

AFRICAN UNION

SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND
RESEARCH COMMISSION



UNION AFRICAINE

COMMISSION SCIENTIFIQUE,
TECHNIQUE ET DE LA RECHERCHE

African Union Scientific, Technical and Research Commission

(AU/STRC)

Progress report to AMCOST V

I. CPA implementation

STRC is mandated to implement programmes and projects that are guided by the Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action and by the AU development strategies in large. As of this reporting period; considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the AU project on Infectious Diseases, Pan African Intellectual Property Organization; and Documentation and Protection of African Indigenous Knowledge and Geographical Indicators.

1. AU Project on Infectious Diseases

This project is aimed at developing an AU framework on the Detection Identification and Monitoring of Infectious Diseases of Human, Animals and Plants in Africa and to establish five regional virtual networks linked to Centers of Excellence across the AU five geopolitical regions.

STRC in collaboration with Member States and partners have developed a final draft framework '*African Union Science and Technology Framework for detection, Identification and monitoring of Infectious Diseases of Human, Animals and Plants in Africa*'. The framework was sent to Member States, NEPAD, partners and other stakeholders for consultations and their concerns were incorporated into the final draft for consideration and subsequent endorsement by AMCOST V.

On the other-hand, STRC is identifying the regional networks and its members by conducting regional workshops, to date three workshops have been held and two networks were identified (Eastern African and Southern African networks) while the Western African network is in inception stage.

The challenges facing this project is the cross cutting nature of work that involved science and technology; agriculture; and human and animal health components. However, resource mobilization to fund the project is also a hindrance.

2. Pan African Intellectual Property Organization

The progress made in the implementation of the Assembly decision AU/Dec. 138 (VII) on the need to establish Pan African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO) is significant. The AMCOST IV in Cairo, Egypt mandated the STRC to re-edit/review the PAIPO documents as well as sort for wider consultation among the stakeholders.

To review the document two consultants were recruited and their work was presented to a consultative workshop to further enrich the document. The workshop took place in Dakar, Senegal in September, 2011 and was well attended by intellectual property stakeholders.

The document was finalized as requested by the 1st AMCOST IV Bureau Meeting in its recommendation and it was sent to the Ministries in charge of intellectual property in the AU Member States and all concerned partners views were incorporated and the document is here for consideration and endorsement of AMCOST V. The greatest challenge of the implementation

is that, for the year 2012 there is no amount of money being appropriated by AU for the project. Hence STRC is left to mobilize resources to fund the project.

3. AU Project on Documentation and Protection of African Indigenous Knowledge and Geographical Indicators (GI)

For generations African local communities have developed knowledge and technologies that responds to their daily challenges. The knowledge transmitted from generation to generation from different facet of lives but mostly in the agricultural sector that produced items with distinctive geographical indicators which is linked to the cultural milieu of production and ways of life.

The project is aimed at developing strategy on the documentation and protection of African indigenous knowledge as well as documentation and protection of geographical indicators. The work on this project is currently on-going and is not possible to present the final draft to the AMCOST V as there is need to conduct several workshops to stimulate stakeholders on the need for Africa to protect its GI.

The challenge underpinning this project is convincing the knowledge holders to give vital information to the formal sector as well as communication problems.

II. Office interaction with the Host country

In the period covering this report the office interacted with the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, the Department of Africa of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Foreigner Affairs, where the following outputs were achieved:

1. Nigerian Federal Ministry of Science and Technology

- The Minster reaffirm the support of the Nigerian Government to the STRC and that will do whatever it needs to ensure that the STRC is placed in the frontier of S&T in Africa;
- The Minster realizes the need to have an office/property that is owned by STRC in Abuja but not rented one and he promises to support the office request when the time comes; and
- The Minster agreed to second 2 Science and Technology Policy experts to boost the capacity of the office.

2. Department of Africa of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Foreigner Affairs

- The Director for Africa acknowledge that the STRC need to have an office that is owned by STRC but not rented one and that he will discuss with the relevant authority to take appropriate action;
- He affirm the need to mobilize more human and financial resources to support the STRC to respond to its mandate;

- He welcomes the office initiative to develop a visibility study on the way to utilize the AU property in Lagos to generate funds to support its activities rather than lying idle which will become a drain to the office due to maintenance;
- Finally he promises that the Nigerian Government will do its best as the AU/STRC host country to ensure that STRC placed in the frontier of S&T in Africa.