Publishable Summary Report

Project background and objectives

Africa has recognised that S&T and ICT are key vectors for bridging the scientific and digital divides, for reducing poverty and ensuring socio-economic development, for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, eventually, for supporting the sustainable evolution of Africa. The Africa Science and Technology (S&T) Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) formulated by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the AU, the creation of the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST), and the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE), are only some of recent examples of Africa's determination to rely on S&T and ICT to achieve its growth and development objectives. In this context, the EuroAfriCa-ICT.org project aims at supporting policy dialogues and strengthening cooperation on ICT research between Europe and (sub-Saharan) Africa.
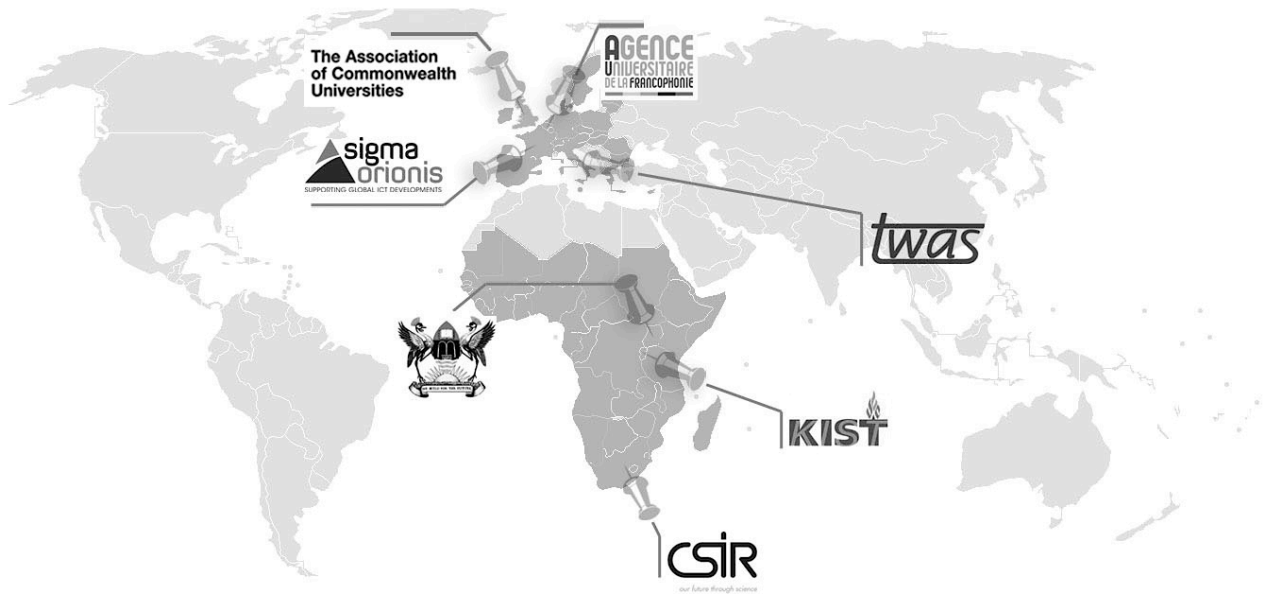
EuroAfrica-ICT.org activities aim at:

- Identifying ICT policy and research priorities of cooperation between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa on ICT Research,
- Organising cooperation events synchronised, whenever possible, with policy dialogue meetings,
- Providing support and guidance to European and African organisations in their efforts to connect and develop joint projects,
- Developing promotion and dissemination activities to support all other activities and ensure the highest overall impact of the project.

Project activities include:

- The identification and analysis of policy and research priorities of cooperation between Africa and Europe, from which recommendations for future cooperation programmes and collaborative projects will be derived,
- The organisation both in Europe and Africa of cooperation events and working group meetings, synchronised whenever and wherever possible with policy dialogue meetings in order to facilitate the development of synergies with other programmes and initiatives (including the CAAST-Net INCO project), involve key stakeholders in the field (such as the ETPs and JTIs in the ICT area), fine tune priorities, etc. To be noted: two key cooperation events organised by the project are the 2010 and 2011 editions of the "Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research", which provide key stakeholders in the field with a key opportunity to celebrate and further strengthen the development of cooperation on ICT research between Europe and Africa,
- The support and guidance of European and African organisations in their efforts to connect and develop joint research projects in the ICT field (through an active online community of researchers from both regions, a database of African excellence research centres, proactive helpdesk services, etc.),
- Dissemination activities to support all other project activities and maximise the overall project impact.

