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Recent IDRC-funded efforts have helped lay a foundation for key areas identified in the Consolidated Action Plan on Science and Technology for Africa. This has occurred, for example, through support for public dialogues on biotechnology; initial efforts to develop improved S&T indicators for Africa; and regional workshops that strengthen linkages between scientific communities and policy-makers in Africa.

IDRC is looking forward to playing an ongoing and active role in supporting the implementation of the Consolidated Science and Technology Action Plan for Africa that has resulted from this process.

This can include areas such as:

- strengthening research support for S&T and innovation systems research and policy analysis in Africa (including ongoing support for the African Technology Policy Studies Network which is based in over 17 different African countries),
- supporting the development of African S&T indicators with UNESCO;
- strengthening independent science advisory systems through African Academies of Science (particularly in Western Francophone Africa),
- enhancing public understanding of, and engagement in, science and technology through improved journalism capabilities and practices in Africa (as well as through support of the worldwide infoportal on S&T for development, SciDev.net),
- enhancing locally-generated, evidence-based research to support African public policy and social dialogues on new and emerging technologies (including biotechnology and nanotechnology), and
- IDRC has also had a strong tradition of supporting national S&T reviews in developing countries.

IDRC's research program areas in Environment and Natural Resources Management; Social and Economic Policy; and Information and Communications Technologies for Development; and Innovation, Policy and Science will each have a role to play in supporting implementation of the NEPAD S&T Consolidated Action Plan.

For example, the IDRC Eco-Health Program Initiative has been strongly involved in helping NEPAD advance an integrated strategy on environment and health. Connectivity Africa, directly responds to the NEPAD ICT flagship program area.

Our regional African offices, in Dakar, Cairo and Nairobi, will continue to help spearhead regional efforts in linking science and research to policy-makers, to ensure that knowledge is effectively accessed and utilized for decision-making.

For example, IDRC's regional office in Dakar has initiated a series of workshops across western and central Africa to bring together researchers and political decision makers.

Workshops have already been held in Senegal on agriculture, Burkina Faso on education, and Ghana on private sector development.

Three future workshops will include: Mali on desertification, Cameroon on address governance, and Bénin on health.

IDRC has been and remains a strong supporter of NEPAD's S&T efforts, including providing core project support for the NEPAD S&T Secretariat, policy and planning activities, and the holding of the NEPAD S&T Ministerial Conference.

In conclusion, we believe that Africa's new S&T Action plan will be a significant blueprint for all of Africa in helping mobilize and harness the application of knowledge in support of social and economic development.