

# EUROAFRICA-ICT/P8 FP7 AWARENESS & TRAINING WORKSHOP (JUNE 13-14, 2012 - MASERU, LESOTHO)

## EVENT REPORT



### INTRODUCTION

---

The EuroAfrica-ICT FP7 Awareness and Training Workshop took place on June 13-14, 2012 at the Maseru Sun Hotel in Maseru, the Kingdom of Lesotho. The workshop was organized by the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 FP7 project under the aegis of the European Commission (DG CONNECT: International Relations Unit) and in collaboration with Department of Science and Technology (DST) of Lesotho. The workshop aimed at raising awareness in Lesotho and southern Africa as a whole on the ICT theme of the European Union's Framework Programmes (FP) for research and technological developments and enhancing the participation of African organisations in EU-funded collaborative ICT research projects. Participation was free of charge but pre-registration was compulsory and subject to selection by the organising committee. During the workshop, about 70 participants from 12 countries, namely Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Tunisia, United States, Finland, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Portugal and Germany, attended to discuss new developments on ICT research, development and innovation, and to promote research collaboration between Europe and Africa.

The EuroAfrica-ICT Awareness and Training workshop featured keynote speeches, thematic presentations, networking sessions, birds-of-a-feather (BoF) sessions, and a cocktail sponsored by DST Lesotho.

Following the closing of the workshop, a half-day visit to the Mohale Dam was undertaken by some 40 participants.

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

---

The workshop aimed at raising awareness in Africa on the ICT theme of the European Union's Framework Programmes (FP) for Research and Technological Developments and at enhancing the participation of African organisations in EU-funded collaborative ICT research projects.



This was done by introducing local stakeholders to the cooperation opportunities offered by EU FPs and by contributing to the refinement of focused Africa-EU ICT research priority ideas.

## **DAY 1: JUNE 13, 2012**

---


The workshop was opened on Wednesday, June 13, by **Dr Barend Taute** (ICT R&D Contract Manager, EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 Regional Contact Point for Southern Africa), who welcomed all speakers, delegates and session chairs to the workshop.

During the opening session Dr Taute introduced **Ms. Mothepane Kotele** (Acting Principal Secretary: Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology, The Kingdom of Lesotho), **Ms. Laura Lindoro** (Attaché Operations: Water and Transport Infrastructure, Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho), **Dr Ntsibane Ntlatlapa** (Competency Area Manager: Networks and Media, CSIR Meraka Institute, South Africa), **Mr. Lerotholi Thite** (Lecturer, The National University of Lesotho, the Kingdom of Lesotho) and **Mr. Laurent Besançon** (Lead Regulatory Specialist at the ICT sector unit – World Bank, EuroAfrica-P8 Knowledge Partner-US).

**Ms. Mothepane Kotele's** official speech highlighted how the Kingdom of Lesotho was excited to host this event, for ICT plays an important role. She expressed the necessity of researchers coming from different ministries in Lesotho to take part in future events such as this one, to bring about change and possible collaborations within the ICT sector. **Ms. Laura Lindoro**, subsequently did the opening remarks on behalf of the Head of Delegation of the EU to Lesotho. She highlighted the potential and cross-cutting nature of ICT in fighting poverty, and also emphasised that while access to ICT services is a responsibility of governments, it is unfortunate that in many countries access to these ICT and mobile technologies is hampered by policies that favour the state over competition. In turn, **Dr Ntsibane Ntlatlapa** congratulated the EuroAfrica-ICT Initiative for putting together such an effective and rich agenda, and encouraged participants to take advantage of the opportunities presented to further their ICT research and infrastructure development goals. He also highlighted the role of networks and media, as well as the importance of training and building local skills, mainly amongst the unemployed youth.

During his keynote address **Mr. Lerotholi Thite** highlighted the state of ICT in Lesotho and emphasised the role of open source technologies as well as encouraging its usage at the National University of Lesotho. He insisted that development should be driven by patents and the protection of intellectual property.

Finally, **Mr. Laurent Besançon** (Lead Regulatory Specialist at the ICT sector unit – World Bank, EuroAfrica-P8 Knowledge Partner-US) highlighted the role that the World Bank is playing in changing the lives of people in African countries through ICT projects that have been conducted among others in Uganda, Zambia and Addis Ababa.



Following the opening session and keynote addresses, the day continued with the following four plenary sessions:

- Introduction to the EuroAfrica-ICT initiative;
- S&T/ICT research in Southern Africa – opportunities, challenges and successes;
- Introduction to the European Union framework Programmes (FP7 + Horizon 2020) for research and development – ICT theme; and
- Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions.

