

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

The Cooperation Council

**Brussels, 12 December 2014
(OR. en)**

UE-ZA 4902/14

NOTE

Subject: Joint Report on Cooperation in Science and Technology
- South Africa-EU Joint Cooperation Council, 26 November 2014

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

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.

(b) JSTCC

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 12th JSTCC meeting was held in Brussels on 13 January 2014. Strategic decisions to explore further collaboration were made, especially in the areas of global health, Earth observation, research infrastructures and marine research. Commitments were made to step up cooperation in these areas. More specifically the EC welcomed the commitment from SA to become a full contributing member of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) General Assembly. (South Africa became a full member in May 2014.) Both also committed to collaborate within the framework of the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (there has subsequently been active cooperation notably with regard to the Ebola outbreak) and continue to support work through respective funding programmes of the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases.

The support for development of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) after 2015 was reiterated, including potential support to the AfriGEOSS initiative. In the domain of research infrastructures, synergies will be explored between the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures and SA research infrastructures roadmaps. The parties agreed to continue to explore ways to support the implementation of the global SKA project and further cooperation on the African-European Radio-Astronomy Platform (AERAP). SA's offer to host the International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI) 2016 was also welcomed. (In April 2014, the ICRI assembly agreed by proclamation South Africa's hosting of 2016 event.) Around this JSTCC meeting, a seminar was organised presenting SA as a research and innovation partner for Europe in Horizon 2020.

South Africa received support from the Trade Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) facility which is jointly operated by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), National Treasury and the EU for the development of the research infrastructure roadmap as well as the organisation of a South Africa-EU innovation policy dialogue.

The 13th meeting of the JSTCC will be convened on 1 December 2014 in Cape Town 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 Department of Science and Technology.

(c) 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 26.7% is higher indeed than the third countries success rate average of 22.6%. So is the South African EC financial contribution success rate 19.0% compared to the third countries average rate of 17.5%.

This successful cooperation has resulted in approximately 416 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 Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) with a participation in 243 signed grant agreements involving 228 participants from South Africa with a dedicated financial contribution of about 37.8 MEUR.

With European partners, South Africans participate in FP7 projects receiving total funding of more than €1.8 billion, 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 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 Strengthening Technology, Research and Innovation Cooperation between Europe and South Africa (ESASTAP Plus), 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 and is now being continued under the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme. 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, e.g. in water and marine research, between the EU and South Africa have been organised.

(d) 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 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 (SBS) Programme allocated to the Department of Science and Technology under the EU Development Cooperation Instrument for South Africa. The objective of the SBS was to contribute to the DST's policy and strategy of using science and technology for reducing poverty through job creation, SME development, economic growth and the improvement of the quality of life. With a budget of €30 million, the programme is specifically focused upon harnessing research and innovation as an instrument for poverty alleviation. It delivered impressive results for example narrowing the digital divide through innovative wireless networks for rural communities. The programme also 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 €36 million being afforded to South African participants since the start of the programme. South Africa has become a contributing member of the EDCTP General Assembly and has worked closely with the EC in mobilising broader African participation. In total, 11 African countries will be contributing members of the EDCTP General Assembly and more are likely to follow. Phase 2 of the EDCTP will be launched on 1 December 2014 in Cape Town.

The European Commission and South Africa also work closely together in the development of the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope project. An African consortium led by South Africa in May 2012 won the bid to host the telescope, with part of the facility also to be located in Australia. In May 2014, the European Council invited the European Commission, through Horizon 2020, to complement investment with a one-time contribution to prioritized ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) projects, such as SKA. Closer cooperation between South Africa and the EUREKA Network has been established. The partnership agreement between the Republic of South Africa and EUREKA on market-orientated research was signed in June 2014. This will provide opportunities for enhanced scientific cooperation involving industry especially SMEs.

