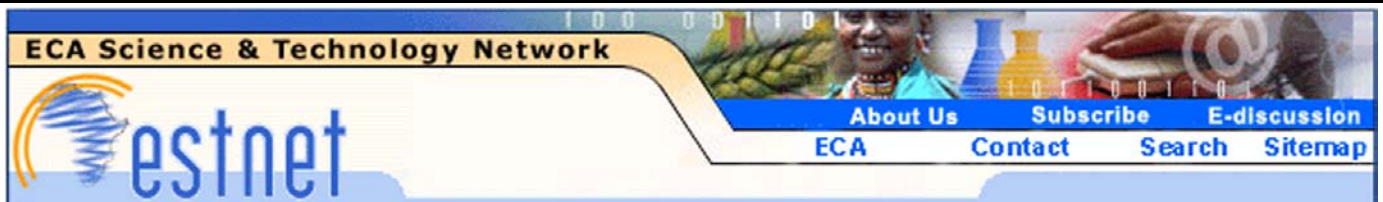




# ESTNET Newsletter

ECA  
www.uneca.org

Issue 1  
December 2002



## What is ESTNET?

The Economic Commission for Africa is convinced that the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) for development and the potential of networking for the promotion of science and technology (S&T) in Africa are enormous. Indeed, nations or firms that do not embrace the ICT revolution and that do not exploit networking will not be able to build competitive advantages and will increasingly be marginalized and left behind. Electronic networking is a powerful, inexpensive and rapid way to exchange information and to enhance collaboration, cooperation and partnership. These observations gave rise to the ECA-sponsored Science and Technology Network (ESTNET) - a tool for accessing and sharing information and knowledge and

for promoting regional cooperation and integration in S&T in Africa via the Internet.

ESTNET is a network specifically dedicated to enhancing partnership and interactions between S&T policymakers, policy-making institutions, policy analysts, managers and other stakeholders at national, subregional, regional and global levels for the advancement of Africa, with an emphasis on sustainable development. Building capacity for active collaboration and for sound policy decisions in science and technology is the overarching goal of ESTNET.

ESTNET is a response to a growing demand for S&T information as well as

*(Continued on page 4)*

## ESTNET's objectives

- To facilitate adequate use of critical S&T policy-related information and enhance African S&T policy-making capacity;
- To keep African S&T policymakers and other stakeholders abreast of the major S&T development trends and policy issues ;
- To encourage increased communication, cooperation and exchanges of opinions, experiences, best practices, management approaches and policies in S&T for sustainable development;
- To become a "one-stop shop" (portal) for S&T policy information, by providing links to other useful, relevant sites;
- To increase interaction among S&T policymakers for mutual assistance and support;
- To contribute towards the development of a vibrant online community and networking culture in Africa. ■



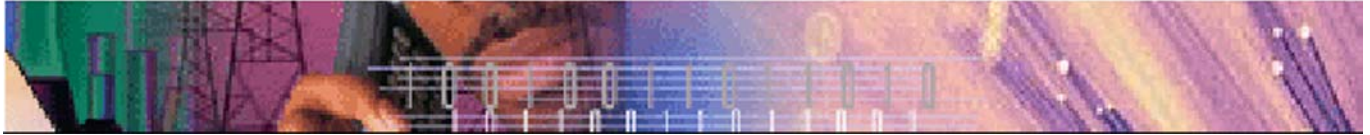
## Editorial

The objective of this Newsletter is to inform potential beneficiaries of a new initiative from ECA, aimed at facilitating access to relevant information and boosting regional cooperation in the area of science and technology policies in Africa. This first issue provides an overview of this initiative and what it could become in the years ahead. The Newsletter will be produced annually.

## Benefits of ESTNET

- Speedy and timely access to relevant information;
- Reduction of reproduction and dissemination costs of documents;
- Creation of a standardized source of information and documentation;
- Enhancement of regional cooperation in science and technology in Africa;
- Support to African expatriate scientists;
- Opportunity to participate in a community of science and technology policy-makers.

