

REPORT ON WAITRO SEMINAR HELD IN –SCHLBO BIRLINGHOVEN, SANKT AUGUSTIN, GERMANY, 6-7 SEPTEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

WAITRO held its 59th EXCO Meeting in Germany, Sankt Augustin on 6 & 7 September 2007. Delegates which comprised of WAITRO members worldwide convened for the meeting.

ST-EAP DELEGATION:

Berenice Lue-Marais – Project Manager CSIR, SA
Zethu Mkhondo – Project Communications Officer CSIR, SA
Nomkhosi Mvubelo – Project Administrator & Financial Officer CSIR, SA
Dr Iba Kone – Networking Consortium Partner, Kenya Nairobi
Dr Yonas Yemshaw – Consortium Partner, Kenya Nairobi

OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING

The networking session aimed to:

- To create awareness of EU framework opportunities for developing countries through the WAITRO Model of Cooperation.
- To increase involvement and discover opportunities for developed and developing countries, in activities open to them under the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development
- Provide a forum for sharing experiences, case studies, results of development activities, ideas, applications and research results and collaboration opportunities

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Needs for collaboration in S&T and solution and solutions to address the needs

DAY 1

On the first day the introduction of WAITRO and presentations from the Regional Focal Points which included Africa and Asia. There were also presentations by national funding agencies about projects that should happen to address the collaboration needs in Science and Technology

ST-EAP PRESENTATION

ST-EAP was invited to present an overview of the project's role and objectives, which was presented by Dr Iba Kone. This gave a project an opportunity of marketing exposure and to build a networking data base.

DAY 2

The second day focused on presentation on funding institutions which included the

- i. EU for FP7, with focus on international cooperation and mobility programme
- ii. Europe Aid with European Neighbourhood and partnership Instrument, Development Co-operation Instrument and Instrument for Pre-Accession.
- iii. European Development Fund through European Investment Bank, Pro Investment Financing and Asia-invest

It also focused on successful projects that that WAITRO completed and its facilitation of the development of a project bidding proposal between WAITRO members under the Asia Pro Eco Programme of the EC, which was also funded.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A Panel discussion opened, chaired by D. Fuchs. The Chair opened the discussion on how WAITRO could fit into INCO-NET and what role it could play. The audience was invited to deliberate on this question as well as how to extrapolate from these case studies.

Concerns raised regarding participation in the Framework Programme

- * Complexity of the process
- * Too much information, therefore making it mentally draining
- * FP7 process needs to be made more accessible

WAYFORWARD

Through WAITRO, members could jump on already existing projects as partners to learn by doing, then through lessons learned, be able to ascertain the return of investment and if it is all worthwhile.

Set up knowledge centres with a dedicated officer from different research institutions, to handle the complexities, and workshop people on how to read the Work Programmes so they can write a good proposal.

WAITRO will also embark on a recruitment drive using the Regional Representatives (to market in their region) especially in developing countries, to highlight the benefits of WAITRO, the success stories and beneficiaries. WAITRO will provide the support in terms of the Network, Skills and expertise.

LEARNING OUTCOME

- It was captivating to hear an FP7 presentation from a European point of view
- It was interesting to note that the European community share the same sentiments as their African counterparts in relation to the complexity of participating in the Framework Programme, and that this was also a deterrent for them to participate.
- Europeans are willing to engage with third world or developing countries to form partnerships.
- In relations to the Marie Curie actions, it was impressive to learn that Europeans are making a concerted effort to make "Europe" attractive to non-Europeans/Africans to create a conducive learning environment.
- In relation to the success stories in Africa, WAITRO is committed to continue being a catalyst to the success of the projects in terms of capacity building, improved networking and linkages.
- The visit, for ST-EAP, was also an induction on WAITRO, its objectives, roles and its members.