AU-EU Innovation Agenda
Stakeholder Event
23-24 November
Nairobi, Kenya & Online

Introduction and policy dimension

The draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda (IA) was presented to High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) Senior Officials in January 2022[1]. It triggered a very positive reception by policy makers and relevant stakeholders. The EU and AU State Leaders acknowledged the work on the Innovation Agenda in the declaration adopted at the EU-AU Summit in February 2022. A public consultation on the draft Agenda was launched at the Africa-Europe Week (14 February 2022), announcing that the results of the consultation would be presented and further discussed at a dedicated Stakeholder Event.

The AU-EU Innovation Agenda is a flagship of the EU's Global Gateway Africa – Europe Investment Package that was also announced at the Summit, providing an outline of actions to be taken in partnership with Africa to "boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport and strengthen health, education and research systems across the world". The Africa – Europe Investment Package will represent the Global Gateway's "proof of concept", paving the way for other global initiatives. A crucial demand of State Leaders at the Summit was to go beyond hypothetical investments, with specific emphasis on what is actually being done rather than just what is planned. This also raises strong expectations for the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda as part of the Global Gateway Strategy.

Objectives & Methodology of the Stakeholder Event

1. **Presenting and discussing on the outcome of the public consultation** on the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda (which took place between February and June 2022), through a **plenary session**.

2. **Co-creating the implementation plan** of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, according to topics, in dedicated "**Thematic Workshops**", according to the priority areas of intervention of the

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[1] A reminder of the Objectives and the Actions foreseen by the Working Document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda can be found in the Addendum section of this Concept Note, at pages 6-10.

Agenda, namely (i) **Public Health**, (ii) **Green Transition**, (iii) **Innovation and Technology** and (iv) **Capacities for Science**, and considering also the area of (v) **Cross-cutting issues**, included in the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

Such thematic workshops will provide for **fora for discussion of specific stakeholder demands and ideas, and possible implementation routes of the Agenda**. These discussion fora will focus on the following topics (i.e. to be discussed in parallel 4 hour-long sessions):

I.   For the priority area of *Public Health*:
   i.   **Needs and technologies for healthy societies with responsive and resilient health systems** – taking into account both communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as primary healthcare services and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

II. For the priority area of *Green Transition*:
   i.   **Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)**;
   ii. **Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE)** (e.g. LEAP-RE Programme).

III. For the priority area of *Innovation and Technology*:
   i.   **Investing in innovation in Africa**: Boost Africa and other possible initiatives by the AfDB, EIB, etc.
   ii. **Innovation ecosystems in Africa**: with contributions on/from ENRICH in Africa, ACP Innovation Fund, AEDIB, STI4SDGs in Africa, AOSTI, etc.

IV. For the priority area of *Capacities for science*:
   i.   **Skills' Development and Mobility** – With contributions focusing on programmes such as ARISE, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions' (MSCAs), Erasmus+, Intra-African Youth Mobility Scheme and more (with participation of Programme beneficiaries among other stakeholders)
   ii. **Higher Education Institutions and the AU-EU Innovation Agenda** – with participation of ARUA, The Guild, RUFORUM, SARUA, AAU, AUC-Education, AAS, OBREAL Global, etc.

V.   For the area of *Cross-cutting issues*:
   i.   **Monitoring & Evaluation of objectives and actions** foreseen by the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda (to be jointly facilitated by AUDA-NEPAD, AUC/AOSTI and Eurostat).

Each topic-related forum will include discussions on:
1)   "Desired deliverables" under short-, medium- and long-term actions of each area of intervention, and on possible support instruments/funding mechanisms to make them attainable;

2)   Potential gaps and needs still not addressed in the draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda, in order to identify possible additional short-, medium- or long-term actions to fulfil them.

3. Providing an event for EU and AU innovators, technology hubs, incubators and financial market players **to showcase the AU and EU vibrant innovation ecosystems** (e.g. in the form of a matchmaking session entitled "**AU-EU Innovation Fair – *Meet the innovators***", encompassing 3 minute-pitches and poster presentations, and to be followed by a networking dinner) and to **catalyse additional partnerships**.

