

Knocking on the Door of Higher Education Institutions: The AU-EU innovation Agenda and the involvement of Nordic actors

On the 18th of February 2022, the European commission have launched the AU-EU Innovation Agenda as a cornerstone to improve the AU-EU High level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation. The Agenda highlights the enormous growth potential of the innovation ecosystems in the EU and the AU proposing actions to generate the desired impact. These actions are focusing on four priority areas: Public Health, Green Transition, Innovation & Technology, and Capacities for Science and start from research actions jointly invested in through improving innovation performance and capacities on both sides.

In the deployment of the Agenda actions, Universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), represent a key asset as they are expected to implement actions pertaining to Education, Skills, Capacity Building and Researchers' & Knowledge Exchange. In addition, to this, facilitation, coordination and promotion of the execution of R&D/Innovation driven actions in the four priority areas mentioned above complete the contribution framework designed in the plan.

Close geographical location has historically led to cooperation between Southern European actors and the AU. And as of today, it may seem that the Nordic actors fall behind in this area. But is this actually the case, or rather, is this cooperation something that has been unrecognized and undercommunicated in the EU? In many ways, Nordic actors' activity and influence is not visible enough in Europe.

The Nordics have historically strong ties and a tradition of collaboration and capacity building in higher education together with institutions in Africa, mainly funded by national and Nordic instruments, in many cases supported by the national aid institutions, the research and education councils and private funding. As such, with substantial expertise in science at the EU arena, Nordic actors can have an important contributing role for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and its priority areas.

The purpose of the event is to inform the participants about the development of a joint European–African Research & Innovation agenda, its priorities and future implementation through Horizon Europe. The event also aims to demonstrate already existing research cooperation between Nordic and African Universities to build on these experiences to contribute to the implementation of the EU-AU R&I agenda.

What is the state of the implementation of the agenda, and how are the Nordic actors contributing to it? These aspects, amongst others, will be discussed at the workshop in September.

The event is organised by:

