

**COOPERATION  
BETWEEN  
THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND SOUTH AFRICA**

**The Cooperation Council**

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**NOTE**

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*Jointly prepared and submitted by the European Commission's Directorate General Research and Innovation and the South African Department of Science and Technology.*

**(a) Introduction and JSTCC**

Cooperation in Science and Technology (S&T) continues to be one of the most active areas of collaboration under the South Africa (SA) - European Union (EU) Strategic Partnership. The foundation for this strong partnership is provided by the close cooperation between the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the European Commission's (EC) Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. The two parties annually convene a Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (JSTCC) meeting to review collaboration and to identify new initiatives, which could strengthen cooperation.

The 10<sup>th</sup> JSTCC meeting was held in Brussels on 8 December 2011. Strategic decisions on the future of our cooperation were made, especially in the areas of pharmaceutical research and innovation, mining and minerals research, with regard to the EU's proposed raw materials innovation partnership, and global change and earth observation, within the framework of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. The meeting recognised the very successful participation of South African research and technology organisations in the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) and reconfirmed the excellent level of cooperation, which have made science and technology cooperation one of the flagships of the South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership.

The 11th meeting of the JSTCC will be convened on the 6 November 2012 in Cape Town, South Africa and will be co-chaired by Robert-Jan Smits, EC Director General for Research and Innovation and Phil Mjwara, Director General of the South African DST. This JSTCC meeting will also be the opportunity to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> year since the entry in force of the EU-SA S&T agreement.

#### **(b) Collaboration under FP7**

South Africa has consistently been one of the most successful participants from outside Europe in the EU Framework Programmes for Research. The South African success rate 27.4% is higher indeed than the third countries success rate average 23.7%. So is the South African EC financial contribution success rate 19.9% compared to the third countries average rate of 18.4%.

This very successful cooperation has resulted in approximately 530 South African participations in successive Framework Programmes, dating back to the Fourth Framework Programme in the mid-nineties. South Africa continues to play a leading role in the current Framework Programme (FP7) with a participation in 150 signed grant agreements involving 184 (8.41%) participants from South Africa with a dedicated financial contribution of about 30 MEUR.

With European partners, South Africans participate in FP7 projects receiving total funding of more than €500 million, emphasising the significant scope of cooperation. The most successful areas of cooperation relate to health, environment and the knowledge-based bio-economy research, underlying how the SA-EU S&T partnership addresses shared global challenges such as climate change, food security and pandemic diseases. Other important areas of FP7 collaboration include space science, information and communication technology, transport research as well as the social sciences and humanities. Several initiatives also target the strengthening of capacities essential for research cooperation, such as reciprocal access to research infrastructures and the mobility of international research staff.

It is important to not only measure the value of cooperation in terms of funding criteria only, since Framework Programme participation provides access for South African research groups to the very best of global research and integrates South Africa with such networks. At the same time, South African partners also contribute significantly to the success of the Framework Programme by adding value to European research. The cooperation is, thus, truly mutually beneficial.

The work of the European-South African Science and Technology Advancement Programme (ESASTAP), an advisory, information and support platform promoting South Africa's FP7 participation, jointly funded by the EC through FP7 and the DST, continues to play a major part in South Africa's FP7 success. Networking sessions of scientists and institutions from the EU and South Africa, FP information sessions on various research areas, including emerging scientific areas of cooperation between the EU and South Africa have been organised. A new bilateral proposal was submitted to DG Research and Innovation and it was positively evaluated in February 2012. The negotiations have largely been completed and the new project – valued at € 1.8 million (EC contribution € 1.5 million) will start in November 2012.

The work of another FP7 project, SACCESS, implemented by the DST, and designed to promote reciprocal European participation in South Africa's national research and innovation programmes, has also started to deliver promising results. A series of information days were organised in Europe to present these opportunities to the broader European research community.

### **(c) Other cooperation instruments**

In addition to FP7, one of the significant instruments for cooperation is the Reciprocal Arrangement between the European Cooperation in Scientific and Technical Research Programme (COST) and the DST launched in 2009. Under this arrangement, several short-term scientific exchange visits undertaken by South African and European researchers have been funded. South Africa was currently represented in more than 30 COST networks bringing together nationally funded research activities covering several research domains.

One of the flagship areas of cooperation remains the Sector Budget Support Programme allocated to the Department of Science and Technology under the EU Development Cooperation Instrument for South Africa. With a budget of €30 million, the programme is specifically focused upon harnessing research and innovation as an instrument for poverty alleviation and is already delivering impressive results for example narrowing the digital divide through innovative wireless networks for rural communities. The programme provides the foundation for a policy dialogue between the DST and the EC on how best to leverage the role S&T can play as an instrument for sustainable development.

