

Unlocking the inclusive innovation potential of ACP countries: a new ACP-EU initiative

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Brussels 09 January 2019/ACP/: New technologies, knowledge and innovations can be powerful drivers of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. In fact, investments in research, innovation and technology are considered instrumental to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda .

On these lines, a growing number of ACP countries have moved to incorporate science, innovation and technology in their national development policies. At the same time, the European Union and Member States remain committed to continue investing in research and development, including enhancing national innovation systems .

It is within this context that the ACP-EU Programme to Strengthen Research and Innovation capacity in ACP countries – a new EUR 60 million initiative of the ACP Group of States funded by the 11th European Development Fund – targets research and innovation public and private stakeholders across ACP countries and regions with a comprehensive package of opportunities.

The initiative expands the support provided by previous ACP-EU programmes. For the past ten years, the ACP-EU cooperation has in fact financed several science, technology and applied research projects, which strengthened R&I stakeholders' capacities, nurtured international collaborations, created partnerships and facilitated the application of research results to specific development needs. At the same time, learning from these experiences demonstrated that a tailor-made and differentiated approach, which takes into account the differing level of development of national innovation eco-systems, can prove effective in strengthening the capacities of key stakeholders at national, regional and ACP levels.

Thus, the new ACP-EU programme will contribute to reinforce national and regional Research and Innovation eco-systems through three interlinked components:

1) The **R&I Policy Support Facility**, which will provide demand-driven assistance in response to specific requests, formulated by ACP Research, Innovation, and Higher Education public authorities so as to enhance the quality of Research & Innovation policies and systems.

2) The **ACP Innovation Pilots Fund**, which will provide financial support for the implementation of projects related to one or more of the following themes:

- i. Increasing access to digital literacy and use of emerging technologies;
- ii. Creating better links between R&I skills development and labour market demand;
- iii. Establishing effective synergies with the private sector;
- iv. Integrating indigenous knowledge into formal knowledge systems and practices.

3) The **ACP Research & Innovation Hub**, a web-based platform serving the exchange and cross-fertilization of knowledge and experiences among the programme stakeholders and beneficiaries, and the synergies with other relevant practices and knowledge platforms.

As stated by Ambassador Ognimba, the Assistant Secretary General of the Political Affairs and Human Development Department at the ACP Secretariat: "We believe that this new ACP-EU initiative represents an integrated approach in our continued commitment to support research and innovation actors and their crucial contribution as powerful drivers towards more resilient, inclusive, knowledge-based societies in all ACP countries."

It is expected the Policy Support Facility and the Hub to be operational as of the end of 2019. A Call for Tenders for a "Technical Assistance to the Secretariat of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States for the Management of the ACP-EU Programme to strengthen Research and Innovation capacity in ACP countries" was published on 9 January 2019 (ref.: EuropeAid/140062/IH/SER/Multi). : <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=140062> [1] and <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:8422-2019:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0>. [2]

The Call for Proposals for the ACP Innovation Pilots Fund is planned for May/June 2019. Eligibility conditions will be detailed in the Guidelines of the Call for Proposals; indicatively, it is expected grantees to be ACP and European Research & Innovation stakeholders. Awarded grants will have the primary aim to distribute funding to third parties on a regional basis (i.e. distribution of funds by the six ACP regions). Detailed information will be published in due time.

Examples of previously supported projects can be found at: <https://www.acp-hestre.eu/> [3]. For more information please contact Dr John F. Kakule (kakule@ACP.int) [4].

Related readings:

[Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa \(STISA-2024\)](#) [5]

[Strategic Plan - Caribbean Community 2015-2019](#) [6]

[Pacific-Europe Network for Science, Technology and Innovation \(PACE-Net Plus\)](#) [7]

[UNESCO Science Report: toward 2030](#) [8]

[Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform – Technology](#) [9]

[Strategic evaluation of EU support to Research and Innovation for development in partner countries \(2007-2013\)](#) [10]

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Links:

[1] [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=140062)

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[2] <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:8422-2019:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0>

[3] <https://www.acp-hestre.eu/>

[4] [http://mailto:kakule@acp.int](mailto:kakule@acp.int)

[5] https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33178-wd-stisa-english_-_final.pdf

[6] <https://caricom.org/about-caricom/what-we-do>

[7] <https://pacenet.plus/>

[8] https://en.unesco.org/unesco_science_report

[9] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm#forum>

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation-eu-support-research-and-innovation-development-partner-countries-2007-2013_en

[11] <http://www.acp.int/category/story-type/news-articles>