These sessions ensured that participants understood what the awareness and training workshop was all about and provided them with details on the EuroAfrica-ICT initiative. Thereafter, participants listened to very interesting success stories regarding ICT research presented by several researchers from Malawi, South Africa and Lesotho, outlining opportunities and challenges that these countries have experienced in terms of ICT research projects. **Ms. Karine Valin** (Managing Director of Sigma-Orionis & Coordinator of the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 project) introduced the FP7 and Horizon 2020 plans and announced the upcoming FP7 calls for proposals and provided guidance for FP7 newcomers.

#### **Birds of a feather (BoF) sessions:**




By definition, a "Birds-of-a-Feather" (BoF) session is an informal meet-up at conferences or workshops where attendees group together based on a shared interest and carry out discussions without any pre-planned agenda. BoFs can facilitate networking and partnership formation among subgroups. "Birds-of-a-Feather" sessions generally allow for more audience interaction than the panel discussions typically seen at conventions. The discussions are not completely unguided, though, as there is still a discussion moderator or facilitator.

During the workshop, participants took part in BoF sessions and were allowed to choose a topic of their interest based on EU-Africa thematic priorities. The session covered the following topics (or themes): e-Agriculture, e-Health, e-Infrastructures and e-Learning. Four groups were formed depending on the interest of participants in each of the above suggested topics. This allowed for in-depth discussions as each topic had a facilitator and a rapporteur who both had to give feedback on Day 2 about the group discussions.

Each BoF group was requested to respond to the following questions with respect to their theme:

- What do you regard as the most important challenges where ICT can play an enabling role?
- How can ICT address those main challenges?
- What are, in your opinion, short term (<5 yr) priorities in ICT research to consider?



- 
- A stylized world map in white and light blue, centered on the Atlantic Ocean, set against a dark red background with a grid pattern.
- What are, in your opinion, long term (>5 yr) priorities in ICT research to consider?
  - What other factors will ensure success of ICT research projects?

These "Birds-of-a-Feather" sessions allowed workshop participants to:

- Exchange information and ideas on specific ICT thematic topics of their choice;
- Network with peers in the same research area;
- Discuss ideas with the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 consortium;
- Engage in discussions with potential partners and establish possible future collaborations; and
- Consider possible involvement in EU FP7/Horizon2020 collaborative projects.

The first day ended with a **networking cocktail reception** sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology of Lesotho, to allow participants the chance to relax while exchanging ideas and contact details and enjoying the traditional Lesotho dances.

## **DAY 2: JUNE 14, 2012**

---

The second day of the workshop (14 June) was opened and moderated by **Ms. Karine Valin** (Managing Director of Sigma-Orionis & Coordinator of the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 project), thereafter followed by a presentation of **Dr Barend Taute** (R&D Contract Manager, EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 Regional Contact Point for Southern Africa) on Africa-EU joint ICT research priorities. He stressed the challenges on e-Health, e-Learning and m-Applications and he also emphasized the importance of participants taking part in Euro-Africa programmes to build international collaboration, and to begin now by putting forth applications for the next call for proposals closing in January 2013.

Participants in the BoF sessions were encouraged to find a way of building and strengthening capacities in ICT research.

**Mr. Laurent Besançon** (Lead Regulatory Specialist at the ICT sector unit – World Bank, EuroAfrica-P8 Knowledge Partner, US) gave a presentation to introduce the 1<sup>st</sup> EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 zoom case study on e-Agriculture, while **Prof Björn Pehrson** (Professor Emeritus, KTH and EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 project partner, Sweden) presented the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 demonstrators.

## **BIRDS-OF-A-FEATHER-SESSIONS: MAIN OUTCOMES**

---

The facilitators of each birds-of-a-feather session taking place on the first day of the workshop summarised their respective session outcomes to the audience on the second day of the workshop: **Ms. Elske van Gent** (Community Relations Officer – IICD, The Netherlands) reported on the e-Health group discussion; **Dr Nomusa Dlodlo** (Senior Researcher – CSIR Meraka Institute, South Africa) provided feedback on the e-Learning discussion; **Mr. Karl Jonas** (Head of CC RESCON, Fraunhofer Fokus and EuroAfrica-P8 project partner, Germany)



tackled e-Infrastructures; and **Prof Björn Pehrson** (Professor Emeritus, KTH and EuroAfrica-P8 project partner, Sweden) summarised the e-Agriculture session.

- **e-Health**

During the e-Health session the following areas were discussed:

**Challenges:** Capacity building (knowledge, awareness, training), overcoming illiteracy, local languages, complicated interfaces. health management information systems (medical records, drug monitoring), health monitoring, disease control, interoperability of systems, policy and strategy.