4. Providing strategic **training and information sessions** focused on topics of particular relevance to the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. **Training sessions** (3 hour-long) are envisioned to cover:

   i.   **Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs): from discovery to patent** – including topics such as patentability, freedom to operate, patent application filing, granting and management, overview of Intellectual Property Organisations (African, European and international perspectives). This training session would be organised in partnership with the African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI) and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) and the full support of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). With a view to being as hands-on as possible, this session would also include:
         a. Experience sharing from African and European researchers on possible hindrances encountered in their work as innovators that have previously prevented them from filing a patent application, so to benefit from live feedback from experts from IPR organisations (e.g. OAPI, ARIPO and EUIPO) on possible solutions and draw lessons for the way forward.
         b. Live testimonials from private sector firms across different domains (e.g. health, agri-food, biotechnology, etc.) sharing their experience and best practices with regards to innovation management and IPRs (this would not entail any sharing of sensitive information), with special emphasis on African markets and regions.

   ii. **Preparing proposals for Horizon Europe and other funding programmes (e.g. Erasmus+): a multi-step training** – aiming to train researchers and Higher Education Institutions' representatives on how to prepare and eventually submit proposals for the EU's Horizon Europe Framework Programme and Erasmus+ as well as establish links based on common research topics, ideas and academic curricula, paving the way for potential consortia creation and proposals' filing. With the aim to be as impactful as possible, this session would also include:

         a. A "*Meet the National Contact Points (NCPs)*" interval, during which NCP coordinators attending the event would introduce themselves, so to establish links with researchers and among NCPs from different countries.
         b. An "*Ideas' fair*", during which attending researchers and higher education institutions' representatives would share their main research topics and axes, based on which topic-focussed group discussions will be triggered, with a view to facilitating the creation of consortia and filing of proposals to the Work Programme II[2] under Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.
         c. "*This is our story*", a series of live testimonials of African and European researchers whose proposals have been successful as part of the "Africa Initiative" in Horizon Europe's Work Programme I, who will share their experience and lessons learnt throughout the application and granting process.

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[2] Work Programmes under Horizon Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/horizon-europe-work-programmes_en

       d.   "*Meet the Alumni*": testimonials of beneficiaries of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions' (MSCAs) fellowships and of Erasmus+ and Intra-Africa mobility grants, who will share their experience.

    iii.   **Open Science and Data Science** – Featuring an overview of opportunities and resources for researchers and innovators in Africa and Europe (e.g. the LIBSENSE initiative; the Africa Knowledge Platform, etc.).

<u>**Information sessions**</u> (1 hour-long) are expected to focus on:

    i.   **Africa Initiative in Horizon Europe: update on projects from Work Programme I, 2021-2022** – information session aiming to provide stakeholders with a real-time update on the projects' outcomes of the calls specifically encouraging or requiring participation of African entities from Work Programme I of Horizon Europe [calls from Work Programme II (2023-2024) are expected to be announced in December]. The purpose would be to identify potential synergies with the short-term actions foreseen for the implementation of the Innovation Agenda.

    ii.   **EURAXESS Africa** – information session on mobility opportunities within Africa and also to Europe or to Africa, for Africa- and Europe-based researchers, respectively.

    iii.   **Erasmus+ in Africa** – information session to provide stakeholders with general information on the different actions of the programme and opportunities for institutions and individuals.

    iv.   **OACPS Policy Support Facility in Africa** – information session on the on-demand and tailor-made services provided and available to African countries enhancing the quality and efficiency of research and innovation policies, strategies and systems.

    v.   **Clustering/Partnership management –** information session on best practices to be adopted for the establishment and management of successful clusters and partnerships within the context of AU-EU collaborative R&I projects, based on lessons learnt from the LEAP-Agri Programme. This session will highlight the need for co-ownership, co-responsibility, co-leadership, fluid and transparent communication, clear compliance by rules, mutual trust and shared vision, imparting hands-on advice on how to put these into practice, based on programme stakeholders' experience.

