

OACPS Research and Innovation Programme



Background

In a world characterised by increasingly rapid scientific and technological changes and emerging crises, research and innovation are more than ever major drivers of sustainable and inclusive development.

They can address societal challenges, accelerate green transition, create new jobs and businesses, and help reduce poverty. They play a central cross-cutting role in the achievement of nearly all the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A growing number of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are incorporating them in their national development agendas, but innovation performance remains hindered by inadequate policies and skills development mechanisms.

Unlocking this innovative potential requires not only to invest more financial means, but also to put in place the right policy framework conditions.

The OACPS Research and Innovation Programme

‘The pathway to sustainable growth’

It is in this context that the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) has started a new programme, funded by the European Union, to strengthen research and innovation (R&I) capacity in ACP countries through a three-pronged strategic approach:

- ✓ An Innovation Fund to foster a conducive R&I environment;
- ✓ A Policy Support Facility (PSF) to enhance the quality and efficiency of R&I systems;
- ✓ A web portal to cross-fertilise knowledge and experiences among key stakeholders.

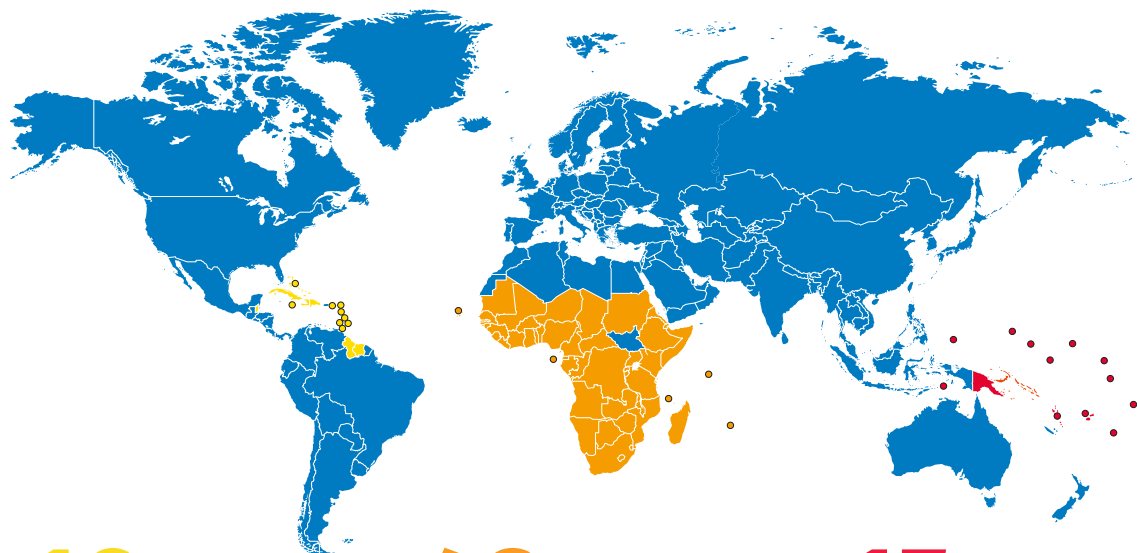


The OACPS Research and Innovation Policy Support Facility (OACPS R&I PSF), an innovative tool

Beneficial to national or regional public authorities in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, the Policy Support Facility aims to:

- ✓ enhance the quality and efficiency of national R&I systems;
- ✓ improve the design and implementation of evidence-based R&I policies and strategies;
- ✓ support the development of national R&I capacities needed to make the transition to self-sustaining knowledge-led economies;
- ✓ foster – at national and regional level – collaboration opportunities between R&I institutions, businesses, academia, and civil society organisations to unleash their innovation potential.