**Role of ICT:** Creating an enabling ecosystem, international interoperability, regional/national integration, involving the whole medical community, cooperation with researchers, access to power/energy, easy-to-use programmes.

**Short term priorities:** Enabling ecosystem: integrate in medical curricula, ICT awareness, harmonising technology and data, harmonizing treatment guidelines, medical records/statistics to influence decisions (example: medical specialists), telemedicine capacity, social media for peer to peer awareness, e-Learning for health, ICT support to diagnostics and medication.

**Long term priorities:** e-Health policy/strategy, innovation and research (root causes), health evidence for disease control, drug monitoring systems.

**Success Factors:** Collaboration, overcome silos, use ICT as a tool, awareness to avoid resistance, community driven projects, involving professional nurses/doctors, overcome social/cultural barriers and belief systems, planning for sustainability, capacity building.

- **e-Learning**

In the e-Learning session the following were identified:

**Challenges:** ICT skills among educators, learners more tech-savvy, teachers not trained in problem solving, inadequate infrastructure (connectivity, computers, vandalisation), energy supply for ICT (expensive, unreliable), regional illiteracy, local digital content, lack of government policy on ICT in education.

**Role of ICT:** Technology capacity building, access to ICT (loans), increased bandwidth, provide clear benefits, coordination between departments (education, science, communications, ...), affordable connections.

**Short term priorities:** Teacher training to include ICT, retaining ICT staff in schools, policing of internet use in education, alternative energy sources (cost effective), encourage local content development, local language translation, study ICT integration in schools (learn internationally), best practice ICT policies, evaluate blended learning (traditional/technical).

**Long term priorities:** Raising national ICT literacy levels, study of factors affecting acceptance of e-learning, set-up own 'silicon valley' for e-learning environment.

- **e-Infrastructure**

The e-Infrastructure discussions focussed on these:



**Challenges:** Broadband to all at competitive cost, creation of local content, enabling a research culture, motivating cooperation (local and international).

**Role of ICT:** define a long-term goal (broadband for all), identify show-stoppers, bring players together, identify local assets (government, students, ...).

**Short term priorities:** regular meetings of a variety of stakeholders, set a roadmap, start implementing.

**Long term priorities:** best practice for broadband in developing countries, replicable models with reliability, robustness, security of ICT systems that consider the local situation.

**Success Factors:** Government support, motivated students at universities, research institute to do technology transfer, private sector business models.

- **e-Agriculture**

The e-Agriculture group discussion provided the following:

**Challenges:** Poverty, resources for entrepreneurs, access to info: guidelines, troubleshooting, market prices (illiteracy, languages), community watch (crime & crisis), weather info, water management.

**Role of ICT:** sensors, www information, cooperation support, mapping / early warning, local languages and audio-visual interfaces, tele-consultations, animal tracking, public procurement info.

**Short term priorities:** Survey of solutions, sell & buy forums, rural entrepreneurial support, market information database, forum for sharing best practice, mobile phone applications, consumer protection.

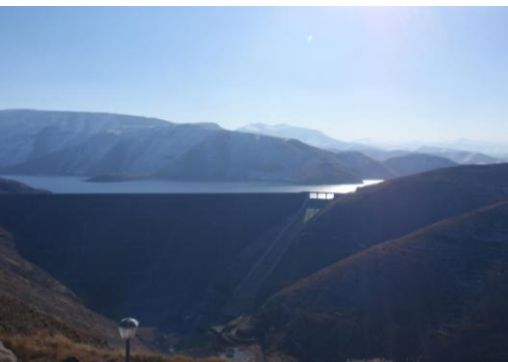
**Long term priorities:** documentation of indigenous knowledge, learning materials for farmers, rural trade partnerships, remote farming, monitoring standards.

**Success Factors:** Political awareness, coordination between sectors, ICT strategy, public procurement models and public-private partnerships.

## **MOHALE DAM AND LAB VISITS**

---

The afternoon of the second day of the workshop was given the opportunity to a group of delegates in the event to visit the Mohale dam: constructed on the Senqunyane river in the Thabaputsoa mountain range in southern Lesotho, the dam was surrounded by snow-covered mountains, as it was the winter season in Lesotho.







The tour guide Mr Leuta Nqosa explained that Mohale dam is one of the world's highest rock-fills, that the water from Mohale dam is transferred into the Katse dam, also one of the largest dams in the world, which is 78 percent full. The tour guide also explained that the Mohale dam is one of the two dams that were built to supply water to neighbouring South Africa's rapidly expanding Gauteng province. It was also highlighted that water is Lesotho's largest single source of foreign exchange.

## EVENT OUTPUTS

---

This important event focused on Euro-Africa collaborative initiatives addressing research, development and innovation in ICT.

