

**FIFTH MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICA – EUROPEAN UNION  
JOINT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION COMMITTEE**

*14-15 April 2005, Pretoria*

**IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

*Submitted by South Africa as host for consideration by the JSTCC*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report to provide an overview of the main activities undertaken to strengthen science and technology cooperation between South Africa and the European Union since the last meeting of the SA-EU Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (JSTCC), held in Brussels in December 2003.

Since the last JSTCC meeting, collaboration chiefly focused on joint initiatives to promote South African participation in the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) as well as the broadening of the partnership to also include science and technology cooperation in other spheres, such as multilateral forums and development cooperation.

The report is submitted to the fifth meeting of the SA-EU JSTCC meeting in Pretoria on 14-15 April 2005, for its consideration.

**2. PROMOTION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME**

2.1 During the course of 2004 and in the first quarter of 2005, the Department of Science and Technology, regularly in collaboration with visiting experts from the European Commission, conducted more than twenty FP6 information and awareness sessions in eight of South Africa's nine provinces.

These briefing sessions were either generic FP6 presentations or focused on specific focus areas such as the FP6 thematic priorities or the INCO-DEV (International Cooperation with Developing Countries) activity.

2.2 The DST in December 2003 also formally launched South Africa's first dedicated Network of National Contact Points (NCPs) for the Framework Programmes to promote and assist South African participation. Seven NCPs were appointed (subsequently increased to nine) to cover the FP6's first six thematic priority areas. The NCPs are tasked to raise awareness about FP6 opportunities in South Africa, assist and guide South African participants and, critically, to proactively engage with their European NCP counterparts in order to facilitate the inclusion of South African partners in FP6 consortia. The South African NCP Network for the FP6 is:

- *Biotechnology and Genomics for Health: Prof Iqbal Parker (University of Cape Town);*
- *Information Society Technologies: Johan Eksteen (CSIR);*
- *Nanotechnology, Materials and Production: Dr Molefi Motuku (Mintek);*
- *Aeronautics: Pontsho Maruping (DST);*
- *Space: Imraan Saloojee (DST);*
- *Food Safety and Quality: Dr Geoff Meese (CSIR);*
- *Global Change and Ecosystems: Renee le Roux (National Research Foundation)*
- *Surface Transport: Stephan Krygsman (CSIR); and*
- *Energy: Dr Boni Mehlomakulu (DST)*

2.3 The DST also continued, as reported at the 2003 JSTCC meeting, to operate a FP6 Seed Funding Instrument whereby it funded preparatory activities undertaken by South African researchers to explore FP6 participation. During the period

under review more than 30 of these interventions were funded for a total investment of more than R500 000. Several of these seed interventions also contributed to the successful South African participations in the FP6. The instrument also supported the visits of European experts to South Africa for FP6 preparatory meetings.

- 2.4 The DST furthermore, in line with a commitment announced at the third JSTCC meeting, operated a Framework Programme Strategic Co-Investment Funding Instrument. This instrument, which main objective is to optimally leverage the benefit from South African participation in the Framework Programme, through an own national South African investment, i.e. in addition to the funding allocated by the European Commission, in the South African participation. This investment is made to provide support to South African participants for those part of the project costs for which no EC funding was allocated and which is not covered by the participating organisation's own funding. The instrument is currently being employed to fund three South African participations in FP5 thematic projects, which in terms of the FP5 rules did not qualify for EC funding, as well as to support three South African participations in theme one, three and five respectively of the FP6. The total DST investment, thus, far committed under the Instrument amount to approximately R12 million.
- 2.5 During the period under review specific attention was paid to promote strong bilateral relations with Member States of the European Union to be used as platform for promoting Framework Programme participation. Similarly Framework Programme participation was also used to promote bilateral cooperation. FP6 engagements were for example undertaken at a bilateral level with Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Initiatives undertaken for example include the promotion of strong links between countries' respective FP6 National Contact Points. The South African NCPs, thus, undertook specific missions to France and Belgium to promote cooperation. The DST is also a member of the French-chaired Forum of national administrations with the responsibility of managing NCP networks. As part of the latter activities the DST is part of a task team to look at the role of NCPs in the future FP7. Recently a priority objective has been the promotion of relations with the new Member States, which had joined the EU in 2004. The South African NCP for Information Society Technologies (IST), thus, for example participated in a major Baltic FP6 conference held in Latvia in April 2005.

- 2.6 Delegations of South African officials also regularly participated in FP6 and related events organised by the European Commission in Brussels and elsewhere. Chief amongst these numbered the Commission's annual Information Society Technologies Conference, IST2004, held in The Hague in November 2004, where South Africa's Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Mosibudi Mangena, was a keynote speaker during the Conference's opening session. A South Africa Information Booth was also very successfully operated at IST2004. The DST's Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation and Resources, Dhesigen Naidoo, in November 2005, also participated in panel discussion on the international science and technology cooperation with the European Union, held as part of the annual Descartes Prize Award Ceremony in Prague. Other participations for example included the European Science and Society Forum in Brussels in March 2005 and the European Biotechnology Bionale Forum in Maastricht in November 2004.