THE 79 MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES -OACPS



16 countries
in the Caribbean

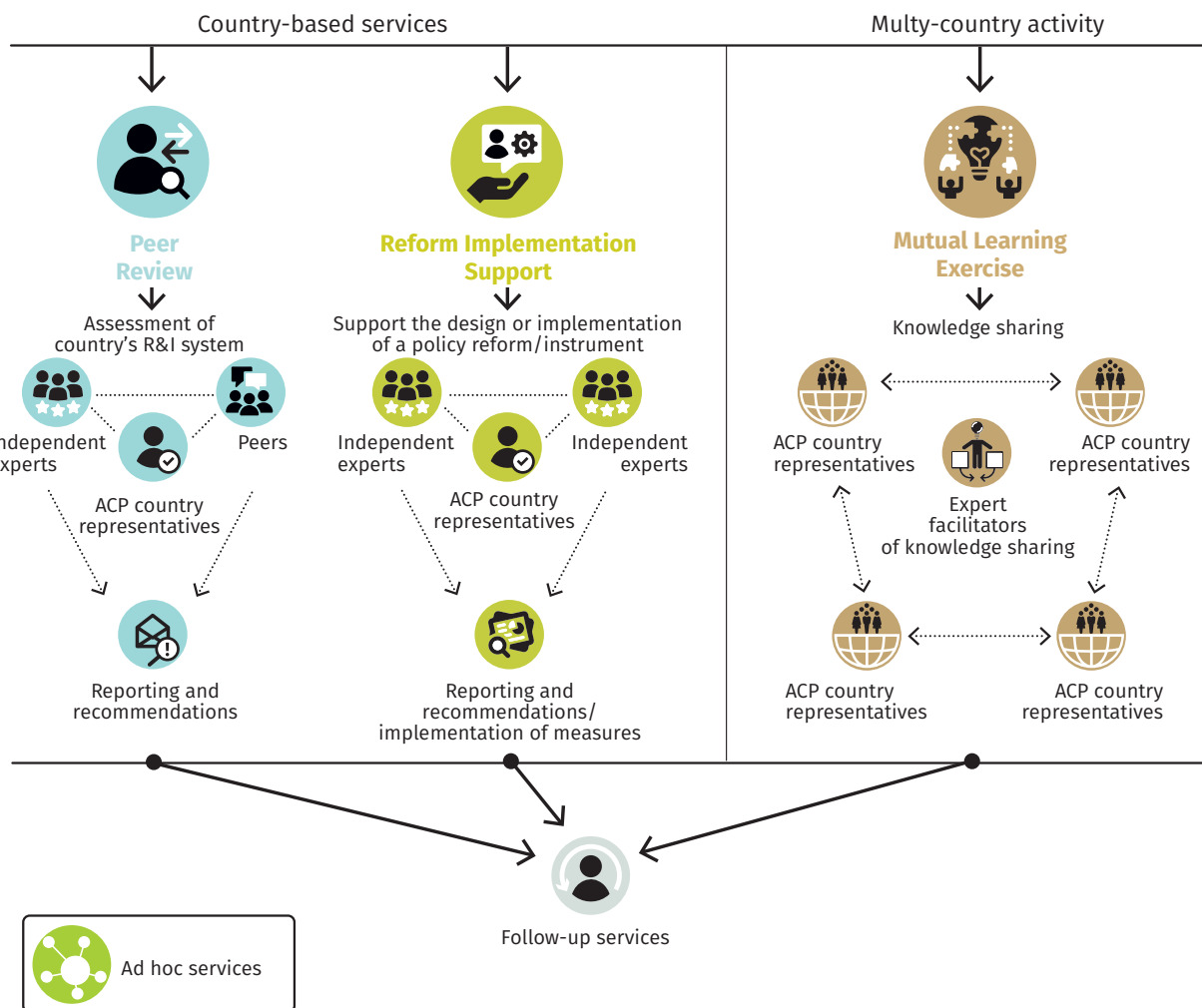
48 countries
in Sub-Saharan
Africa

15 countries
in the Pacific

A broad range of tailor-made services

Policy and decision-makers from ACP countries can access a broad range of services to improve their policy-making practices: peer reviews, reform implementation supports, mutual learning exercises, ad hoc services and follow-up services. Upon their request, high-level experts with hands-on knowledge will be deployed by the PSF to provide these services which consist of practical support to identify, design and implement the reforms needed to enhance R&I policies and systems in ACP countries. The experts will collect insights from key stakeholders and provide tailor-made advice to R&I challenges.

OACPS R&I PSF services



Peer Review

An in-depth assessment of the country's R&I system to identify strengths, weaknesses, bottlenecks and challenges. Operational recommendations will be provided to improve the quality and performance of R&I systems.

Examples:


- Strengthen an inclusive and gender-transformative national R&I system.
- Effectively harness science, technology and innovation (STI) to achieve the SDGs ('STI roadmaps for SDGs').
- Reinforce higher education systems to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees.



Reform Implementation Support

Support in the design or implementation of a specific policy reform or instrument.

Examples:




-  Develop a tailor-made Open Access Policy on research data.
-  Design measures to bridge the gaps between research, industry and higher education.
-  Implement a specific policy instrument to boost research competitiveness (e.g. research excellence, internationalisation of research, mobility of researchers, brain circulation, etc.).



Mutual Learning Exercise

As ACP countries may face similar challenges, mutual learning exercises allow several volunteering countries to explore together the best way to share policy experiences and identify success factors and best practices to tackle current or emerging issues.

Examples:




-  Stimulate business R&I (fiscal incentives, tax credits financial instruments, etc.).
-  Effectively respond to and address the COVID-19 outbreak and other epidemics (exchanges of best practices, specific R&I policy instruments, social media apps, etc.).
-  Facilitate the implementation of e-governance for R&I.



Ad hoc services

Policy and decision-makers can also request other ad hoc services to meet their needs as they arise.

Examples:


-  International benchmarking to design and implement specific policies and instruments to tackle crises and emergencies (COVID-19, climate change, etc.).
-  A series of workshops to design a regional STI policy adaptable to national needs.
-  Regional capacity building workshops in STI policies and SDGs for parliamentarians.



Follow-up service

A follow-up service provides support to countries that have already conducted or participated in a previous PSF service and need support to roll out or implement the policy recommendations from that previous service.

Examples:

-  After assessing the state of the art of its R&I eco-system, a country asks support to implement a specific policy instrument to promote STI investment.

