

**EU-AFRICAN R&D PROPOSAL IDEA****Personal Details**

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**Proposal****Title**

**Capitalizing on the common experiences, the individual assets and the values of the people**

*The title of your Proposal: please provide a maximum of 15 words that accurately reflect what your proposal is about.*

**Proposal idea (max 500 words):**

The 7<sup>th</sup> R&D Framework Programme of the European Commission introduces a set of parallel specific programmes (Cooperation, Ideas, People, Capacities). Being still at an early phase of their capacities, it would not make much sense for African actors to separate different streams or to purposefully make distinctions between several notions that – at the end – provide less than what they promise.

Having in mind the plurality of different thematic priorities and the aim to support as many different applications and service areas as possible, we propose a research action that shall involve a wide and representative partnership of African actors from different countries and with different backgrounds (academia, institutions, administrations, industry, people's associations and political parties).

In the action we shall employ the Experience and Application Research (EAR) approach<sup>1</sup>. The use of the Experience and Application Research (EAR) approach is encouraged for an early involvement of users and to create links to the structures, cultures and communities while also looking closer to the existing practices and mentalities of all participating members and organizations.

For sure, such a proposal can focus on a single thematic item or on a single country or region. However, we think that the best to afford at this stage of African development is to gain the ability of enabling the true recipients of the actions to articulate their needs – otherwise it shall be a more or less case of marketing products and framing them into the different contexts.

*Learning from Europe's mistakes should become the leitmotiv for every EU-African R&D initiative.* In this respect, a unique opportunity emerges for adopting this approach and through consultation with experts and a series of workshops, focus group sessions etc., so that any planned research action will consciously try to reach consensus regarding business demands, human factors issues and the technological challenges involved in implementing its proposed vision (though this sounds like common sense, it is rarely addressed in projects). Such interactions will define “where we want to go” (vision of the situation of the future) and “how we want to get there” (prioritised key challenges over a short-to-mid-term period).

One area that can provide the best returns on investments to be made concerns the digital and intangible assets production, distribution and consumption, and can form for sure a safe and with high reciprocity area of research funds and investments concentration from Europe.

If planned such an action would aim to empower jointly African and European professional stakeholders as well as enterprises (especially SMEs and entrepreneurs) to reach a higher and more sustainable competitiveness in global market, on their way towards a society of collaborative relationships and *a culture of sharing*.

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<sup>1</sup> IST Advisory Group, Experience and Application Research: Involving Users in the Development of Ambient Intelligence, ISTAG Working Group, Final Report v1, 22-06-2004.

**Short Description of Institution**

*A short description of the institution (between 200 and 300 words) to include the most recent relevant experience related to the proposal idea.*