

Reference to paragraph 2 of Document 186 EX/14 Part V

PARIS, March 2011

REPORT ON MAIN RESULTS OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

MAIN RESULTS OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

- (a) During the technical mission a consultative meeting with key national institutions and universities was organized in Abuja to identify priorities, possible gaps and the specific niche for the proposed Centre which could bring added value, both nationally and at the regional level, over other existing biotechnology initiatives. The potential role of the Centre in view of existing plans to establish for Western Africa, a centre of excellence in biotechnology along the lines of the "Biosciences eastern and central Africa" hub in Kenya, was also discussed. This meeting involved UNESCO, the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO and representatives of the Nigerian National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), the National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, the National Root Crop Research Institute, the National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, the Biotechnology Laboratory, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development.
- (b) The Centre will be located at the Nsukka campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), one of the oldest universities in Nigeria, established in 1960. It is comprised of fifteen academic faculties, located in two main campuses – Nsukka and Enugu. The Centre will collaborate mainly with the faculty of Biological Sciences but also with the faculties of Agriculture, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine at the Nsukka campus and with the college of Medicine and the Teaching Hospital at the Enugu campus. The biotechnology programme of the University of Nigeria was established in the 1980s and has contributed to building scientific capacity in Nigeria.
- (c) The Centre should provide opportunities for training its own staff in the focus areas for the Centre's activities to complement the recruitment of high calibre scientists regionally and internationally. It will provide opportunities to train and retrain academic and support staff of universities and institutes in Nigeria, other west African countries and beyond for effective teaching and research in the areas of competence of the centre. Building adequate and sustained equipment maintenance capability will also be included in the training programme. Further, development of a science park to facilitate the marketing of technologies is planned. In collaboration with other partners the Centre will also establish an international industry and policy oriented master of biotechnology (M. Biotech) programme designed for government policy makers who thus will be better equipped for policy formulation, analysis and implementation.

- (d) Findings of the mission were satisfactory. Construction of the Centre's buildings is underway and is nearing completion, with over 1,900m² of floor space and adequate facilities for research, lectures and offices. The new on-campus 83 room complex, the international scholar village, is also nearing completion, as well as facilities for visiting guests and faculty. Financial resources needed to finalize construction have been acquired.
- (e) The library has over 3,000 online journals available and establishment of a new data centre is almost finished. The plans include a computer park with 1,000 terminals. The new IT facilities, have a capacity of 300 terabytes and bandwidth of 150 mbps. The UNN also hosts a South-East Zonal Biotechnology Centre, of NABDA. In addition a high level Centre to be funded by the ETF will also be located at the Nsuuka campus, as will a SHELL-UNN Centre in environmental management.
- (f) It is clear from the site visit that the UNN has the capability to host the proposed Centre, and that the choice of this location is fully justified. The University also has easy access to the newly upgraded Enugu International Airport.
- (g) The Federal Government of Nigeria has displayed strong support for the creation of the Centre and has committed to meet the running costs and staffing needs of the Centre, as well as some of the costs for teaching and research activities through the ETF intervention fund.
- (h) In December 2010 an information meeting was organized at UNESCO for country representatives of the Africa Group. There was unanimous support for this proposal and several countries, such as Egypt, Ghana and Libya, have indicated their desire to collaborate with and to be involved in the Centre's activities.