An interactive discussion about the event was recorded and screened live on one of Lesotho's television/radio networks: **Dr Barend Taute** and **Ms. Karine Valin** were interviewed on the current news show broadcasted on June 13 at 6 am of the first day on both radio and television, where they were able to present the objectives of the EuroAfrica-ICT Initiative and to invite researchers, small medium enterprises and institutions to come participate in the awareness workshop. Due to this invitation coupled with the results of the online pre-registration system that was subject to selection by the organising committee the attendance was beyond expectation for the two days of the workshop. The Opening Session of the workshop was also screened live on Lesotho TV.

From the BoF discussions emerged a list of research areas (as shown above) relevant to four of the themes discussed during past events organised by the EuroAfrica-ICT Initiative. The possibility of establishing collaboration on ICT between the Euro-Africa-P8 project, the CSIR and the National University of Lesotho as well as with the Ministry of Science and Technology was also discussed.


The closing session chaired by **Dr Barend Taute** featured closing remarks from **Ms. Karine Valin** and **Mr. Lefa Thamae** (Director, Ministry of Science and Technology, Lesotho). This closing session highlighted the following:

- The event was important in terms of its core goals of supporting Africa-Europe dialogue, but also as a platform for African researchers to meet and collaborate;
- The awareness workshop allowed for the discussion of important engineering and technical challenges that need to be overcome to work towards the information society and knowledge economy that are known to be enablers of socio-economic growth.

## ONLINE POST EVENT SURVEY: RESULTS

---

An online survey was conducted by Sigma-Orionis after the event to evaluate the success of the event and to receive feedback from the participants in order to improve some aspects of future events to be organised by the EuroAfrica-ICT/P8 partnership. The survey was based on



some questions with different options that could be selected, and other open-ended questions where people could comment.

The overall consensus among those who attended the workshop was that it provided an excellent overview of the latest developments into the ongoing and planned EuroAfrica programmes for ICTs. Delegates also found the opportunity to meet key players from different countries and to share experiences of great value.

The Table below shows the questions of the online survey and the most relevant answers:

<b>How did you hear about the event?</b> (Government of Lesotho, EuroAfrica-ICT website, Colleague, EuroAfrica-ICT Newsletter, Other)	Most of the respondents indicated that they heard about the event from the Department of Science and Technology of Lesotho, demonstrating the importance of the government in sensitising people on important issues of relevance to their country.
<b>What attracted you to this event?</b> (Networking opportunities, Agenda/speakers, Lab visits, Other)	Most people (about 70%) were attracted by the <i>Networking opportunities</i> , followed by <i>Agenda/Speakers</i> . This showed that they were interested in engaging with others and understanding the work currently done in other countries.
<b>Session attended?</b> (Day 1, Day 2, Lab visit)	Most people attended Day 1 (around 70). Somewhat fewer attended Day 2 (around 63). 40 people went on the Mohale Dam visit.
<b>Useful contacts established</b> (Between 5 and 10; More than 10; less than 5; None)	The workshop was really positive in terms of networking, since most of the participants established more than 5 useful contacts, some more than 10 and nobody indicated 'None'.
<b>Would you recommend the event to others (yes, no)</b>	The success of the workshop is demonstrated by this final question since 90% respondents would recommend this kind of events to others.
<b>Do you feel after the event that cooperation between Europe and Africa on ICT Research is: Very/Quite/Not so Promising</b>	The majority of respondents answered 'Very Promising', some of them said 'Quite Promising' and only 10 % said 'Not so Promising'.
<b>Event content</b>	Delegates were asked to judge the event content in terms of relevance of addressed topics, presenters' knowledge of topics, clarity of the information provided and session length; The majority of respondents considered the overall content of the event to be 'excellent' or 'very good', while only a low minority found it just 'acceptable'.

## PROCEEDINGS

---

Event proceedings are available at: <http://euroafrica-ict.org/2012/06/18/proceedings-euroafrica-ict-fp7-awareness-and-training-workshop/>.



## CONCLUSIONS

---

A unique combination of researchers and policy makers representing many research institutions as well as the Ministry of Science and Technology in Lesotho attended the event. This success in attracting important stakeholders confirmed the importance of the EuroAfrica-ICT Initiative (currently through the EuroAfrica-P8 project) to bring together African and European researchers and policy makers to share experiences, hold dialogues on joint agendas and build networks.

The event was a success both in terms of networking and outcomes, since the event objectives of raising awareness in Africa on the ICT theme of the European Union's Framework Programmes (FP) for Research and Technological Developments and enhancing the participation of African organisations in EU-funded, collaborative ICT research projects were met.

