

Terms of Reference for the Senior Officials Meeting of the Africa-EU Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Dialogue

Preamble

The 2010 Africa-EU Summit identified the launch of an Africa-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, established by means of the Africa-EU Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) will contribute to creating a more enabling environment for promoting efficient cooperation with maximum impact, by notably building trust and understanding between partners in the planning and management of cooperation programmes. It will also constitute a valuable platform for mutual policy learning and exchange of views by both sides. In this context, the SOM will provide a forum for discussion and will also make strategic policy decisions with regard to the strengthening of cooperation.

The Terms of Reference for the Africa-EU SOM were adopted by the plenary session of the 1st Africa-EU SOM in Addis Ababa on October 10-11, 2011.

Article 1

Role and Tasks of the SOM

1.1. Role

In the context of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and Partnerships adopted by the EU-Africa Lisbon Summit in December 2007, and in particular the 8th Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space, the Africa-EU SOM plays a central role in **formulating, reinforcing and evaluating** the Africa-EU **cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation**. The SOM also acts as the forum which supports and prepares the Ministerial Meetings on Science and Technology.

1.2. Tasks

With a view to promoting the Africa-EU cooperation in STI and thereby to supporting the sustainable development of both regions, the SOM will:

1. act as a forum for the exchange of information and views and recommendations on STI 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 STI and requiring cooperative activities;
3. propose concrete actions to be taken in the context of the EU-Africa 8th Partnership, the bilateral cooperation activities between countries represented in the SOM, or the exchange of information at national level;
4. observe and report on STI policies, developments and activities in the Africa-EU context;
5. communicate/exchange information with the European Commission, African Union Commission and member states of Africa and the EU with respect to cooperation in STI;
6. support and prepare the Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology, as well as follow-up the implementation of the Ministerial decisions;
7. provide directive/guidance to expert groups in issues related to STI, including the JEG 8, and receive and discuss their reports;
8. report to the Africa-EU Ministerial Meetings on issues relating to STI;
9. identify methods and sources of funding to advance STI cooperation and foster co-ownership of the policy dialogue.

Article 2

Composition of the SOM

The membership of the SOM comprises senior officials of the relevant authorities concerned with Research and Innovation (STI) in the African Member States, the African Union Commission, the European Union Member States and the European Commission. To engage the African and EU economic regions in the policy dialogue, the Regional Economic Communities, NEPAD and other regional organizations will be invited as observers to attend the SOM.

The Member States/Commissions are each represented by **one delegate and a substitute**, formally designated by their relevant government authorities responsible for STI. The delegates serve in the SOM until replaced by their national authorities through formal notification to the SOM Bureau. Member States could participate with larger delegations of up to three members in particular cases allowing for the participation of multiple ministries/authorities involved in, or concerned with STI. An exemption from the number of delegates also applies to both the two commissions and the two chairs as they might require more delegates to support the process of chairmanship.

Article 3

Chair

The SOM will be co-chaired by Africa and the EU as follows:

- one co-chair from the EU and the other one from Africa
- the African co-chair is the African Member State holding the chair of AMCOST
- the EU co-Chair is the European Commission

The chair will be supported by a bureau, composed of the two executive Commissions, the AMCOST Chair, First Vice Chair and Second Vice Chair of AMCOST, the EU Troika, in addition to the European and African co-Chairs of the Joint Experts Group of the EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space.

Article 4

Role and Tasks of the Chair and Bureau

The SOM's co-chairs, hereafter referred to as the "chair", will prepare the agenda and logistics of the meetings, chair the meeting and draft the minutes. The chair will invite members to the meetings and transmit all background documentation at least two weeks prior to meetings to the members of the SOM, in particular information concerning issues on which the SOM must formulate an opinion.

The Bureau will provide logistic and technical support to the SOM and the Chair, particularly in preparing input documents, following-up the implementation of SOM decisions and organizing the SOM and Ministerial meetings. The Bureau will be chaired by the SOM chair.

Article 5

Meetings of the SOM

5.1. Frequency

The SOM will convene at least one meeting per year. The dates and venues of meetings will be proposed at the preceding meeting if possible. The SOM may decide to convene additional plenary meetings and to establish working groups on an *ad hoc* basis if and when required.

5.2. Venue

The SOM will always be hosted by one of its members, including the European Commission and the African Union Commission. If possible, the meetings will take place alternately in the EU and Africa.

5.3. Agenda

The agenda will be developed and proposed by the chair of the SOM. Members may request the chair, not later than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, to include a specific item on the draft agenda. The requesting member should provide the chair with the necessary background documentation in order to allow for timely distribution to the SOM members. The agenda will be approved by the SOM at the beginning of each meeting.

5.4. Preparation for Meetings

Detailed information on dates and venue, as well as the draft agenda and any documents relating to a meeting will be sent to the SOM members two weeks prior to meetings by the chair. The working documents of the SOM will be provided in English (main document) with translations to French, Arabic and Portuguese

5.5. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings will summarise the discussions held and will report on all decisions reached. Opinions expressed by individual members of the SOM will in general not be reported in the minutes. The minutes will be distributed to the respective Ministries/authorities and the SOM representatives by the chair.

5.6. Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

As a principle, only the conclusions and recommendations of those meetings attended by **at least 30%** of SOM members eligible for voting **from both Africa and the EU** will be considered binding. Conclusions and Recommendations of the SOM will be adopted by consensus. Upon request, mention will be made in the minutes of minority views on any specific item. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be taken by a majority of two thirds of present and voting members (one vote per member state, including the two Commissions).

Article 6

Financial Issues

6.1. Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence expenses of delegates participating in a meeting will normally be met by their seconding country/authority. The European Commission and the African Union Commission may provide funds to cover part of the aforementioned expenses from any available sources.

6.2. Organisational Costs

Local organisational costs will normally be covered by the host country/organization. The European Commission and the African Union Commission may provide additional sources of funding, if necessary.

Article 7

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The present Terms of Reference lay down the organisational structure and functions of the SOM. Amendments to these Terms of Reference may be proposed by any member of the SOM with the support of two other members. Their adoption requires a two-thirds majority of SOM members present at the meeting in which the decision is to be taken. SOM members will be informed of the proposed amendments at least 14 days prior to the meeting by the chair.