<http://www.uneca.org/estnet>



## Implementation strategies

ESTNET provides an effective means of facilitating and supporting ECA's implementation strategies in S&T. These include:

1. The provision of advice and assistance to member States in taking stock of the present S&T situation, organizing policy dialogues and designing and implementing sound S&T policies, strategies and programs.
2. The organization of and participation in regional and subregional meetings at the highest level of decision-making to review problems of common interest, exchange views and discuss concerted modalities of action.
3. The training of high-level decision-makers in S&T priority areas, particularly where such training can significantly increase management capabilities.
4. The provision of information and documentation (including publications and databases) on S&T topics of interest.
5. The design and execution of extra-budgetary projects to reinforce activities financed by the regular budget and additional support activities
6. The coordination and harmonization of activities with the UN Headquarters, Specialized UN agencies, development agencies, IGOs, NGOs and donor organizations.
7. The support and backstopping of ECA-sponsored regional institutions in science and technology.
8. The implementation of joint activities with international and regional development organizations, including the multilateral financial institutions, within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and other development initiatives. ■

---

***Bringing science and technology issues to the forefront of African development planning***

---

## ESTNET and ECA's role in S&T

ECA's strategic interventions in S&T plays a leading, catalytic and complementary role in accelerating Africa's sustainable development. In this regard, ESTNET will strengthen this role by providing ECA with an additional tool for:

- Assisting member States in the formulation and implementation of the regional, socio-economic and inter-sectoral aspects of S&T policies in Africa, particularly with regard to sustainable development;
- Providing and diffusing information on best practices in S&T policies and management;
- Bringing S&T issues to the forefront of national development planning as a central element of member

States' socio-economic development process;

- Launching or supporting policy dialogues, including e-conferences and e-meetings;
- Initiating and executing carefully designed and cost-effective S&T projects to meet the challenges of technological change and globalization, in partnership with other stakeholders;
- Effectively promoting strategies and support policies for the technological advancement of member States; and
- Participating in collaborative activities and projects with other international regional and subregional organizations. ■

### ESTNET Site features

- Over 1000 Gateway Links
- Interactive Databases
- Information Page
- Downloadable Software
- Clickable Map of Africa
- Communication Facilities

**ECA is grateful to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for providing a grant to organize an Ad Hoc Experts Meeting in Addis Ababa, in 1999, on science and technology best practices and best research results in Africa .**



## The gateway structure for ESTNET's resources

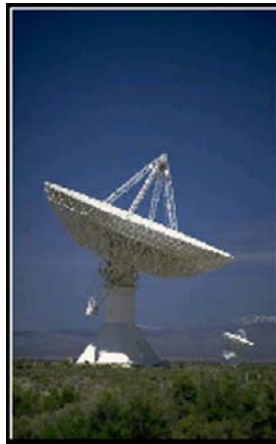
ESTNET has structured its resources for African S&T policymakers as a 'portal' or 'gateway'. This is because many stakeholders have:

- Limited access to the policy resources offered by the Internet;
- Limited experience with ICTs;
- 'Old' computers and other hardware;
- Limited knowledge of the Internet;
- Expensive telephone and Internet connections;
- Slow data transmission speeds due to inadequate infrastructure;

- Unreliable information systems due to frequent power interruption and shortages, and;
- Low policy capacities to formulate S&T strategies, policies and plans of action.

A highly developed but technologically basic 'gateway' will better meet the needs of African countries than a network with a narrow focus on ECA's work. The portal will save time and money for African users by enabling them to search and find relevant information quickly in a

more customized way. The design and management of ESTNET will facilitate off-line browsing, thus making it more accessible and affordable to users. ■



## How will ESTNET success be assessed?

The long-term success of ESTNET will be assessed by a number of indicators such as:

- The number of users, clients, partners and organizations;
- The number and types of transactions by topic and by origin carried out on the network, as evidenced by the number of inquiries, visits, downloads, communications, searches, subscriptions, postings, etc;
- The amount of country-related information in S&T available on the network;
- The contribution to a regional dialogue on S&T issues, policies and management in Africa;
- The satisfaction of users, as evidenced by their feedback and comments. ■