South Africa is also one of the most successful participating countries in the European Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership with more than €30 million being afforded to South African participants since the start of the programme. The Secretary-General of the European Research Council visited South Africa in March 2012 as part of a concerted effort to promote South African cooperation in the ERC programmes.

Consistent with the conclusions of the South Africa-EU Summit, the parties are exploring closer cooperation in the area of radio astronomy. The European Commission for example supports the development global Square Kilometre Array radio telescope project. An African consortium led by South Africa in May 2012 won the bid to host the telescope, with the part of the facility also to be located in Australia.

#### **(d) Policy dialogue**

The DST and the EC continued to conduct regular exchanges on S&T policy issues of common concern. These engagements also include other South African Agencies, such as the National Research Foundation, which is engaging with its counterpart, the European Research Council.

Several European Commission officials visited South Africa during past year as part of the effort to further bolster S&T partnerships. This included for example the Head of Unit responsible for energy conversion and distribution systems. During these visits, discussions are held aimed identifying shared research policy priorities, which could provide a foundation for enhanced cooperation.

Several DST officials, and from other South African research and technology organisations also visited Brussels during the year to engage in various policy related discussions with their European counterparts. South African speakers are also often invited to intervene at events hosted by the EC.

This included for example South Africa's Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Derek Hanekom, who was a keynote speaker at the EC's high-level event on innovation in healthcare, held in March 2012. The Minister of Science and Technology, Minister Naledi Pandor also visited Brussels twice to engage in high-level science and technology policy engagements with the European Parliament.

#### **(e) Multilateral engagement**

The DST and the EC continued to actively collaborate within various multilateral S&T forums and programmes, including the OECD's Global Science Forum, where they had co-chaired an activity analysing S&T cooperation programmes with developing countries. Africa and the EC also continued to provide strong leadership to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), in their respective roles as Co-Chairs.

A current major focus of activity is the Carnegie+5 Senior Officials Group, tasked to work on producing recommendations to enhance international cooperation to advance global research infrastructure initiatives. South Africa succeeded the EC as chair of this Group when it hosted the November 2011 meeting of the Group. Indeed the Carnegie Group is a major forum for current multilateral engagement – South Africa hosted EC Director-General Robert-Jan Smits at the Group's main meeting (consisting of Science Ministers and Advisors) in November 2011. At the June 2012 Carnegie meeting held in Germany, Minister Pandor met with EC Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn.

**(f) Support for Africa-EU cooperation**

The DST and the EC's cooperation remained a major driving force behind the implementation of the Joint Africa-European Strategy's Science, Information Society and Space Partnership. The DST was notably very active in the preparation of the Second Action Plan of the Joint Strategy and is a member of the Senior Officials Bureau in charge of the Africa-EU High-Level S&T Policy Dialogue, the establishment of which had been endorsed by the third Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in November 2010 and the first meeting, which was convened in October 2011.

Furthermore the DST is a leading partner in several networks funded by the EC under FP7 to enhance S&T cooperation with Africa. This for example includes the Network for the Coordination and Advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science and Technology Co-operation (CAAST-Net.) The DST was also the African Regional Coordinator of the ERAfrica networking bringing African and European research funders together to design new jointly funded programmes. The DST also coordinates the Promoting African-European Research Infrastructure Partnerships (PAERIP) initiative.

The two parties also continued engagement to facilitate science and technology cooperation and dialogue between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union, including the advancement of the outcomes of the 2002 ACP Forum on Research for Sustainable Development held in Cape Town. South Africa financially supported the ACP's Programme for Science, Technology, Innovations and Capacity Building launched in 2009 (30 MEUR from the 9<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and 5 MEUR from the SA DCI) and supports the continuation of the same programme in EDF 10 (20 MEUR from the EDF and 3 MEUR from the SA DCI).

**(g) Future events**

Minister Pandor will lead an important delegation to the ESOF 2012 in Dublin this July, where she will also be meeting with Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn.

In the near future, in the margins of the upcoming EU-SA Annual Summit (18 September 2012), the DST is organising a side-event dedicated to lessons from SA-EU Innovation for Poverty Alleviation Programme sector budget support programme. The DST has already invited President Zuma to open this event. The Department might also organise an event to mark the approval of the second phase of the European-South African Science and Technology Advancement Programme (ESASTAP) – an advisory, information and support platform for SA researchers on FP7. The DST has also expressed its interest in the Business Forum that is also planned in the margins of the EU-SA Summit.

Furthermore, on 5-6 November 2012, a conference on the second phase of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnerships (EDCTP-2) will be co-hosted by Minister Pandor and Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn in Cape Town. This event will form part of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the entry into force of the SA-EU S&T Cooperation Agreement. Additional celebratory events involving young researchers will also be organised. The DST will host the JSTCC, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy's Science, Information Society and Space Joint Expert Group as well as the Africa-EU science, technology and innovation policy dialogue's Senior Officials Meeting Bureau during the same week.

Further information:

<http://www.esastap.org.za>

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