Format

A two-day face-to-face and "hybrid" event, with plenary sessions, workshops and an AU-EU Innovation Fair. A high-level plenary will serve to present the outcome of the public consultation and the up-to-date implementation plan of the Innovation Agenda for feedback by the audience (for more details, please refer to the table below). Workshops will provide a forum for discussion of specific stakeholder demands and ideas, as well as possible implementation pathways, while the Innovation Fair will showcase the innovation ecosystems of both sides. Training and information sessions will aim to equip participants with hands-on information that will help them make the most

of and contribute to implementation actions of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, contributing to the maximisation of the Agenda's positive impact.

During both plenary and thematic sessions, feedback will be gathered interactively, through online tools (e.g. SLIDO and online post-its of ideas) and also through open interventions of participants, noted in real-time and stored electronically. Online tools will be employed both for quantitative (e.g. voting) and for qualitative information gathering (open questions/answers and fetching of ideas through electronic post-its). During the thematic workshops, paper flipcharts will also be used to foster brainstorming and cohesion in smaller groups. The Organising Committee will ensure the transfer of all contents onto a centralised electronic database at the end of the sessions, with utmost care.

The feedback received, through the plenary and the thematic workshops, will then be analysed (by the ad-hoc IA Working Group of the HLPD Bureau), summarised and circulated for approval among all event's participants, after the Stakeholder Event and before the end of the year. The outcome of this analysis will be incorporated in the final version of the Innovation Agenda, to be approved by the HLPD. A 1.5 hour-long wrap-up session at the end of Day 2 will allow to highlight the main take-homes from the plenary and thematic sessions and outline the main next steps towards the finalisation of the Innovation Agenda.

Table 1 – **Overview of the programme of the "AU-EU Innovation Agenda Stakeholder Event"**

	Day 1	Day 2
AM	<u>9 am – noon</u>: *Plenary session*: (1) Opening addresses (2) Overview of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and next steps and their timeline (3) Review of the outcome of the online public consultation on the draft Agenda (4) Interactive discussion	<u>8:30 am – 11:30 am</u>: *Training sessions*: (1) IPR (2) Horizon Europe's proposals (3) Open Science & Data Science <u>11:30 am – 12:30 pm</u>: *Information sessions*: (1) Horizon Europe's Africa Initiative (2) EURAXESS and researchers' mobility (3) Erasmus+ in Africa (4) OACPS Policy Support Facility in Africa (5) Clustering/Partnership management
PM	<u>1 pm – 5 pm</u>: *8 parallel thematic workshops* (1) Public Health (1x) (2) Green Transition (2x) (3) Innovation & Technology (2x) (4) Capacities for Science (2x) (5) Cross-cutting Issues (1x) <u>5.30 – 6.30 pm</u>: *Wrap-up session* on the main take-homes in terms of feedback and input received on the Innovation Agenda throughout the day, from the plenary to the thematic sessions. <u>7 pm</u>: *Networking dinner*	<u>12:30 pm – 3:30 pm</u>: *Matchmaking session*: "AU-EU Innovation Fair – *Meet the Innovators*" : 3 minutes pitch presentations to be followed by poster sessions <u>4 pm – 5:30 pm</u>: *Wrap-up/closing session*, aiming to highlight: (i) The preliminary main take-homes of the two days; (ii) The main next steps towards finalisation of the Agenda.

Target Stakeholders

The expected number of participants will be of at least 200 stakeholders and no more than 500 (ideally in the order of 300) <u>on site in Nairobi</u>, and more online. Stakeholders to be convened will include:

(i)   Representatives from all organisations that participated in the public consultation, across all sectors (e.g. public and private sectors, Higher Education and research institutions, CSOs, etc.);

(ii)   Networks and Associations of Innovators and R&I Organisations across all four priority areas of the AU-EU cooperation in STI (including those that did not take part in the consultation and were engaged afterwards). These will also include key African diaspora, MSCAs' alumni and youth organisations;

(iii)   Project coordinators from Horizon Europe's Africa Initiative's newly granted projects deemed pertinent by the Working Group-Organising Committee for the implementation of the short-term actions of the Innovation Agenda;