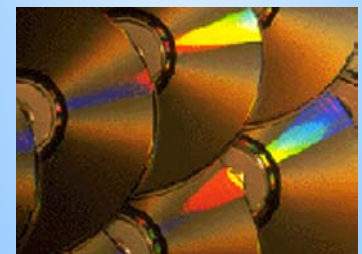
### Next steps

- The operational draft of the ESTNET website has been completed.
- ESTNET website to be pre-launched during the last quarter of 2002.
- Updating and fixing the pilot site will continue in the months ahead.
- ESTNET is now accessible over the Internet at this address:  
<http://www.uneca.org/estnet>

## Contents of the new ESTNET site

- [Home page](#)
- [ESTNET News](#)
- [ECA Meetings in S&T](#)
- [ECA Documents](#)
- [African S&T Organizations](#)
- [African S&T Projects](#)
- [International Organizations](#)
- [Journals and Periodicals](#)
- [References & Documents](#)
- [Gender and S&T](#)
- [Events in S&T](#)
- [Foundations and Donors](#)
- [Consultants Database](#)
- [Document Posting](#)
- [Request Advisory Services](#)

- [About us](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [E-discussion](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Search Page](#)
- [Site Map](#)



ESTNET will be available in CD-ROM format





ESTNET Team  
 Sustainable Development Division  
 P.O. Box 3001  
 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
 Phone: +251 (1) 510406  
 Fax: +251 (1) 510350  
 Email: [estnet@uneca.org](mailto:estnet@uneca.org)  
 Web: <http://www.uneca.org/estnet>

*Building Science and  
 Technology Capacity in Africa*

## Partnerships

Within ECA, ESTNET is an interdivisional effort led by the Sustainable Development Division (SDD) in collaboration with the Information Services Section (ISS), the Communication Team and the Development Information Service Division (DISD). Outside ECA, the S&T policy-making apex bodies of member States are the main partners. Collaboration is sought with other interested regional institutions, such as the *Conseil ouest et centre africain pour la recherche et le développement agricoles* (CORAF), the African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), the African Regional Centre for Engineering Design & Manufacture. (ARCEDEM), the African Regional Industrial Property Association (ARIPO) and the *Organisation africaine de la propriété intellectuelle* (OAPI). Collaboration is also sought with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Partnership will also be sought with MAGTECH (science and technology network in the Maghreb region) and with the African Technology Forum, the African Technology Policy Studies network (ATPS) and SciDev. ECA's offices in Southern, Northern, Eastern, Western and Central Africa will also be asked to contribute to the network in their respective subregions.

*(Continued from page 1)*

a strong desire of the African S&T community to interact more effectively among its own members as well as with the global S&T community. It is also a response to a fantastic opportunity opened up by the rapid expansion of Internet connectivity in Africa. The network is a means of harnessing the immense power of Internet to promote effective S&T strategies and policies in Africa.

African nations, particularly in rural areas, are caught up in a technological time warp, being hundreds of years behind the most technologically advanced nations. With the Internet and the advent of innovative community telecentres, a growing number of Africans can have access to better information and telecommunication possibilities. ESTNET will help in breaking the isolation, thereby fostering

### Harnessing Technologies for Sustainable Development

If effectively harnessed, new and emerging technologies can help catalyze Africa's transition to sustainable development. This is the key message of a newly released ECA policy research report entitled *Harnessing Technologies for Sustainable Development*.

The Report identifies medical (red) and agricultural (green) biotechnologies as key missing ingredients often overlooked as a basis for sustainable development. They can help lower the incidence of disease, reduce food insecurity and decrease vulnerability to environmental damage by allowing more flexible crop management systems.

However, the Report stresses that the expected benefits of both red and green biotechnologies can only be realized if a number of key challenges are addressed, including the extent to which the technologies are relevant to Africa, are pro-poor and mitigate biosafety and related risks. The Report articulates the potential benefits of specific technologies. ■



the integration of African countries into the world. It supports what has been called "the revolution of inclusion".

ESTNET is a catalytic initiative to kick-start networking in S&T policy-making in Africa. It is a collaborative network, as it relies on the contribution of member States and interested regional

organizations and institutions for its development and management. Hopefully, member States and institutions will open national chapters and dynamic 'nodes', hence contributing significantly to its success in the years ahead. ■