

# Fresh EUR 50 million boost for research and innovation in the ACP countries

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Science, technology and innovation (STI) are increasingly recognised as key drivers of sustainable and inclusive development across the world. Moreover, STI are vital to help achieve the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals and provide solutions to pressing societal and economic challenges.

It is against this shared understanding that the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union (EU) have agreed to launch the **ACP Innovation Fund**, a substantial effort to boost and optimise STI capacities in the countries concerned.

The ACP Innovation Fund is a key component of the new "[ACP-EU Programme to strengthen Research and Innovation capacity in ACP countries](#) <sup>[1]</sup>". The new programme is to improve the capacity of research and innovation stakeholders, policy development and knowledge transfer. The ultimate goal of the programme is to have a structuring effect on the innovation-ecosystems and capabilities of ACP countries.

**Through this programme, the ACP and the EU will make available a budget of €50,000,000** to advance solutions to the following challenges:

- Digital literacy, knowledge and use of emerging technologies;
- Effective links between research and innovation skills development and labour market demand;
- Synergies in the Research and Innovation (R&I) ecosystem in particular with the private sector; facilitating conditions for technology transfer; promoting R&I uptake;
- Promoting local and indigenous knowledge and its use in combination with formal knowledge systems and practices.

The overall available budget will be **distributed in equal amounts by ACP regions**, divided into six Lots.

Each Lot corresponds to a geographical area, namely: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Caribbean and Pacific. While objectives and priorities are the same for all Lots, proposed actions must take place primarily in one or more ACP Member States belonging to the Lot for which the proposals is submitted.

In response to an open call, the ACP Group and the EU welcome proposal submissions from non-profit-making organisations established in one of the eligible countries and with proven experience in managing research and innovation support funds.

The ACP Innovation Fund is based on a mechanism of redistribution of resources. Proposed actions have to be **centred on supporting ACP research and innovation actors both financially** – at least 65% of the grant must be redistributed to so-called "third parties" – **and technically**, through transfer of skills, know-how and experience.

**Third parties** are organisations established in one ACP Member State of the targeted region and with experience in managing research and innovation projects. Third parties can be, for instance: academic and research institutions, spin-offs, representatives of indigenous communities, agencies working for gender equality in research, innovation support organisations, start-ups.

Full details on the eligibility criteria for applicants and third parties are provided in the Guidelines to the call.

All eligible organizations interested in applying are invited to **submit a proposal by January 29, 2020**. This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted at the same time (concept note and full application).

**Click [here](#) <sup>[2]</sup> to go to the EuropeAid's publication website** <sup>[2]</sup> to access the Guidelines for grant applicants (available in English and French) and all related documents, and to apply. The reference of the call is EuropeAid/166663/IH/ACT/Multi.

An information session is scheduled in October (date to be confirmed soon) at the External Cooperation Infopoint in Brussels, Belgium. Lunchtime conferences are live streamed. The video of the conference will be available thereafter on the website at [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint_en) <sup>[3]</sup>.

## Seeking partnership under ACP Innovation Fund?

You may wish refer to our former programmes' website (<https://www.acp-hestre.eu/> <sup>[4]</sup>) and the [final brochure](#) <sup>[5]</sup> on the ACP website where the contact details of many former beneficiaries in many different sectors are available.

Also this [EU website](#) <sup>[6]</sup> about partner searchers. In particular, the [CORDIS Partner Service](#) <sup>[7]</sup> is one of the largest databases of partner profiles for **research and innovation** (for organisations previously involved in EU funded programmes).

For questions regarding the **ACP Innovation Fund**, please contact Dr. John Kakule at [kakule@acp.int](mailto:kakule@acp.int) <sup>[8]</sup>.

Tags: [News articles](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

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