(iv)   Project coordinators from the 14 best-performing projects as per the mapping assessment conducted for the AU-EU R&I partnership on FNSSA;

(v)   Project coordinators from past AU-EU R&I partnership projects (e.g. those funded under Horizon 2020), across the four priority areas of the AU-EU R&I cooperation, especially those with a high degree of maturity and deemed particularly successful by the ad-hoc IA Working Group of the AU-EU HLPD;

(vi)   Project coordinators, innovators and researchers from projects supported through ARISE and ACP Innovation Funds;

(vii)   Erasmus+ project coordinators (Erasmus Mundus and Capacity Building in Higher Education projects);

(viii) Private citizens and organisations with an interest in innovation;

(ix)   Representatives from multilateral and bilateral Development banks and agencies (e.g. EIB, AfDB, WB, AFD, GIZ, AESA, etc.) as well as other donors (e.g. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Belmont Forum).

The ad-hoc IA working-group of the AU-EU HLPD Bureau, will ensure a well-balanced participation of stakeholders, organisations included, from both Africa and Europe. Gender balance and participation of youths will also be pursued.

Participation criteria

Participation in this Stakeholder Event will be made possible through an [online registration platform](), for both in person- and online-attendance. Each stakeholder's registration will be confirmed promptly, following a review by the Organising Committee.

Resources, event date and venue

The in person-component AU-EU Innovation Agenda Stakeholder Event will take place at the [Mövenpick Hotel in Nairobi]() on **Wednesday November 23rd and Thursday November 24th**. The organisation of this event will be supervised by the ad-hoc IA Working Group of the HLPD Bureau, while organisational work will be performed by a dedicated contractor. Some resources might be needed to finance travel and accommodation of specific participants.

Addendum

I. Reminder on the Objectives of the Working Document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda

The following **objectives** were formulated by the ad-hoc Innovation Agenda Working Group of the AU-EU HLPD on STI, based on the principles of co-creation and co-ownership, sustainability and openness:

1. **Make it real:** <u>Translate innovative capacities and achievements</u> of AU and EU researchers in government and business sectors, including technology and innovation hubs, public and private non-profit entities, such as civil society organisations and individuals, directly into tangible outputs, thereby supporting sustainable growth and jobs, in particular for the youth. Ensure close cooperation between the AU and EU to jointly deliver on the SDGs, with special emphasis on 'Decent Work and Growth' (SDGs **8)**, 'Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure' (SDG **9**), and 'Combat Climate Change Impacts' (SDG **13**).

2. **Generate impact by design:** <u>Foster and/or strengthen innovation ecosystems to enhance socio-economic impact</u> on the ground through the exchange of knowledge, including technology transfer, experience, and human resources between and within AU and EU countries.

3. **Strengthen people, communities, and institutions:** <u>Develop sustainable, long lasting and mutually beneficial higher education, research and innovation partnerships b</u>etween the AU and the EU countries as foundations for resilient knowledge economies and societies, preventing or mitigating, among others, the effects of major crises.

4. **Learn, monitor, and scale it up:** <u>Scale-up instruments that can take forward existing successful programmes and projects</u> between AU and EU partners (bilateral or multilateral), enable and/or strengthen the knowledge triangle of education, research, innovation, and place special focus on public participation, transparency, and inclusion mainly with the youth through capacity empowerment, advancing knowledge and fostering entrepreneurship and co-creation, without generating brain-drain.

II. Reminder of the Actions foreseen by the Working Document of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

Actions were proposed to address the needs identified for each of the four priorities of the AU-EU HLPD: **Public Health, Green Transition, Innovation & Technology and Capacities for Science**. In addition, a set of actions cutting across all priorities were also included. Implementation of these actions will help reaching the objectives of the Innovation Agenda within specific timeframes. Each action is linked to one or more objectives of the Innovation Agenda, as indicated by the numbers in square brackets [], and to one or more areas of needs and gaps identified (cfr annex II) as per < A, B, C, D, and/or E > for each action. The short-term actions represent the R&I activities to be implemented and generating impact within 3 years of implementation. Medium- to long-term actions are considered to achieve tangible outcomes within 3 to 6, and 6 to 10 years, respectively. In addition, some actions will be continuous throughout the time span of the Innovation Agenda and beyond, while others will have a fixed-time duration.

