



**EAST AFRICAN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
COMMISSION (EASTECO)**

Concept Note

East African Science & Technology Commission (EASTECO) 1st Regional Stakeholder Meeting

22-26 August 2016,
Kigali, Rwanda

Science, Technology and Innovation for socio-economic development, regional integration and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

1. Background and Rationale

In order to accelerate Africa's transition to an innovation led, knowledge based economy, the June 2014's 23rd Ordinary Session of African Union Heads of State and Government Summit adopted a 10-year Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024). The strategy is part of the long-term people centred AU Agenda 2063 which is underpinned by science, technology and innovation as multi-function tools and enablers for achieving continental development goals. The 2007 AU Assembly Resolution was later included in STISA 2024 where Each Member State was encouraged to take concrete actions to allocate at least 1% of GDP to R&D to ensure that Africa maximizes ownership and responsibility for its own developmental path. Furthermore, In order to effectively monitor and evaluate achievements, various African countries subscribed to the Africa Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) initiative coordinated under NEPAD.

Developments throughout Africa over the last decades suggest a changing landscape, where science, technology and innovation (STI) are emerging as key drivers in social and economic development. These changes include enhanced research funding commitments from national governments, increases in the rate of scientific production and innovation activities, the emergence of new organizations/councils and ministries that fund, coordinate, and monitor science, technology and innovation; and increasing cases of collaboration on cross-regional research. For instance, at the regional level, the newly established East African Community Science and Technology Commission (based in Rwanda) aims to identify the major issues relating to science, coordinate and promote technological activities in member states, and facilitate relations among scientists across all disciplines.

The **East African Science & Technology Commission (EASTECO)** is an Institution of the East African Community (EAC) established by the 5th Extra-Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State on 18th June 2007. This is in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Establishment of the East African Community as set out on Chapter 16, Article 103 (a), where the Partner States undertook to promote cooperation in the development of science and technology within the community. The Treaty, in Article 103, recognizes the fundamental importance of science and technology in economic development.

EASTECO was operationalised in July 2015. The **Development Objective** of EASTECO *is to promote & coordinate the development, management and application of Science & Technology to support regional integration & socio-economic development.*

The EAC Partner States of Burundi, **Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania** and **Uganda** have established **Science Granting Councils** mandated to facilitate and coordinate the development and implementation of policies and strategies for integrating Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) into their respective national development processes. They aim to promote scientific and technological development and societal transformation through developing high level human resources, promoting and supporting specific research programmes, and facilitating the dissemination and uptake of scientific and technological knowledge products and services i.a.

Use of relevant and appropriate technologies offers many solutions for sustainable socio-economic development, however, translating the potential of technology into development impact will only be possible if an **enabling environment** is in place. In that regard, , EASTECO has organised a regional workshop convening the main movers of science, technology and innovation in the 5 EAC Partner States in August 2016 to strengthen the process of regional STI planning and collaboration. The regional meeting provides an

opportunity for key actors in the region to discuss the **enabling factors and policy approaches** that can drive innovation and technology development efforts in the EAC region following global best practices.

EASTECO being the regional coordinating body is in the process of developing a strategic plan to act as a guiding framework for the exploitation of STI to accelerate the development and competitiveness of the east African regional economies. In this regard, EASTECO intends to organise a regional consultative workshop convening the main movers of science, technology and innovation in the 5 EAC Partner States on 22nd -23rd August 2016 in Kigali to strengthen the process of regional planning and collaboration.

2. Objectives of the Workshop

The objective of the workshop is to build consensus among national level stakeholders on regional STI policy priorities and a guiding framework for the judicious application of STI to accelerate the Socio – economic development of the EA region.

The specific objectives are:

- To discuss and agree on regional STI priorities;
- To explore potential synergies and/or areas of collaboration between NCSTs in East African Community including enabling factors and policy approaches;
- To achieve consensus on regional STI policy research agenda (Prioritised themes that contribute to solving challenges in the region, including areas for collaborative research);
- To gather input from stakeholders with the aim of informing the EASTECO strategic Plan 2017-21;

3. Workshop Structure

The workshop is planned for 2 days and will be convened back-to-back with the Annual Regional Meeting (ARM) of the Science Granting Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI). Jointly funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), the SGCI aims to strengthen capacities of Science Granting Councils in Eastern, Southern, Central and West Africa in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The workshop will explore how regional cooperation can complement and reinforce national efforts and benefit the broader region with regard to technology transfer, collaborative research, and technology-related international bilateral agreements and partnerships. A draft EASTECO Strategic Plan will be presented and discussed. The workshop will be highly interactive allowing an exchange of experience and views among participants. (See attached preliminary programme).

4. Expected Outputs

- i) Documented inputs from stakeholders experiences, lessons, good practices and ideas;
- ii) Consensus on strategic regional STI priorities (that are especially relevant to countries in the region and build on the comparative advantage of the EAC partner states);
- iii) Agreed framework for regional innovation systems and technology development;

- iv) Regional Research collaboration/Agenda (priority themes that contribute to addressing challenges in the region; and
- v) Stakeholder input into the EASTECO strategic Plan 2017-21

5. Workshop Organizers and Financial Support

The meeting will be co-organized by EASTECO in collaboration with the Rwanda's National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) and the SGCI.

The meeting is supported by the EAC partnership fund, Rwanda's NCST, and the SGCI.

6. Workshop Participants

The workshop will target stakeholders from i) policy makers from the countries in the region with responsibility for the implementation of national development strategies; ii) representatives of National Science Granting Councils and key regional STI stakeholders; and iii) representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other sectors of civil society.

7. Background documents:

The following background documents will be sent out to workshop participants to facilitate their preparation for the workshop

- The Protocol on establishing the East African Science and Technology Commission (2007)
- Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024)
- Monitoring Africa's progress in research and experimental development (R&D) investments; African Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) Initiative series, NEPAD-AOSTI Policy Brief No. 2, July 2013.
- EAC industrialisation Policy
- Global Sustainable Development Goals and Targets
- Draft EASTECO Strategic Plan