

	CONCEPT NOTE
Title	Advancing the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership in the context of the International Research Consortium (IRC)
Dates	June 6, 2023
Venue	Durban-South Africa (CAPE TOWN B)
Zoom link	https://faraafrica.zoom.us/j/86838216150
Convener	FARA, AU-EU HLPD Working Group on FNSSA
Partners	FARA, CAADXP4, European Commission, Africa Union Commission (EST & DARBE), DST-SA, UH-Finland, ACU-UK, SLU- Sweden, CIRAD-France, WUR-The Netherlands, ARC-SA, NRF-SA
Detailed Description of the Interaction	<p>1. Background</p> <p>In 2016, a roadmap towards a Research and Innovation (R&I) partnership on FNSSA was adopted by the AU-EU Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) under the aegis of the AU-EU HLPD. Largely informed by the EU strategy and the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), the Roadmap defined AU-EU common R&I priorities within the FNSSA domain. Under the leadership of the HLPD, the implementation of the Roadmap has galvanized a growing FNSSA Partnership chaperoned by the HLPD FNSSA Working Group.</p> <p>Although there are many large knowledge gaps, it is widely acknowledged that the R&I FNSSA landscape is highly fragmented, fraught with multiplicity of actors and initiatives causing an undesirable level of incoherent funding efforts. To overcome these problems, an International Research Consortium (IRC) has recently been launched by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Project, Long-term European African Partnership for FNSSA (LEAP4FNSSA). The IRC is open to all R&I actors in the AU and EU FNSSA space and currently has 52 signatories.</p> <p>At the end of the LEAP4FNSSA project one of the action areas proposed as next steps was to undertake activities to consolidate the gains of the</p>

LEAP4FNSSA project by sustaining the momentum of the IRC generated under the LEAP4FNSSA project. This was to be carried out during the bridging period to ensure continuity and a seamless, efficient and successful start-up phase of the IRC. The activities include:

- a) Advocacy and communication to sensitize stakeholders including policy makers about the IRC and the value add it offers plus to update them on the process towards its operationalization. The purpose is to keep the IRC membership updated of what is going on regarding the intervening period. This action is to be achieved through representation of the growing IRC membership at strategic FNSSA partnership and HLPD events.
- b) Sustaining the partnership being formed with IRC members, federating IRC membership and strengthening institutional commitment to the IRC by the AU and EU Member States
- c) Strengthening country participation (especially African countries) in the IRC and generally in the AU-EU policy process (HLPD and its Bureau)

The 8th Africa Agribusiness and Science Week presents an opportunity to achieve key milestones of the above activities through a side event that will bring together the current 52 IRC signatories, potential members and other interested R&I partners. At the proposed side event, key preparatory actions towards growing the IRC will be discussed and AU and EU Member States will be engaged to develop an understanding of the sustainability and functionality of the IRC.

The proposed side event will also serve as the first meeting of the 52 IRC signatories since the launch of the game-changing IRC in September, 2022.

2. Objective of the side event

The objective is to continue the dialogue that started during the LEAP4FNSSA project on consolidating the membership of the IRC as well as on building the sustainability of the IRC towards playing its expected role as the main AU-EU Platform of the FNSSA partnerships for building stronger food systems, sustainable growth and jobs.

3. Expected Outcomes

- i. Plan for sustaining the momentum of the IRC during the transition period outlined.
- ii. Ideas shared on the IRC institutional commitment and its implication for policy articulated.

The outcomes and policy implications will feed into the IRC session during the upcoming AU-EU Ministerial Meeting at the end of June 2023.

	<p>4. Approach</p> <p>In line with the above-mentioned objectives and expected outcomes, the session will include presentations, facilitated panel discussion and an open discussion (see Annex 1 below for the detailed meeting agenda).</p> <p>5. Expected Participants:</p> <p>The expected participants include all the 52 signatories of the IRC, interested R&I stakeholders and potential IRC members, including private sector actors, policymakers, national and regional agricultural research institution actors and gender and youth organisations etc.</p> <p>6. Facilitation:</p> <p>The Meeting will mainly be facilitated by FARA with support from DST, South Africa and the University of Helsinki.</p> <p>7. Date and Venue:</p> <p>The meeting will take place at the venue of the AASW—the Durban International Convention Center on 6th June 2023.</p> <p>7. The Meeting Agenda:</p> <p>The meeting Agenda is presented in <i>Annex 1</i>.</p>
Required logistics and services	Working logistics (video projector, audio equipment, notebooks, and pens and equipment for a hybrid meeting format)
Working documents and tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IRC Manuscript https://library.faraafrica.org/2022/09/16/the-au-eu-international-research-consortium-irc-platform-document/ or the LEAP4FNSSA Home page. 2. The EU-AU FNSSA Road Map https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/13c79b47-cc74-4a88-9f7e-b8c435344c3c_en?filename=eu-africa_roadmap_fnssa.pdf 3. The Framework for African Agricultural Productivity https://www.resakss.org/sites/default/files/pdfs//comprehensive-africa-agriculture-development-progr-39424.pdf
Format	Meeting will be in a hybrid format. In-person participants are self-sponsored.

Annex 1: Tentative programme (Tuesday, 6 June: 15:00-18:00 GMT+2)

Facilitator: Dr Irene Annor-Frempong, FARA

Time	Activity	Responsible person
14:30 – 15:00	Registration	FARA, Secretariat
15:00 – 15:05	Opening remarks	Yemi Akinbamiyo, ED, FARA, Ghana
15:05 – 15:15	Key hindrances likely to affect the achievement of the SDGs caused by fragmentation of actions in STI	Imme Gerke IDRG, Germany
15:15 – 15:25	Presentation on the FNSSA Partnership	Beate Knight, Assoc. of Commonwealth Univ. (ACU), UK.
15:25 – 15:35	Presentation on the FNSSA project database	Petronella Chaminuka ARC - South Africa / Ioannis Dimitriou, Swedish University of Agric. Sci., Sweden
15:35 – 15:55	Presentation on the IRC	Irene Annor-Frempong, FARA, Ghana
15:55 – 16:45	Panel discussion on the relevance and policy implications of the IRC for the AU-EU partnership on FNSSA and for the Innovation Agenda	Godfrey Bahigwa AUC-DARBE, Ethiopia Magdalena Gajdzinska, EC-RTD- Brussels-Belgium Antonella Zona, EC-DG Agri. – Brussels-Belgium Genna Tesdall, YPARD- Germany Michael Sudarkasa, AFAP- South Africa Russell Curtis, Invest Durban- South Africa

16:45 – 17:25	Open discussion	Facilitated by: Thato Morokong, DST, South Africa (in-person) Antti Autio, UH (online), Finland
17:25 – 17:30	Closing remarks	Aggrey Agumya, ED Designate, FARA, Ghana

Please access the session virtually via this Zoom link: <https://faraafrica.zoom.us/j/86838216150>