



Strengthening the role of African researchers in the Europe–Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)

Date: 18th November 2020

Time: 15:00 – 17:00 hours, East African Time (EAT)

Organizers: Wageningen University & Research and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)

Introduction

On the occasion of the 16th Annual General Meeting of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Wageningen University and Research and RUFORUM on behalf of the LEAP4FNSSA project proposes to discuss how to strengthen the role and participation of African researchers in the Europe-Africa Research & Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). Through the LEAP4FNSSA Project, a platform that brings together African and European researchers will be established and equitable participation of research institutions from both continents is required. The purpose of this event is to gather views on how African research institutions and individuals can effectively participate and benefit from this platform.

Background

Africa and Europe have had a formal political partnership dating back to April 2000 when the two continents held the first bi-continental Summit in Cairo, Egypt under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the European Union (EU). The defining moment of the formal partnership was the 2nd EU-Africa Summit held in December 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal during which the first [Joint Africa-Europe Strategy \(JAES\)](#) was developed. Since then, the two continents have continued to work closely to address issues such as climate change, global security and sustainable development. The JAES is implemented through Multiannual Roadmaps and Action Plans developed or updated at each Summit. These define the priority areas of cooperation among the two continents for the periods defined therein. Expert groups have been established to oversee and provide technical and political guidance for the implementation of the Roadmaps and Action Plans. For example, the **AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD)** on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) was established in 2010. Subsequently, the Roadmap towards a jointly funded EU-Africa Research & Innovation Partnership on **Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)** was launched in 2016.



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The [FNSSA Roadmap](#) provides a framework for improved coordination of research and innovation policies, programmes and funding mechanisms. The Roadmap aims at promoting the food systems approach across the entire value chain, while linking research to innovation and involving all relevant stakeholders for enhanced impact at local level in the FNSSA domain.



The [LEAP4FNSSA Project](#) (Long-term Europe-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture) was set up to provide a tool for European and African institutions to engage in a Sustainable Partnership Platform for research and innovation on Food and Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

Under the aegis of the High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) and its Bureau, LEAP4FNSSA aims to achieve its main objective through:

- Increased synergies and coherence between actors, research and innovation projects, initiatives and programmes, through the development of institutional alliances and clusters of projects.
- An enhanced learning environment and large knowledge base, including monitoring and evaluation activities, and established communication and links between different initiatives in order to improve European-African cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).
- A well-established long-term sustainable partnership and co-funding mechanism.

Participation of African research institutions and researchers in the platform

While African universities and researchers are well placed to generate evidence for policy making through research, they have often contributed to these efforts individually. As the existing AU-EU FNSSA Partnership would be transformed into a “bi-continental” Platform for collaboration, this would require coordination at several levels:

- Between the different stakeholder groups involved (such as research, policy, private sector, civil society, funding agencies) and



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- Within a specific stakeholder group, e.g. European – African researchers

A coordinated and organized approach would make it easier to:

- a) mobilize input and
- b) Prepare universities and research institutions to effectively and jointly deliver the aspirations of the future bi-continental Platform.

This webinar is organized by LEAP4FNSSA¹ to share information on the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) with the aim to explore opportunities for coordinated engagement of African universities and research institutions to contribute to the development and implementation of the future Platform.

It will be organized as a virtual side-event during the 16th RUFORUM Annual General Assembly (AGM). The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture is a consortium of 129 universities operating in 38 countries spanning the African continent. RUFORUM's mission is to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of small-holder farmers. At Continental level, RUFORUM has signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union Commission to support the implementation of "*Priority Area One: Eradicating Hunger and Achieving Food and Nutrition Security*" of the *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)*. RUFORUM is also an implementing partner of the Action Plan for transformation of education, science, technology and innovation in Africa with the leadership of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government ([AU-C10](#)) championing education, science, technology and innovation.

The RUFORUM AGM is therefore seen as the opportune moment to engage with the African research community.

Objectives of the Webinar

The objectives of the webinar are;

1. Share information on the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA),
2. Share information on the 'Platform' for the efficient and coherent implementation of the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership to be developed by LEAP4FNSSA
3. Discuss the opportunities of such a 'Platform' for African researchers and their institutions, and
4. Solicit the views of the African researchers and their institutions on how they could effectively and efficiently contribute to such a Platform. Special attention will be paid to reach out to female researchers, who make up just 30% of Africa's researchers.

Timing

The webinar will take place in the afternoon (15:00 to 17:00 hours, East African Time) of 18th November 2020. The duration of the webinar will be 2 hours.

¹ Wageningen Research and RUFORUM



Target audience

The Webinar is targeted to African researchers from Universities, National Research Organisations, Science Granting Councils, Sub Regional Research Organisations, International Research Organizations working in Africa such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Think Tanks, Private Research Institutes among others in Africa working in the FNSSA domain.

Programme

Webinar Moderator: Dr. Aldo Stroebe, Executive Director Strategic Partnerships at the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa

Translations to French and Arabic will be done

Time EAT	Topic	Speaker
	Arrival and registration of participants	
15.00-15.15	Welcoming session <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome remarks Objectives of the side event 	<i>LEAP4FNSSA</i> <i>Jennie van der Mheen,</i> <i>WUR</i> <i>RUFORUM</i> <i>Prof Adipala Ekwamu,</i> <i>Executive Secretary for</i> <i>RUFORUM</i>
15.15-15.30	Background to the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership in Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)	Ms. Nienke Buisman <i>Head of Unit International Cooperation</i> <i>European Commission</i> <i>Directorate-General for Research and Innovation</i>
15.30-15.45	The importance of the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) to the African research community	Dr Irene Annor-Frempong, <i>Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)</i>
15.45-16.00	The 'Platform' for the efficient and coherent implementation of the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership to be developed by LEAP4FNSSA; Role of the African research community	Dr. Philippe Petithuguenin, <i>CIRAD and coordinator of LEAP4FNSSA</i>



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16.00-16.50

Discussion session

Moderator

- How to ensure the effective contribution of the African research community in the EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership and future Platform?
- What does it take to coordinate the contribution of the African research community?

16.50-17.00

Wrap-up and next steps

LEAP4FNSSA

Jennie van der Mheen

