



Africa-Europe International Research Consortium

A long-term Platform for connecting all African and European institutions, public or private, involved in research and innovation on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Why an Africa-Europe International Research Consortium?

Food and Nutrition Security and the Sustainability of Agriculture (FNSSA) are top priorities in the 'Green Transition' in Europe and Africa. However, FNSSA encompasses a number of differentiated actors, initiatives, strategies and programmes at national, sub-regional and continental levels. Because their efforts, actions and networks within this sector are highly fragmented, it has been challenging to make progress and see the expected impact and paradigm shifts on some of the joint EU-AU FNSSA goals, as laid out in the 10-year roadmap approved by both Unions. This fragmentation can be attributed to two main causes; absence of a coordination infrastructure and lack of knowledge management mechanisms.

With the aim of improving scaling-up and impact of FNSSA actions in Africa and Europe, the overall objective of the International Research Consortium (IRC) is therefore to improve coordination by creating synergies between the many R&I programmes, initiatives, policies and actors and by providing actors easy access to a credible and large knowledge base.

By addressing this fragmentation issue, the IRC will achieve four specific objectives, hence acting as a network of networks;

1. reducing the hassle of identifying partners in R&I and finding appropriate funding opportunities,
2. boosting innovation by showcasing solutions that work, supporting creativity and expertise of all FNSSA stakeholders at national, sub-regional, and continental level,
3. facilitating the liaison between all these many R&I programmes, initiatives, projects and actors, and, on the other side
4. the specific science-policy dialogue between the AU and the EU known as the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD).

Who can be members?

IRC membership is open to all public and private stakeholders involved in either funding, implementing or applying research and innovation (R&I) in an AU-EU context. These stakeholders encompass academia and research organisations, national and international R&I funders, policy makers, private sector, SMEs, and farmer and civil society organisations. IRC members support an enhanced coordination of the activities. A well-balanced representation of youth and women is aimed at.

As the IRC is meant to be a long-term partnership mechanism, members will sign a membership declaration, be willing to engage in long-term (more than 5 years) partnership starting end 2023 and be willing to pay an annual minimum fee (fee level to be decided by the IRC founding members).

What value will the IRC add to the existing R & I landscape?

Members of the IRC should find it easier to:

- interact with R&I partners from both Europe and Africa;
- enhance the impact of their R&I investments and scaling-up through alignment and synergies;
- gain access to a Database of Projects, tailored information and relevant knowledge, to adapt it to their local context and build on it;
- find the right partner(s), who may have the resources, knowledge and network connections, to take members' ideas a step further;
- increase the visibility of what they are doing and planning to do by getting connected to a high-level AU-EU initiative.



LEAP4FNSSA project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 817663

What are the IRC thematic priorities, functions and services?

The activities of the IRC are focused on the thematic priorities of the EU AU FNSSA Roadmap. This includes; 1. Sustainable intensification 2. Agriculture and food systems for nutrition 3. Expansion and improvement of agricultural markets and trade 4. Cross-cutting issues include improving coordination between projects, supporting innovation processes and strengthening collaborative capacities of R&I communities, etc.

The proposed IRC **functions and services** include;

1. Increase synergies and coherence between actors
2. Develop a learning environment and knowledge base
3. Liaise with the AU EU HLPD Bureau
4. Capacity development in the FNSAA domain

How will the IRC be set up and funded?

The IRC is proposed to have a light governance structure made up of four functional levels; strategic – (General Assembly and council), Advisory – (External Advisory Committee), Operational – (Working Groups) and Support – (Secretariat that functions under a rotational coordination structure).

Beyond ensuring the funding of its governance structure through contributions (annual fee) of its members, the IRC will work to attract funds into the research and innovation actions. Two types of funding strategies are envisaged through 1. Acquisition of funds to fuel partnership and coordination and 2. Acquisition of funders, who join the IRC network with their funding schemes. The IRC strategically aims at attracting funders' networks as members.

IRC development process & principles- Want to join?

The IRC development process has been based on principles of Inclusiveness, Commitment, Pragmatism and Co-creation. This process has engaged a high number of organisations through LEAP4FNSSA stakeholder meetings and eConsultations. About 300 Expressions of Interests have been received from 77 African and European institutions. The Expressions of Interest process is ongoing. This will be followed by declaration of membership at institutional level to establish founding members before the upcoming launch of the IRC in September.

Use the following links to:

Express your interest to join the IRC - <https://www.research.net/r/LEAP4FNSSA>

Register to participate in the IRC Final write-shop and Founding Launch 14-16th September 2022 –
<https://events.faraafrica.org/register/>

Participation will enable you to join in the co-creation process and in the decisions on the functions and services, membership criteria, governance, funding strategies, organisation and activities of the IRC

Want to know more?

The establishment of the IRC is led by the LEAP4FNSSA project, a Coordination and Support Action funded under the EU Horizon 2020 funding instrument.

For more information, please contact the LEAP4FNSSA Coordinator: Irene Annor-Frempong leap4fnssacoordination@faraafrica.org or visit the following websites; www.leap4fnssa.eu
<https://faraafrica.org/>, DGroups (<https://faraafrica.community/>)



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