The project consists in a consortium of seven partners located both in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)** - *Belgium*
- **Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)** - *United Kingdom*
- **Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)** - *Rwanda*
- **Makerere University** - *Uganda*
- **Meraka Institute of CSIR** - *South Africa*
- **Sigma Orionis (Coordinator)** - *France*
- **TWAS, academy of sciences for the developing world** - *Italy*

The EuroAfrica-ICT.org project is therefore:

- A focused, result-oriented and ambitious project,
- Represented by a limited yet well-established partnership, offering all necessary skills to efficiently implement planned activities from the very beginning of the project.

Project achievements and perspectives

During the first period of the project (from January to December 2010) a number of activities have been successfully developed, making the partnership even more confident that project objectives can be fully reached during the second and last project period (from January to December 2011).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT WEBSITE

During the first six months of the project, the previous EuroAfrica-ICT.org website has been further developed and modernised, in order to offer extended services to European and African organisations interested in the development of joint research projects in the ICT field, and to more easily collect useful inputs from these organisations. The domain name "www.euroafrica-ict.org" has been maintained in order to ensure a continuity with the old website.

The project website is updated on a day-to-day basis with news and event announcements related to the ICT field, provided both by the project consortium (all partners contribute actively with news, event announcements, etc.) and by other related projects, programmes, dialogues and initiatives.

The website not only provides detailed information on project objectives and activities, but also includes a substantial amount of background information and some new features such as:

- A Community page which provide a link to a new LinkedIn Group (http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=2892844) that has been created to replace the old EuroAfrica-ICT community of researchers (this new community includes now 332 members);
- A repository section that include a list of reference documents and links, a photo gallery (http://euroafrica-ict.org/project-resources/photogallery/) and a video channel (http://euroafrica-ict.org/project-resources/video-channel/), where pictures and videos of the past events organised in the framework of the project are uploaded;
- A poll, to gather the opinions of the website's visitors concerning the role of ICT in the socio-economic development and integration of the African Continent (a total of 344 votes have been registered);
- A new logo/ banner that give a new graphical identity to the project.

ORGANISATION OF COOPERATION EVENTS

During the first 12 months of the project, 3 cooperation events have already been organised, in line with what is planned in the DoW:

- The 8th EuroAfrica-ICT Concertation Meeting, that took place on June 23, 2010 in Brussels, Belgium,
- The 14th Regional EuroAfrica-ICT FP7 Awareness Workshop, on November 4-5, 2010 in Mauritius,
- The 3rd EuroAfrica-ICT Cooperation Forum on ICT Research, that took place on December 7-8, 2010 in Helsinki, Finland.

PROMOTION & DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The objectives and activities of the EuroAfrica-ICT.org project have already been widely disseminated within the European and sub-Saharan African ICT communities, through direct contacts, participation in external events, contribution to publications, email blasts, monthly e-n'letter, Information service providers, etc. The ICT2010 Event, held in Brussels, Belgium on September 27-29, 2010 under the aegis of the European Commission (DG INFSO), has been an important dissemination opportunity for the project, thanks to an exhibition booth and the organisation of a networking session allowing to extensively promote the project activities (over 6000 delegates participated in the 2010 ICT Event).

IDENTIFICATION OF POLICY AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES

During the first half of the project lifetime, a methodology to identify policy and joint research priorities of cooperation between Africa and Europe has been clearly defined and some steps has already been implemented: a series of interviews to some 50 key-players and experts in the ICT field has been conducted and a survey has been submitted to broad range of stakeholders including academia, researchers, civil society, international organisations, policy makers

and NGOs implementing ICT research, development and innovation programmes and projects both in Europe and in Africa. The survey was circulated through existing mailing lists, the EuroAfrica-ICT.org website and additional networks likely to reach the key target audiences (some 300 contributions have been received for the time being). The progress report assessing the results obtained so far has been submitted to the European Commission (D1.1).

SUPPORT FOR EU AND AU ORGANISATIONS

During the first period of the project, continuous support and guidance services for the development of joint research projects have been provided to EU and AU organisations through the Helpdesk section of the website. A database of African Research Institutes to be used by European research organisations looking for potential African partners has been developed and will be available online in the coming months. Within this task, the new EuroAfrica-ICT online Community, including more than 300 members, have also been expended through the creation of a new group on LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/groups? about=&gid=2892844).

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The EuroAfrica-ICT.org project, building upon the substantial results obtained through two previous initiatives (the FP6/IST START project in 2006-2008 and the FP7/ICT EuroAfriCa-ICT project in 2008-2009), has allowed to create a significant momentum supporting a stronger development of S&T ICT cooperation between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa and opening new perspectives for the participation of sub-Saharan African organisations in FP Calls for proposals. It is essential, when international cooperation activities are concerned, and particularly when such a momentum has been created, that continuity can be ensured. This can be easily seen with the successful continuity between the START, the EuroAfriCa-ICT and the EuroAfrica-ICT.org EU projects.

Further information

Please, visit www.euroafrica-ict.org or contact the project coordinator:

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