominates rising food prices from both macroeconomic and poverty perspectives

The impact of climate change and adaptation on food production in low-income countries - Evidence from the Nile Basin, Ethiopia

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8536>

By Mahmud Yesuf, Salvatore Di Falco, Temesgen Deressa, Claudia Ringler, and Gunnar Kohlin, Discussion Paper No. 828, December 2008.

This paper presents an empirical analysis of the impact of climate change on food production in a typical low-income developing country. Furthermore, it provides an estimation of the determinants of adaptation to climate change and the implications of these strategies on farm productivity. The analysis relies on primary data from 1,000 farms producing cereal crops in the Nile Basin of Ethiopia. We found that climate change and climate change adaptations have significant impact on farm productivity. Extension services (both formal and farmer to farmer), as well as access to credit and information on future climate changes, affect adaptation positively and significantly.

Accelerating Africa's food production in response to rising food prices - Impacts and requisite actions

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8538>

By Xinshen Diao, Shenggen Fan, Derek Headey, Michael Johnson, Alejandro Nin Pratt, and Bingxin Yu, Discussion Paper No. 825, November 2008.

In Africa the global food crisis threatens the livelihoods of millions of people who because of high rates of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and food dependency are already exceptionally vulnerable. In better circumstances, Africa's agricultural sector would respond to rising prices by increasing food supply. But such a response is impossible without significant new policy actions on both the production and marketing of African agriculture. This paper assesses the likely impacts of two strategic policy options: doubling African staples production, and improving "market access" through regional integration and lowering transaction costs.

Events

African crop science society conference

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8547>

Dates: 28 September - 1 October 2009

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

The general assembly of the African Crop Science Society (ACSS) decided that the next conference in 2009 will be in South Africa - Cape Town. On behalf of the Board of the ACSS and the local organizing committee of South Africa we cordially invite you to attend the next conference. The conference theme of 2009 will be Science and Technology Supporting Food Security in Africa.

eLearning Africa 2009 - learn, share, network

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8555>

Dates: 27-29 May 2009

Location: Dakar, Senegal

eLearning Africa is the most comprehensive conference on ICT for development, education and training on the Continent. Its mission is to bring people together who are actively engaged in education and in the implementation of learning technologies in schools, universities, corporate training as well as in education in the public sector. Participants are high-level decision-makers such as Ministers of Education, representatives from government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), development agencies and international organisations, senior executives from businesses, as well as practitioners from all fields of education.

4th African biofuels

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8557>

Dates: 30 March 2009 - 2 April 2009

Location: Midrand, South Africa

African Biofuels is without doubt Africa's largest and most established gathering of professionals in the biofuels industry. The event will consist of a pre-focus day on biodiesel, ethanol and alternative biofuels production; two main conference days that will focus on overcoming the current industry challenges and creating new opportunities and; a post conference focus day on technology and the movement towards second generation. The event will showcase more than 40 speakers, more panel discussions, delegate open floor discussions, mini workshops, 16 case studies and much more.

African science communication conference 2009

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8565>

Dates: 18-21 February 2009

Location: Gauteng, South Africa

SAASTA will be hosting its 2nd African Science Communication Conference bringing together individuals across the various sectors in realising Science Communication's role in driving economic growth and long term sustainable development. As Africans, we need to define our destiny and change our mindset with respect to science, engineering and technology, as well as research. For the success of our continent and its people, it is imperative that significant investment in the popularisation and public understanding of Science and Technology development is made. It was this realisation that led to the development of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (August 2005).

Jobs for ACP scientists

Senior program specialist

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8581>

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is seeking a Senior Program Specialist for the Think Tank Initiative, a new IDRC program. As a key member of the Think Tank Initiative team, the Senior Program Specialist will develop and adapt analytical frameworks and tools to guide and improve the organisational performance of policy research organisations in developing regions and their capacity to carry out sound research that influences national policies.

Fellowships and Grants

Grants for computer science meetings in African countries

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8571>

With funds provided by Microsoft Research Ltd, TWAS and AAS encourage the organization of scientific activities on the theme of Computer Science in Africa by offering financial assistance to the organizers of conferences, workshops, symposia and special meetings held in Africa. The support is normally provided in the form of travel grants for principal speakers from abroad and/or participants from developing countries other than the country where the meeting is held. Supported speakers should be from

not-for-profit research organizations.

African biosafety network of expertise. terms of reference for legal/policy fellow long-term trainee

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8573>

In building capacity, experience and effective networking among the available expertise and institutions on the continent on biotechnology and biosafety, NEPAD OST has established an African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) under the African Biosciences Initiative. As part of kick-off activities for this network, ABNE would like to support the development of professional careers in the areas of biosafety by awarding a fellowship position of up to one year duration in the legal/policy area of biosafety. Closing date for submission of applications: 30th January 2009.

African Fellows Programme (AFP)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8575>

The RI African Fellows Programme is a scheme that aims to facilitate capacity building and training in agricultural science by providing sub-Saharan African scientists with Fellowships to work with a research group at a European laboratory. The African Fellows Programme addresses specific local agricultural problems to enable institutional strengthening and knowledge transfer in the longer term. This is achieved by catalysing partnerships between African and European scientists. With sustained efforts, these partnerships will empower resource-poor countries to identify locally appropriate solutions to problems being faced in rural agricultural development. The next pre-proposal call is to be announced.

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