



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Wednesday 12th July 2023

PRESS RELEASE: AICAD SELECTED TO HOST AFRICAN OPEN SCIENCE PLATFORM (AOSP) NODE FOR EASTERN AFRICA REGION

After a very rigorous and competitive process, the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa has selected the African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD) as a regional node for the African Open Science Platform (AOSP) taking charge of the East African region node. AICAD is a regional organization charged with linking university generated technologies to the communities to fight poverty with headquarters at Jomo Kenyata University of Agriculture and Technology. AICAD has country offices located at Makerere University in Uganda, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and Egerton University in Kenya.

The other two award winners in Africa include; the Egyptian National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences (NARSS) for the Northern African Node based in Egypt and the UbuntuNet Alliance for the Southern Africa Node based in Malawi. The appointment will be for a five-year term, starting in June 2023, with additional regional nodes to be appointed to cover all regions of the continent.

Hosted by the National Research Foundation (NRF) since 2020, the AOSP aims to position African scientists at the cutting edge of data intensive science by stimulating interactivity and creating opportunity through the development of efficiencies of scale, building critical mass through shared capacities, and amplifying impact through a commonality of purpose and voice. This prominent initiative is supported by the South African Department of Science and Innovation, the International Science Council, CODATA, the Academy of Science of South Africa, and other prominent regional networks. The AOSP will also leverage international networks and developments, and the momentum towards operationalization of the international framework for open science.

The Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe congratulates AICAD on being appointed to coordinate this noble initiative in East Africa. Makerere University welcomes every initiative and programme that harnesses the power of research to transform lives and societies. AICAD through this African Open Science Platform (AOSP) will enhance the ongoing efforts of ensuring that research, science and data contributes to reduction of poverty in the African region.

“The Makerere University Strategic Plan stipulates the re-positioning of Makerere University into a research led university. This is premised on the fact that no country can develop without research. The main goal of AICAD is fighting poverty using university generated innovations. I am happy to note that the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa has appointed

AICAD as a regional node for the African Open Science Platform (AOSP) taking charge of the East African region node. With this appointment, Makerere University is ready to work with AICAD to coordinate all member universities and other research data generating agencies to pursue the ideas of open science. The idea of open science and data sharing is key in the innovation process. When data is shared, solutions are quickly realized. I understand this is how the COVID-19 vaccine was quickly produced. Different research groups were able to share their data for a common cause," remarked Prof. Nawangwe.

The role of the African Open Science Platform (AOSP) regional nodes will be to coordinate, create linkages, support, and promote efforts aligned with implementation of Open Science programmes at a regional level, strengthen knowledge networks and infrastructure access, and enhance cooperation between regions and globally in support of the AOSP's vision. Among others, regional nodes will be expected to lead on programme delivery and implementation, coordination, capacity building, societal engagement in dialogue, and policy support and promotion of the UNESCO Open Science Recommendations at national and regional levels.

The incoming Director of the AOSP, Dr Tshiamo Motsegwa, had this to say: "For the Global South, and the African continent specifically, the efficiency and productivity gains from Open Science present a compelling case for government research funding in the context of limited resources and competing priorities for the development of a facilitative and truly African-wide Open Science Diplomacy platform for enhancing continental coordination, collaboration and making global linkages – this to develop an African science system fit for purpose".

About AICAD

AICAD Uganda Country office was established in 2000 located at Makerere University and headed by a Country Director. AICAD's headquarters are located in Nairobi, Kenya. This office is responsible for coordinating the institute's programs and activities dealing with poverty reduction in Uganda through human capacity development by linking knowledge to application. Initially, AICAD was funded through JICA but since 2012, the Institute's programs are funded by the three governments of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. AICAD's primary aim is poverty alleviation, by facilitating the local people to solve their problems. To do this, AICAD works with public Universities and other institutions to filter and apply those aspects of research that are of practical significance to targeted users. These include public universities such as Makerere, Kyambogo, Mbarara, Gulu Busitema, Kabale, Muni and KIU. As part of its human capacity development, AICAD's network has played useful roles in supporting young institutions, individual researchers (through graduate student's research) and communities.

Follow this story on <https://www.nrf.ac.za/the-african-open-science-platform-appoints-three-regional-nodes/>

-----Ends-----