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AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
ON
SCIENCE, INFORMATION SOCIETY AND SPACE

RATIONALE

Africa is the continent where the scientific and digital divides are the widest. The MDGs identify the essential role of science and technology for socio-economic transformation. Investments in African scientific capacities have not been prioritized and the continent is losing some of its best scientific and technical expertise to other regions. It is in this context, that the Africa Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action was developed, consolidating the AU Commission and NEPAD programmes related to science and technology capacity building, knowledge production and technological innovation.

The MDGs also identify information and communication technologies (ICTs) as key enablers for poverty reduction and growth. Although ICTs are multi-sectoral tools for socio-economic development, a dedicated coherent strategy needs to be implemented in order to develop an inclusive information society in Africa. It is on these principles, and in the context of the World Summit on Information Society, that the African Regional Action Plan for Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE), an AU initiative, was developed.

Space applications provide, by their very nature, an effective platform to address problems from a regional perspective. The use of space science for development in Africa presents considerable opportunities, and there is a need to establish institutional arrangements to enable Africa to tap their benefits. Space-based systems can play a key enabling role in the attainment of Africa's sustainable development objectives and contribute to the monitoring of climate change.

Bridging the digital and scientific divide within African countries and between Africa and other regions, as well as fostering cooperation on space applications and technology to support Africa's sustainable development objective underlie the Africa-EU Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space.

Priority action 1: Support the Development of an inclusive Information Society in Africa

Objective

- Bridging the digital divide and to enhance the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as key enablers for poverty reduction, growth, and socio-economic development.

Expected outcomes

- A more sustainable, accessible, affordable and effective African ICT infrastructure;

- Enhanced use of ICT applications in order to achieve MDG objectives, notably in the health and education sector;
- Progress toward inclusive and equitable knowledge-based societies;
- Common African-EU positions and approaches in international and regional ICT fora.

Activities

- Complement investments made on physical infrastructures, as planned in the EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure, through support to key capacity-building initiatives identified in the African Regional Action Plan for Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE);
- Create the right conditions for setting-up efficient public-private partnerships to ensure affordable service costs and the widest diffusion on ICTs and related services;
- Ensure coherence between activities carried out at continental and regional levels;
- Increase the use of ICTs and ICT-applications of high societal impact in Africa, in particular the e-health and e-learning domains;
- Enhance ICT human resource development, promoting e-skills and digital literacy;
- Reinforce the deployment of regional research and education networks and their interconnection with the GEANT-2 network;
- Harmonize efforts and initiatives with regard to ICTs that include infrastructure, internet exchange points, interconnectivity and interoperability;
- Promote ICT policies and strengthen regulatory frameworks in Africa;
- Promote telemedicine and early warning systems for epidemics, linked to rapid response plans;
- Hold a systematic and regular dialogue on all issues related to ICTs on technical, senior official and political level in the most effective formats.

Actors

- AU Commission/NEPAD, African States, RECs;
- European Commission, EU Member States;
- Private Sector;
- Civil Society and NGOs;
- Local authorities;
- International Financing Institutions;
- UN and specialized agencies.

Finance

- Appropriate financing sources in accordance with their respective scope and their

relevance to objectives and activities concerned, their specificity and eligibility criteria, such as the 10th EDF, ENPI, DCI;

- Bilateral contributions from EU Member States and African States.

Priority action 2: Support S&T Capacity Building in Africa and Implement Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA)

Objective

- Bridging the scientific divide, to strengthen African capacities in the area of science and technology, and to enhance the use of science and technology as key enablers for poverty reduction, growth, and socio-economic development.

Expected outcomes

- A strengthened African S&T base;
- Increased number of scientists, technicians and engineers;
- Mainstreaming of S&T into RECs' sectoral programmes and projects;
- Improved infrastructure and facilities for R&D;
- Strengthened AU- EU cooperation on science and technology programmes.

Activities

- Start implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Science and Technology for Development in Africa;
- Enhance cooperation with RECs on mainstreaming science and technology for socio-economic development and competitiveness, and strengthen their capacities in this area;
- Promote the application of S&T to achieve specific MDGs;
- Promote integrated health research strategies and improve national capacities in areas such as health management information systems, epidemiological surveys, clinical and operational research, and enhance links with the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP);
- Define innovative ways and means of financing science and technology in Africa;
- Develop harmonized science and technology policies in Africa;
- Reinforce the S&T dimension in education and training;
- Promote the exchange of good practices of cooperation in S&T at the regional and international levels;
- Advance institutional and policy arrangements that enable African countries to mobilize and share their scarce resources to conduct science and generate technological innovations;
- Promote the participation of the African research community into European programmes of Research and Technological Development;

- Promote twinning arrangements between relevant African and European actors.

Actors

- AU Commission/NEPAD, African States, RECs;
- European Commission, EU Member States;
- Private Sector, universities, science and technology institutions and research centres;
- International Financing Institutions;
- UNESCO and other UN agencies;
- European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP).

Finance

- Appropriate financing sources in accordance with their respective scope and their relevance to objectives and activities concerned, their specificity and eligibility criteria, such as the 10th EDF, ENPI, DCI;
- Bilateral contributions from EU Member States and African States;
- African Science and Technology fund;
- EDCTP, Thematic Budget Investing in People.

Priority Action 3: Enhance cooperation on Space Applications and technology

Objective

- Enhanced cooperation in the use of sustainable and affordable space application and technology to support Africa's sustainable development objectives.

Excepted outcomes

- Space-related issues fully integrated in specific dialogues and cooperation initiatives in areas such as environment and resource management, climate change, peace and security;
- Specific projects based on space technologies to achieve regional and global development goals.

Activities

- Jointly analyse the potential to use space applications to better manage natural resources, improve living conditions of populations and promote sustainable development, in particular in the areas of:
 - Telecommunications and bridging the digital divide;
 - Monitoring of climate change, desertification or fires, and water and food resources through Earth Observation, such as Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) for Africa;

- Navigation applications such as GALILEO, European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS);
- Facilitating humanitarian aid operations and improving security of populations through integrated space applications,
- Space technologies and scientific applications as contributions to the knowledge-based society.
- Ensure effective follow-up of the event "Space for Development - the Case of GMES and Africa" (Lisbon, December 2007);
- Develop concrete joint cooperation initiatives in selected areas.

Actors

- AU Commission/NEPAD, African States;
- European Commission, EU Member States;
- European agencies such as the European Space Agency (ESA) and Eumetsat;
- Private Sector.

Finance

- Appropriate financing sources in accordance with their respective scope and their relevance to objectives and activities concerned, their specificity and eligibility criteria, such as the 10th EDF, ENPI, DCI;
- Bilateral contributions from EU Member States and African States.