



Building blocks for a research partnership between Europe and Africa

The expected growth of the world population to 9 billion in 2050 and the changing diets will affect food availability drastically. Therefore improving food and nutrition security and ensuring the sustainability of agriculture is a global issue for the years to come. African and European researchers have agreed to jointly engage in the preparation of a new, long-term and ambitious partnership to solve these issues.

The PROIntensAfrica project has tracked down the main building blocks for a new, long-term and ambitious research partnership between Europe and Africa, presenting a jointly funded and governed mechanism. The project partners also agreed upon a research agenda to sustainably intensify the African agri-food systems, presenting four main pathways for agricultural intensification.

"Africa wants to utilise the potential to become a food basket for the world, and for that, we need to intensify the agricultural production. However, Africa also wants to avoid the negative impacts of intensification", explains Dr. **Oluwole Fatunbi** of Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), co-coordinator of PROIntensAfrica project.

Diverse pathways lead to sustainable intensification of agriculture

As a result of two years of work, the PROIntensAfrica project partners have designed both a **research funding mechanism** that would best meet the requirements for a Europe-Africa research partnership, and a **research agenda**.

The research agenda is based on research results obtained through 17 case studies completed across the African continent. Through studying the real-life situations, PROIntensAfrica defined four main pathways used for sustainable intensification of agriculture in Africa. These pathways have been labelled as "conventional", "ecotechnological", "agroecological" and "organic" pathway.

Although the pathways are organised as a typology which works as a foundation for the research agenda, they also demonstrate the richness and variety of agricultural management options that are open to African farmers. In addition, the pathways also reveal the amount of information gaps that need to be filled by research.

Joint programming, joint funding

In order to efficiently fund and organise the research to be conducted within the partnership, the PROIntensAfrica project proposes a research funding mechanism built on existing structures and proven experiences, such as a joint programming initiative or a European joint programming framework.

"Scientific impact calls for joint funding, aligned strategic research initiatives, balanced ownership, and good governance. This is why our partnership proposal is of such an importance – it is created by the actors themselves and it really addresses the problem of overlapping and disorganised research", says project manager **Pieter Windmeijer** from Wageningen University and Research (WUR).



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The coordinator of PROIntensAfrica, **Huub Löffler** from WUR says that the project has succeeded in bringing the idea into reality.

“In this project, we have involved both African and European researchers for a joint cause. We have a balanced consortium, and we are presenting a model for partnership which can be flexible, inclusive, collaborative, co-owned, based on alignment and reaches impact”, he says.

The project’s final seminar “Effective and efficient research and innovation partnerships” takes place at the African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, 13-15 March 2017. This seminar will allow stakeholders to fine-tune the final propositions and steps towards for the strategic partnership. The research agenda “Harnessing and improving the potential of diverse pathways for sustainable intensification in agri-food systems in Africa” will be available on 31 March, 2017.

More information: www.intensafrica.org

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The IntensAfrica partnership image caption:

A key dimension of the IntensAfrica partnership is to provide a mechanism for long-term partnership between EU and Africa, linking policy formulation to project implementation, involving wide stakeholder representation, and building on what already exists.



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