INNOVATION FUND

Promotion de la Recherche, l'Innovation et la Culture Numérique en Afrique Centrale (PRICNAC)

PROJECT CONSORTIUM

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), France

PARTNERS

Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Burkina Faso

Association of African Universities (AAU), Ghana

Réseau des experts en ingénierie de formation de l'Afrique Centrale et des Grands Lacs (REIFAC), Cameroon

Observatorio de Relaciones Unión Europea –America Latina (OBREAL Global Observatory), Spain

LOCATION

Central Africa:
Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Principe

PERIOD

January 2021 – January 2025

TOTAL BUDGET

EUR 4,884,128

EU FUNDING

EUR 4,079.180

PROJECT CONTACT

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CHALLENGE

Confronted with poor economic productivity, a mismatch between the training programmes at education providers and labour market needs, a digital lag, and a lack of collaboration among actors from the public and private sector actors, many countries in Central Africa are falling short of their potential to invest effectively in their economies at national and regional level.

FOCUS

The training capacities of secondary and tertiary education providers will be adapted to include skills-based, local development and digital transformation components.

By strengthening the research capacities and digital skills of research centres and networks, improving entrepreneurial and digital skills of companies and NGOs, and linking national authorities to market and educational needs, the national and regional research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems will gain the tools they need to become more inclusive and function more smoothly, in support of sustainable development in Central Africa.

The establishment of a PRICNAC network with the active involvement of these stakeholders will also contribute to the creation of strong R&I ecosystems.

RATIONALE

Although Central Africa scores better than the African average on some economic indicators, such as abundance of natural resources, private investment, exports and foreign direct investment (FDI), this is having hardly any positive impact in terms of improved living standards or inclusive growth.

In addition, the Economic Value Added (EVA) of the private sector and the quality of governance score lower than the African average, which hinders the transformation of currently weak economies into productive economies in the region.

Increased investments in research, development and innovation in important sectors such as next generation agriculture, computer science, programming and software, and biological and medical sciences are critical to increase the countries' scientific and technical capacities and boost their economies.

However, for this to happen, a critical mass of well-trained human capital tailored to the needs of the labour market is needed, in addition to adequate innovation policies and accelerated digitalisation in the scientific and economic sectors. Hence, the road to inclusive sustainable development and poverty reduction requires sustainable collaboration between the private and public sectors.

Promotion de la Recherche, l'Innovation et la Culture Numérique en Afrique Centrale (PRICNAC)

PRICNAC
Promotion de la Recherche,
de l'Innovation et de la Culture
Numérique en Afrique Centrale

Prototyping of a numerical control machine (CNC) - Electronic wiring session

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METHOD

PRICNAC focuses on engaging a wide range of actors from the public and private sectors – education institutes, research centres and networks, multinational and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), public authorities, chambers of commerce, business organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and young entrepreneurs – that are active in all areas of the economy.

PRICNAC provides financial support to micro-projects consisting of multiple stakeholders from different countries in Central Africa, selected through calls for proposals (see website for details), that operate at regional level and:

- Strengthen human capital, by supporting individuals and institutions with creative ideas to assemble a regional platform (PRICNAC network) for information sharing, collaboration, training and networking.
- Better connect stakeholders who are active in R&I ecosystems to establish mechanisms for sustainable cooperation.
- Contribute to regional collaboration to address the most challenging R&I needs.
- Build entrepreneurship capacities and new bottom-up initiatives by promoting the role of education institutions within innovation ecosystems.

PRICNAC provides training to the selected micro-projects on:

- The application of Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S) - defined as bottom-up approaches to support innovation for sustainable local development based on local specificities, contextual adaptation, targeting of the most promising transformation activities, and involvement of actors from the private and public sectors. It is also an innovation policy concept whereby partnerships between businesses, public entities and knowledge institutions will focus on regional strengths and elaborate plans to boost regional innovation.
- R&I and entrepreneurship issues that focus on adaption to local needs.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Impacts

An inclusive research and innovation environment for sustainable development and poverty reduction in Central Africa.

Outcomes

- Improved access to sustainable solutions that are generated by R&I and adapted to local contexts.
- Extension of PRICNAC network activities.

Outputs

- Stakeholders in the R&I ecosystem are able to develop, improve and transfer sustainable solutions that are adapted to local contexts.
- Secondary and tertiary education institutions are able to offer trainings that are adapted to the labour market.
- Strengthened technical and organisational capacities of R&I consulting structures in the private sector.
- Functional PRICNAC network for the promotion of R&I in Central Africa.

PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

Access to digital literacy, knowledge and use of emerging technologies.

Links between R&I skills development and labour market.

Synergies in the R&I ecosystem (private sector, technology transfer, R&I uptake).

Local and indigenous knowledge.

SECTOR

Sustainable development

KEYWORDS

digitalisation, research, innovation, multi-stakeholder network, training

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Introduction to electronic assembling and programming workshop

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