(e) 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. An Implementing Arrangement between the two bodies is under preparation. The Secretary-General of the European Research Council is expected to visit South Africa in January 2015 as part of a concerted effort to promote South African participation in the ERC programmes. An Innovation Policy dialogue will be implemented in 2014-2015 via workshops. It will present opportunities for the exchange of best practices and experts on various aspects of innovation policy, including SME participation, innovative funding instruments, intellectual property and collaboration between the government, industry and research community.

Furthermore, Minister Pandor and EU Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn continued the strengthening of the partnership through regular high-level contacts at a bilateral meeting at the margins of the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) on 24 June 2014 in Copenhagen.

Several DST officials and 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 previous Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Derek Hanekom, who was a keynote speaker at the 2014 Innovation Convention, held in March 2014. European Commission officials also visited South Africa.

(f) 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. South Africa and the EC also continued to provide strong leadership to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), in their respective roles as Co-Chairs. The parties also active support the work of the Group of Senior Officials on Global Research Infrastructures.

(g) Support for Africa-EU cooperation

The DST and the EC's cooperation remained a major driving force behind the implementation of the science, technology and innovation (STI) components of the Joint Africa-European Strategy (JAES). Efforts are focused upon implementing the outcome of the second meeting of the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on STI that took place in Brussels on 28-29 November 2013, of which the conclusions were endorsed by the EU-Africa Summit 2014. DST is a member of the Bureau, the governance structure for the HLPD, of which the European Commission is the co-chair. An EU-Africa high level expert group has been established and tasked to develop a roadmap towards a long-term jointly funded research and innovation partnership with a first focus on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. The expert group is expected to deliver this roadmap by April 2015, which is foreseen to feed into strategies for Horizon Framework Programme as well as other EU funding programmes, EU Member States and African partners.

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 Plus). 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 coordinated 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 9th European Development Fund and 5 MEUR from the SA DCI) and supported the continuation of the same programme in EDF 10 (20 MEUR from the EDF and 3 MEUR from the SA DCI).

(h) Future events

The EU Commissioner for Science, research and innovation Mr Carlos Moedas and the EC Director General for Research and Innovation, Mr Robert-Jan Smits will visit South Africa during the first week of December 2014 on the occasion of the launch of the 2nd phase of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership in Cape Town as part of the effort to further bolster S&T partnerships. The JSTCC will also be convened on 1 December, together with a series of other strategic engagements, including CAAST-NET Plus side event "Niches to enhance EU-Africa health research cooperation satellite" as well as the ERAfrica show case.

An EU-SA Energy Research Workshop is organized by ESASTAP Plus on 9 December 2014 in Rome, as a side meeting to the 2014 Strategic Energy Technology Plan Conference. The objective of the workshop is for the research communities from the EU and SA to engage on strategic discussions around potential areas for future collaboration, e.g. in renewable energy, clean coal technology and the hydrogen and fuel cell economy.

An Implementing Arrangement to provide South African early-mid career researchers with research opportunities in Europe between the European Research Council (ERC) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) is under preparation. The ERC President is also expected to visit South Africa in January 2015.

The first workshops of the EU-SA Innovation Policy Dialogue are foreseen for the first week of February 2015. It was agreed that three workshops would be organised, namely: (1) Encouraging participation of industry and SME in research programmes; (2) Supporting “knowledge triangle partnerships” between academia, industry and research to boost innovation; and (3) Designing funding instruments to optimally support innovation in February 2015 in South Africa . The Intellectual Property and Creating advisory and support services for actors in the innovation ecosystem which will be changed to Measurements for decision making) will be arranged together a ta date still to be confirmed. The final Mainstreaming Innovation workshop will be held together with the Innovation Conference to be organized by the ESASTAP Plus project. The proposal is to have the Innovation Conference in Sept 2015

Plans exist for the establishment of the EU-SA Marine Research Working Group. Workshops on Mining and Minerals Research and Research Infrastructures are also envisioned in early 2015, building on the successful South African participation in the ERAMIN European network funding raw materials related research and innovation.

Preparation for the hosting of the ICRI conference in 2016, will also take place in the upcoming months.