- 2.7 The results of South African participation in the FP6 will be reviewed in detail by the fifth JSTCC meeting. The summary of South African participation is included at Annex A. A strategic perspective of South Africa's FP6 participation follows in the conclusion hereunder. It should be noted that as during the FP5, South African experts had again participated in the FP6 evaluation panels.
- 2.8 For future prospects, the European Commission's approval in early 2005, of the DST's proposal for a FP6 Specific Support Action, the European South Africa Science and Technology Advancement Programme (ESASTAP), will enable a more concerted, as well as greater strategic effort to promote participation in the last calls of the FP6 as well as preparation for the future Seventh Framework Programme.

### 3. **COLLABORATION IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS**

- 3.1 Close collaboration within the ambit of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) constituted the highlight of the parties' collaboration in multilateral forums. The Director-General of the DST, Dr Rob Adam, and his counterpart at the European Commission's Directorate-General: Research, Dr Achilleas Mitsos, collaborated closely throughout 2004 to ensure the successful adoption at the Third Earth Observation Summit, held in Brussels in February 2005, of the Ten Year Implementation Plan for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) prepared by the GEO. The two parties also collaborated to promote outreach to and the involvement of developing countries in global Earth observation activities. Dr Adam and Dr Mitsos for example co-chaired a special Earth Observation Partnership Conference convened for this purpose and held in Brussels in October 2004.

- 3.2 The DST has encouraged its continental and regional partners in science and technology forums of both the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to include science and technology collaboration with the European Union as important focus areas in their international engagements. Discussions have for example started, lead by South Africa and Botswana, to create a regional network of National Contacts Points for FP6 / FP7 in Southern Africa.

#### 4. **OTHER COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES**

- 4.1 A European Commission representative served on the South African Reference Group for Women in Science, an initiative which has contributed significantly to a mutually enriching policy dialogue on addressing the gender imbalances in research.
- 4.2 In October 2004, a test-bed connection between the high-speed European research network, Géant, and the South African network TENET, was established. This arrangement will serve as a temporary connection, pending the connection of the new South African National Research Network (SANReN) with Géant, to be finalised in the second half of 2005. The DST continues to collaborate closely with the Directorate-General: Information Society on these and other aspects related to research networking.
- 4.3 An important milestone in the strengthening of the partnership was the South African Medical Research Council's success in winning the bid to host the African Secretariat of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) at its premises in Cape Town. The Cape Town EDCTP Secretariat was officially opened by the South African Ministers of Science and Technology and Health in July 2004. There were also

several successful South African participants in the first round of EDCTP calls for proposals.

- 4.4 Following the initial discussions at the fourth meeting of the JSTCC, important progress has been registered, following a number of interactions between the DST and the EC, including a presentation by the DST Director-General in Brussels, in exploring the availing by the EC of sector support to South African science and technology under the European Programme for Reconstruction and Development (EPRD). The fifth meeting of the JSTCC will consider for approval the Terms of Reference for a pre-feasibility study of future EPRD support to science and technology in South Africa, support which could include a sector programme mechanism.

## 5. **CONCLUSION**

Following the initial results reviewed at the fourth JSTCC meeting, South Africa registered significant success with regard to FP6 participation, with the country's success rate comparing favourably with other "third countries" of a similar scientific standing. There is, however, also significant potential for improved participation. Many of the factors, which contributed to the relatively poor performance of "third countries" in the FP6, also impacted negatively on South Africa's own participation. Chief among these rank the difficulty for third country researchers to be included in those European consortia with the best chances of FP6 success. Indeed, from a DST perspective connecting South Africa's potential FP6 participants to strong European consortia has become the priority focus area as part of the national FP6 promotion efforts. The South African NCPs will play a critical role in this effort through their relations with their European counterparts.

Apart from the number of successful projects, the broadening of the range of successful South African participations, to for example now include areas such as information society technologies, is also especially satisfactory. However, other areas such as aeronautics have continued to be difficult with no South African successes registered. An area, which remains of special concern is the Marie Curie Mobility Instruments, where South Africa has not been successful in accessing both the incoming and outgoing international fellowships. The JSTCC would have to identify the institutions constraints related to the nature of the instruments, which could have contributed to this lack of success.

Since the signature of the SA-EU S&T Cooperation Agreement in 1996, throughout successive JSTCC meetings, the scope and depth of the SA-EU science and technology partnership have continued to grow. This has also been the case for the period between the 2003 and 2005 JSTCC meetings. Significant potential exists to further build and enrich the relationship. The experience gained and lessons should serve both parties well, with a priority focus in the period leading up to the next JSTCC meeting in 2006, on ensuring optimal participation in the remaining calls for proposals of the FP6 as well as the preparation for the FP7.