The added value of the OACPS R&I PSF

The OACPS R&I PSF uniqueness lies in the combination of its main features:

✓ Flexible and tailor-made

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' in terms of policy advice. Services are implemented in line with ACP countries' needs and in a timeframe adapted to their local policy framework. Priorities are defined in a bottom-up manner by country and regional authorities which are actively involved in the process of designing and implementing R&I policies.

✓ Impact-oriented

Beyond descriptive analyses of R&I systems and policies, the services aim to achieve defined outcomes and impacts. Some services might include an 'Impact pathway of the recommendations' and capacity reinforcement.

✓ A powerful tool to enhance south-south and triangular cooperation

PSF services are implemented by a panel of high-level R&I experts and peers, primarily chosen from different ACP and EU countries. 'Mutual Learning Exercises' also enable ACP countries to address together identified R&I policy challenges of mutual interest.

✓ Community sharing and knowledge producing

PSF services combine country-specific features with international good practices, in terms of effective innovation systems and policy instruments.

✓ Evidence-based

Robust quantitative and qualitative data support the policy recommendations. And the use of top-level experts and peers, with hands-on knowledge on R&I operational functionalities, fosters learning from both conceptual and practical expertise.

✓ Inclusive

The PSF pays special attention to gender equality and inclusiveness (youth, indigenous communities, disadvantaged groups, etc.), at different levels, such as in the selection of the expert panels and its recommendations.

Who can apply

Requests for PSF services can be submitted to the OACPS Secretariat by:

- prime ministers from ACP countries.
- high level authorities in charge of Research and Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education (HE) from ACP countries (such as ministries, national councils or committees).
- high level authorities from a group of ACP countries.
- high level authorities from ACP public regional organisations.

How the OACPS R&I PSF works

The attribution of a PSF service follows four sequential steps:

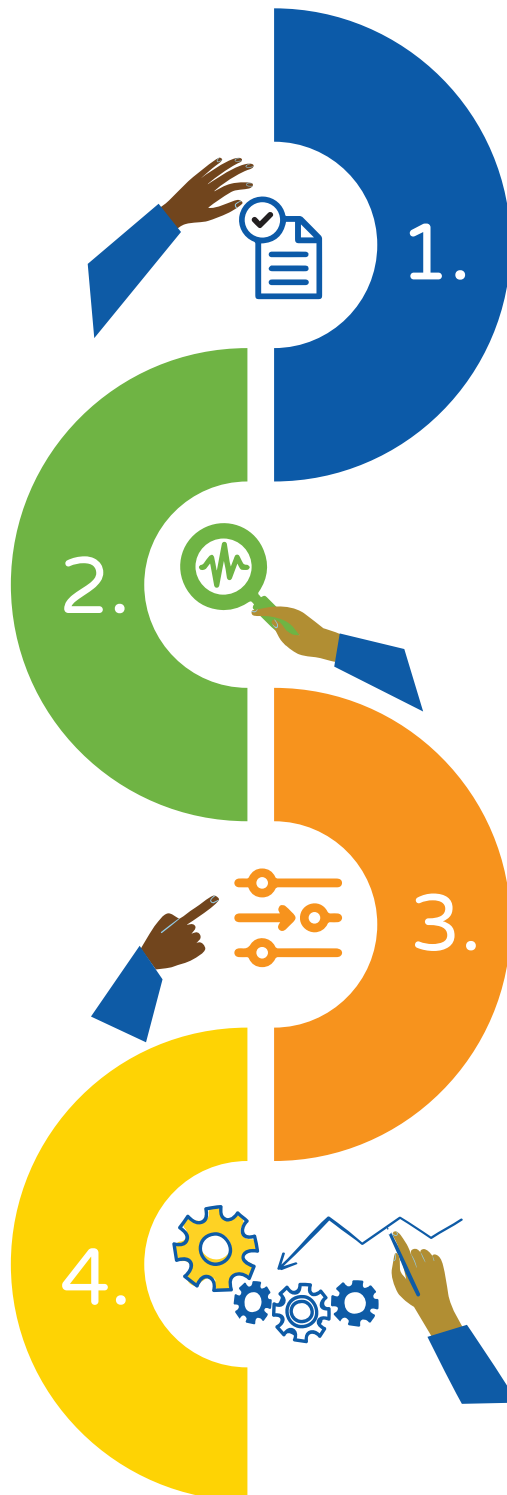
Assessment of Eols

The Eol is then evaluated against eligibility and assesment criteria.

PSF service implementation

The service implementation includes three successive phases:

- Planning phase (selection of experts and peers, collection of background data and work plan).
- Field phase (country visits, interviews and assessments).
- Closure phase (drafting of reports and dissemination of findings to stakeholders).



Submission of requests

An Expression of Interest (Eol) for the request of a PSF service is submitted to the OACPS Secretariat by a country, a group of countries or a public regional organisation.


Fine-tuning of the service requests

If the Eol has been approved, the next step is to fine-tune the service request by mutually agreeing on the purpose, scope, and country commitment.

OACPS Research and Innovation Programme

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OACPS R&I



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