3.1   Short-term actions

3.1.1) Cross-cutting

1) Fostering the links and networks between the business and government sectors, including private-public partnerships (PPP), higher learning and research organisations, financial institutions and civil society organisations, through the establishment of a dedicated consultative platform under the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, enhancing the quality and the efficiency of measures improving the innovation ecosystems. [1,2,3] < A >

2) Designing mechanisms to pro-actively involve citizens in the innovation ecosystems, to boost active citizenship for ensuring a better and faster societal uptake of innovation outputs, and to exploit their creative and collective intelligence, while making effective efforts to close the gender gap and to avoid any type of discrimination. [2,3] < A >

3) Identifying and sharing climate resilience and adaptation practices during consultative meetings, aiming to avoid lock-in development paths and 'Combat Climate Change Impacts' (SDGs 13). [1,2,3,4] < B, C, E >

4) Fostering the participation of financing partners, e.g. business angels, into AU-EU partnerships to jointly improve access to the use of innovative financial engineering, including for early stage businesses and start-ups, thus enhancing the uptake of new products and innovation services. [1,4] < B, D >

3.1.2)   Public Health

1) Supporting the transformation of health R&I outputs into relevant products, policy guidance and services. [1,2] < B >

2) Developing joint innovation and research agendas on health priorities, enhancing best practices and common standards in the selected areas of cooperation, and spreading availability and use of key enabling and emerging technologies (e.g., digitalisation, ICT, robotics, AI) to enhance the performance and resilience of public health systems, which have been shown to be extremely fragile under the 'stress test' of the COVID-19 pandemic, that will be also impacted by on-going climate change. [1,2] < B, C, E >

3.1.3)   Green Transition

1) Developing or transferring innovative renewable energy production and use devices, suitable for easy and prompt adoption by 'energy communities', 'energy villages', and/or at household level, with affordable and sustainable access for less favoured territories and less favoured groups, to prevent deterioration of rural environments and improve the urban ones (smart & green cities). [1,2] < B, C, E >

2) Supporting the development of innovative climate services through a new "space science, technical and innovation cooperation" action for risk reduction at local and regional level, based on in-situ and remote networks of climate changes and impacts, as well as on resilience and adaptation practices, in line with the Lisbon Manifesto of the High-Level Europe-Africa Forum on Earth Observation from Space of July 2021. [1,2] < A, B, C, E >

3.1.4) Innovation and Technology

1) Supporting research and innovation cooperation between AU and EU research organisations and companies (in particular SMEs) from low tech to high tech (e.g., frugal innovation including organisational innovation) by making smart use of local intelligence and adapted business-driven models, mobilising multi-actor approaches (innovation platforms, living labs, etc.) in sectors like agro-food-nutrition, circular economy,

sustainable manufacturing, One Health, raw materials, using digitalisation and artificial intelligence as transversal enablers. [3] < A, B, C, E >

2) Supporting technology/innovation hubs, networks, and operations of accelerators and incubators, including by assessing technology fields that could benefit from standardisation, to develop the human capital and skills pool for effective technology transfer and to stimulate entrepreneurship, inter alia through thematic exchange programmes between start-ups, researchers and policymakers, including social innovation beyond technologies. [1,3,4] < A, B, C, E >

3.1.5) Capacities for Science

1) Strengthening cooperation between AU and EU higher education institutions, research centres and organisations, and capacity building partnerships, with a focus on the potential of knowledge transfer, teaming, twinning and learning mobility activities (e.g., by involving the European University Alliances, consortia from the Erasmus+ programme and the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme, and ARISE grantees), by reinforcing scientific and academic mobility opportunities (through notably the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), to support the co-construction and/or co-reinforcement of training programmes, and research and innovation projects in line with the socio-economic needs of the concerned countries/regions, both in the AU and in the EU. [3,4] < C, E >

