



EU-AU High-Level Policy Dialogue On Science, Technology and Innovation

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Innovation

Final version

25/06/2020

Background and context

Africa and Europe have a long-standing political partnership and are increasingly enhancing collaboration in the area of Science and Technology and Innovation.

The Africa-EU Summit in 2010 initiated the launch of an AU-EU Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Dialogue as one of the priority interventions to render further impetus to strengthening of African-European research and innovation cooperation.

The Policy Dialogue, fostered by means of a bi-annual plenary of the AU-EU Senior Officials HLPD contributes to creating a more enabling environment for promoting efficient cooperation with maximum impact between partners in the planning and management of cooperation programmes.

According to its mandate, two thematic Working Groups have been established by the HLPD:

- Working Group on Climate Change & Sustainable Energy (CCSE) and
- Working Group on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

New global and regional frameworks for policy goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 9 in particular), the African Union's Agenda 2063 as well as the emerging framework of Horizon Europe, all of which explicitly stressed the importance of innovation and promoting better policy framework for strengthening innovation systems.

In 2018, the '*Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs*' was launched as a new area of cooperation. The alliance calls to strengthen the role of the private sector to create jobs while strengthening the business environment and private sector. The role of start-ups, scale-ups and SMEs is highlighted as well as their ability to professionalise, innovate and internationalise. Connecting innovation ecosystems will benefit both parties as it allows access to new networks, resources and innovative impulses.

Europe and Africa in particular have seen an enormous growth of the entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem, with now over 600 local tech hubs in Africa and over 1bn USD in venture capital raised. These new actors have taken on a significant role in their locales, in particular where the public innovation systems are weak because of limited funding, capacity

or interactions. Similarly, on the front of technology transfer (i.e. the interface between research and innovation), new development around open innovation platforms, new IP-models, renewed interest in university-private sector collaboration, and co-creation models have happened. However, these new actors and trends have often developed ‘bottom-up’ and are so far poorly connected within each continent and between them. There is a policy challenge and opportunity in developing strong Africa-Europe partnerships for increasing the impact of innovation.

The European Commission pilot programme ‘*Africa-Europe Innovation Partnership*’ launched in Sep. 2019 with the support from the African Union Commission, paved the way for deeper cooperation in the innovation sector. The fourth meeting of the HLPD in Addis Ababa in November 2019, decided to establish the ‘Working Group on Innovation’(WGI) as a third pillar to the HLDP.

1. Role and Tasks:

1.1 Role of the WGI

The purpose of the Working Group on Innovation is to support the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation (HLPD) by providing regular information on activities and data regarding the Innovation.

As such, the scope of activities of the Working Group includes:

- Ensuring regular exchange between key actors in Africa and Europe in AU-EU cooperation and innovation
- Identification of key issues in AU-EU cooperation in innovation
- Elaboration of potential for AU-EU cooperation in innovation
- Development of key recommendations for the HLPD

1.2 Tasks of the WGI

With a view to promoting the AU-EU cooperation in STI and thereby to supporting the sustainable development of both regions, the WGI will take into account the current work and output of the existing WG FNSSA and CCSE, following the mandate of the HLPD:

1. Act as a forum for the exchange of information and views and recommendations on Innovation policy in Africa and the EU, and establish a common information base on this subject;
2. Identify development issues of regional importance to be addressed by Innovation and requiring cooperative activities;
3. Suggest concrete actions for Innovation to be taken (in the context of the Joint Africa-EU strategy (JAES), adopted at the 2nd AU-EU Summit in Lisbon in 2007) in the frame of bilateral cooperation activities between countries represented in the HLPD, or the exchange of information at national level;
4. Support HLPD with
 - Observe and report on STI policies, developments and activities in the Africa-EU context;
 - Communicate/exchange information with the European Commission, African Union Commission and member states of the AU and the EU with respect to cooperation in STI;
 - Identify methods and sources of funding to advance STI cooperation and foster co-ownership of the policy dialogue.

2. Outputs

Given the large potential scope of policy issues involved, the variation in policy instruments and actors, the heterogeneity in institutional configurations and the relative novelty of policy engagement, the Working Group will focus its efforts on a roadmap for the Africa-Europe Innovation Partnership.

The roadmap will consist of the following components:

- Analysis of the State of Play in Africa-Europe Innovation Partnership policy trends, including an overview of relevant current innovation policy instruments
- Examination of possibilities to improve complementarities and synergies between existing and future policy instruments
- A work plan for mutual exploration of specific priority topics in order to generate mutual learning and policy guidance
- Monitoring & evaluation approach for following the progress of the partnership.

Once the roadmap has been approved by the HLPD, the WGI will be tasked in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the roadmap.

3. Composition, selection and appointment of members of the Working Group

The WGI has limited membership (16) with the aim of convening a small and efficient group that includes among its members all the key skills required to compile a roadmap as described herein.

The participating AU and EU Member States as well as the African Union Commission and the European Commission are invited to suggest names of high level experts. The final selection of experts is done by the HLPD Bureau that is guided by article 4 of the HLPD 'way forward' and driven by the following criteria:

- Expertise: individual members will be acknowledged experts, having competencies in specific areas of relevance to the roadmap related to the innovation sector. In addition one representative of each existing WG - the FNSSA and CCSE - will participate to the present WGI;
- Key skills: Collectively, the group should demonstrate all the key skills required to compile a roadmap on innovation: knowledge of EU/AU institutions and research programmes, knowledge of best practice in collaboration and cooperation, research communication, knowledge exchange, uptake and impact, science-policy interface, capacity-building
- Regional balance: Equal representation from AU and EU.
- Gender balance: Without compromising other criteria, the selection process will strive for gender balance.
- Geographic and linguistic balance: Where relevant, notably for Africa, WGI members will be selected to achieve sub-regional and linguistic representation.
- Sectors: The WGI should include representatives of the scientific community, civil society, the public sector and the private sector.

The final decision of its composition will be taken by the HLPD Bureau.

WGI members participate in their own right, on the basis of their particular expertise, and do not represent either their organisation or their country.

Participation in the WGI is voluntary. Members may resign from the WGI at any time, but are asked to provide the HLPD Bureau with 'reasonable' advance notice.

There will be no remuneration for the work in the WGI.

4. WGI reporting and liaison:

The WGI will be co-chaired by the EC and the AUC.

The WGI could appoint two contact-points at the kick-off meeting, one from the EU and one from AU. Liaison between WGI and HLPD Bureau should then preferably pass via the co-chairs of the WGI and the co-chairs of the HLPD Bureau.

The co-chairs of the WGI update the Bureau members on the progress of the WGI during HLPD Bureau meetings.

5. Language:

The WGI should report in English. Translation into other languages if necessary will be assured by the HLPD Bureau.

6. Location:

It is anticipated that the WGI will mainly operate in a virtual configuration, with physical meetings on a small number of occasions.

7. Support, resources and financing:

The International Service Facility is tasked by DG R&I to support, organise, facilitate and provide follow up for all meetings. It will also cover the travel-related costs for the WG-members to attend the meetings.