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## **MEMO: Meeting for Coordinators' of projects funded by the Coordinated Call for Africa, Health**

September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Time: 10-15

Place: SDME Building  
Square de Meeûs 8  
B-1049 Brussels  
Room SDME 3E (9<sup>th</sup> Floor)

Present: Ana Nieto, European Commission  
Ole Olesen, European Commission  
Gerasimos Apostolatos, European Commission  
Ana Jiménez Castellanos, AFRICA BUILD  
Norbert Georg Schwarz, APARET  
Salla Atkins, ARCADE HSSR  
Katharina Kuss, PRD COLLEGE  
Lieve Daeren, HURAPRIM  
Ruairi Brugh, COST-Africa  
Laura Phelan, COST-Africa  
Melissa Plath, CAAST-Net

### **The Africa Call**

The European Commission, Directorate – Health and CAAST-Net, a Network for the Coordination and Advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science and Technology Cooperation, convened this meeting of Coordinators of Africa Call projects and related projects. The meeting was organized in order to create a network of the projects, to find possible areas for cooperation between the projects, to strengthen synergies in order to initiate coordinated action with mutual benefit, CAAST-Net will provide support to these processes in order to ensure coordination and a multi-disciplinary approach.

### **Projects**

AFRICA BUILD (Building a Research and Education Infrastructure for Africa) aims to improve capacity for health research and education in Africa through Information Technologies (IT). It will provide innovative learning and research opportunities. The main objectives are to promote health research, education and practice in Africa through the creation of Centres of Excellence. These centres will be based on 4 related pillars: e-learning, information technologies, knowledge sharing, and 'know-how'. In some previous experiments with e-learning in Egypt and in Burundi, the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid (UPM) has made use of platforms such as Moodle and Google Talk to conduct the trainings, depending on the bandwidth capabilities of the targeted countries.

APARET (African Programme for Advanced Research Epidemiology Training) combines the training of qualified professionals at African Research Institutes with opportunities for these institutes to gain highly remunerated research grants in order to catalyse the development of self-driven research activities. The project will target graduates of Field Epidemiology Training Programmes (FETP) and Field Epidemiology Laboratory Training programmes (FELTP). APARET fellows will have a 2-year contract with their host institutes, with the host institutes paying the salaries of the fellows. A core part of the one-year fellowship will be the

application for a research grant, supported by a Mentor of the training network, for each fellow and the host institutes.

ARCADE HSSR (African Regional Capacity Development for Health Systems and Services Research) seeks to increase the regional capacity of Sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen service delivery and system design by training scientists to conduct relevant research needed to inform these decisions. The project will use blended and innovative technology for greater effectiveness of the trainings and technologies. A 'sandwich' method will be used whereby students will conduct most of their studies in their own countries, with short trips to Europe to complete their training. In addition, exchanges will take place between Southern universities, recognizing the existing skills and capacities in the South.

PRD COLLEGE (Poverty Related Diseases College) works on capacity building for the next generation of scientists working on poverty related diseases. 24 Fellows have participated in the programme, with two-thirds of participants based at African institutions. The programme will provide training for scientists at partner institutions, as well as an internship at African institutions.

HURAPRIM (Human Resources for Primary Health Care in Africa) intends to promote and help develop innovative interventions and policies to address the lack of skilled health workers. The project will assess the scope of the deficit in health workers and analyze the process of recruitment, undergraduate and postgraduate training, professional retention and (un)employment for a variety of primary health workers. HURAPRIM will also tailor existing interventions and design new ones to improve the situation of health workers in the African partner countries.

COST Africa (Clinical Officer Surgical Training in Africa) aims to reduce surgical morbidity and mortality in Africa and contribute to a sustainable district health system. The project aims to ensure the delivery of high quality emergency and non-specialized elective surgical care at the district hospital level by: training, evaluating, supervising, quality assurance, and retaining clinical officers.

### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations arose from the discussion:

- Develop a database of Africa Call and associated projects, including partner institutions and the associated contact person. A larger database mapping the projects, partners, and topics being funded in Africa would also be relevant.
  - This information, however, must be updated regularly to stay relevant.
- Relevant information and connections with EC delegations in partner countries, African policy makers and organizations, and guiding documents should be shared with projects via the Portal or other relevant means.
- Mutual participation in project events would create knowledge of the activities and results of the other projects and would not create a large financial burden.
- Information should take place at different levels, including linking websites, newsletters, etc., but also sharing of deliverables and results, partner information, etc.

### **Conclusions:**

Connecting with institutions other than Directorate-General (DG) for Research and Innovation, including funding institutions, would aid the impact of the results of the projects. Other relevant institutions include: other EC institutions (for example, DG Development Cooperation), the EC delegations in African countries, Regional Economic Communities, the African Union Commission, other local political organizations, etc.

The European Commission, CAAST-Net, ERAfrica (European Research Area Network for Africa), and other projects have information and mappings on ongoing activities and policies in Africa. These should be made available for the use of the projects and partners. Updating changes in relevant policies and politicians in African countries would be beneficial for projects.

Due to the nature of the FP7 framework, many African partners are participating in multiple projects. There are natural synergies that exist in these shared partners; however, many times the contact persons are different and do not know that their institution is a partner in another relevant project. Therefore, knowing a project's contact person, and not just the institution itself, is of importance.

Multidisciplinary cooperation is one aspect of the Africa Call. Introducing the projects to a larger audience, including the other projects of the Africa Call, will support multidisciplinary. The CAAST-Net Stakeholder's Conference can be one arena for this introduction.

Clustering projects and harmonized timelines is worth consideration for greater impact of projects and events. However, competition is also good – multiple training sessions are needed to cover Africa.