2) Improve the transparency and recognition of higher education qualifications and the relevance of curricula, and to enhance mobility. Foster the development of high-performing digital education systems and upgrade digital skills and competences for the digital transformation. [3,4] < E >

3.2   Medium term actions

3.2.1) Cross-cutting

1) Re-skilling and/or upskilling citizens of all ages in countries in the AU and in the EU, to allow them all to profit from innovation and technologies, and to counteract the insurgence of new or the increase of existing inequalities and/or discriminations, targeting SDGs 8-9-13. [1,3,4] < C, E >

3.2.2) Public Health

1) Ensuring technology transfer and improving and developing quality vaccine, medicines and health technologies and production, to avoid shortage and ensure affordability, availability, and accessibility for the people in need, while also ensuring equal distribution among geographical areas. [1] < B, C >

3.2.3)   Green Transition

1) Fostering digital applications and green technologies to give impetus to agro-ecological production, healthy and sustainable food processing and consumption, and by co-designing with food system actors to scale digital solutions for production, processing and marketing to support sustainable and agroecological transition. [2] < B, C, E >

2) Developing in Africa renewable fuels in a changing world for climate change mitigation. [1,2] < B >

3.2.4)   Capacities for Science

1) Promoting joint master and doctoral degrees between AU and EU universities, and supporting the inclusive mobility of students, researchers and staff by building on

existing programmes (such as the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions) to increase the number of future researchers and innovators freely moving among and between both areas, while limiting the risks of talent drain. [3,4] < C, E >

2) Supporting the creation of enabling STI environment for sustainable innovation ecosystems through Smart Specialisation roadmaps to reinforce the innovation culture across the quadruple helix actors, the evidence basis for prioritisation of innovation investments and the participatory governance processes for tackling place-specific developmental challenges. [3,4] < A, B, C, D, E >

3.3   Long-term actions

3.3.1) Cross-cutting

1) Tapping the full potential of sciences by promoting research with a special focus on youth, women and demography, mitigation and management of global challenges (including those posed by climate change and natural hazards), to build better societies and create well-being for all, in the AU and EU member-states and regions. [1, 2] < A, E >

3.3.2) Public Health

1) Designing and implementing new and innovative methods and tools to counteract future health threats due to long standing, (re)emerging, or antimicrobial resistant pathogens, and to promote one health and precision medicine, in a changing environment. [2] < B >

3.3.3) Green Transition

1) Improving the agricultural innovation ecosystem to strengthen capacities of actors to innovate, including research organisations, to co-design and scale technology and innovation through multi-stakeholder approaches, to build thematic networks in Africa and to strengthen relationships for exchanges of knowledge and experiences between Europe and Africa, to co-invest in start-ups and agro-SME and their ecosystem, and most importantly to enhance capacity for proactive innovation policy development. [2,3] < A, B, C, D, E >

3.3.4) Innovation and Technology

1) Reinforcing and facilitating inclusive and affordable access to world-class research and innovation infrastructures in the AU and EU countries, so that they can fully play their role of research and innovation hubs and 'lighthouses' for the whole continents. [3,4] < A, B, E >

1) Ensuring that digital transformation supports the dissemination of knowledge, e.g. through promoting connection with the European Open Science Cloud. [3,4] < A, B, C, E >

3.3.5) Capacities for Science

1) Providing specific support for better bridging research and innovation in AU and EU countries by fostering the emergence of new and/or by strengthening the existing centres of excellence, inter alia for young African and European researchers while

supporting senior researchers by establishing 'advanced study institutes' ("collegium") bringing together AU and EU researchers in residence, within the framework of calls for proposals targeting cross-cutting subjects. [1,4] < A, C >

2) Modernising and reinforcing the research and higher education systems (RHESs), both in AU and EU countries, since effective, enduring and impactful innovation ecosystems cannot thrive in the absence of RHESs based on excellence, high quality, inclusiveness, openness, transparency and merit. [3] < A, B, C, E >