



Newsletter

In this issue, we welcome the opening of the Higher African Institute of Information and Knowledge Technologies (ISATIC) in Douala (Cameroon), set up with the assistance of USF-AWB: this school of computer science is characterized by the importance given to entrepreneurship and innovation. Then we will present an association of researchers between France and Colombia (COLIFRI), an association with which we are negotiating to improve the professional training of researchers in this country.

Then a short summary of the day of strategic reflections will analyze the feedback on many universities we work with.

Wishing good reading. ■

Prof. Robert Laurini, president of USF-AWB.

Opening of ISATIC, Douala (Cameroon)

For nearly 8 years, USF-AWB has supported the maturation and implementation of the project to create the African Higher Institute of Information and Knowledge Technologies (ISATIC). More specifically, the role of USF-AWB has been, among other things, to define the syllabi, the organization of schooling (permanent and transitional, face-to-face and remote), training in entrepreneurship, innovation, links with the economic community, and recruitment assistance.



This new institute will open in a few weeks with further training:

- In BTS (two-year technical degrees): administrator of Big Data Center, Web design and management IT;
- Bachelor level: information systems, telecommunication network design, big data center designer and e-health;
- Master level in Embedded Systems.

This is the heart of the letter from Jean-Gervais Yoyomoutomé, founder and Executive Director of ISATIC, dated September 12, 2020.



"Since 2012, when the annual Reflection Days on Youth Training and Employability in Africa began, USF-AWB have been a tireless supporter of counselling and assistance. The project to create ISATIC, the Private Institute of Higher Education under Cameroonian law, was born from the absence of the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in African universities and schools. Thus, any ISATIC student is a potential project leader. The ISATIC awards diplomas at BTS, Bachelor and Master degrees.

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Such a project requires experienced people and an organization with knowledge and experience in the creation of institutes and program design. That's why the USF-AWB's assistance has been so important.

This is why, as Executive Director, I express my gratitude to you"

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Franco-Colombian cooperation at level that had never been achieved before

The scientific and academic relations between France and Colombia are old and have always shown a strong dynamism. However, they have consolidated strongly over the past decade. Traditionally, cooperation between the two countries has focused on linguistic and cultural promotion, public and private law, as well as human and social sciences. Recently, new areas in support of recent commitments by both nations to common challenges such as peace, climate change, rural and urban development, digital transformation, innovation and competitiveness, The European Union and its Member States have come to diversify and give new impetus to this bilateral cooperation.



France is currently Colombia's 5th largest scientific partner country with more than 600 joint publications per year. As Elena ARNAL, Head of the Scientific University Partnerships, Central and South America Division of French Foreign Office (MEAE), recently pointed out: *"The MEAE is very committed to this Franco-Colombian cooperation, as evidenced in recent years by the rapprochement of the French and Colombian ecosystems in terms of higher education and research (...) The Franco-Colombian meetings that took place a year ago were an opportunity to elevate our scientific cooperation and to structure in a more solid way all our networks: academic, institutional, and also entrepreneurial at a level that had never before been achieved with Colombia"*.



These meetings, held in Medellin in June 2019, included the participation of the Colombian Vice-President, Maria Lucia Ramirez, of the French Nobel Prize in Physics, Serge Haroche, and more than 1200 players in the higher education, research and innovation sectors highlighted the dimension of this bilateral relationship and the scope of the actions of the Colombo-French Association of Researchers - COLIFRI.

COLIFRI, born almost 3 years ago, is the result of an initiative of the French Embassy in Colombia with the aim of promoting and consolidating research, development and innovation in an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary way. In this context, more than 100 researchers are currently involved with the organization to formulate and carry out bilateral projects in various fields. For example, on the renewable energy sector, a binational team of experts from various public and private institutions is currently developing a large-scale project funded by the Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects, which focuses on the study and implementation of energy solutions in the capital city of Puerto Carreño capital of the Colombian department of Vichada. This territory, currently characterized by unfavorable socio-economic indicators, shows little dynamism compared to the country's economy.

In this context and through applied research activities, this COLIFRI project aims to strengthen local value chains (honey, cashews, tourism and fishing) in order to increase entrepreneurship and association, improve access to employment and education, guarantee food and environmental security and ultimately support the improvement of the quality of life of thousands of people. Through these types of projects, COLIFRI demonstrates that research and cooperation are fundamental to the sustainable development of territories and communities. This is what the association is now seeking to promote, and it is showing great ambitions for the implementation of high-impact actions to address important global issues.

A partnership between COLIFRI and USF-AWB is being negotiated: USF-AWB's role will revolve around the professional training of researchers.

For more information: info@colifri.com - www.colifri.com. ■

Minutes of the USF-AWB Strategic Meeting on September 1, 2020

On September 1st, 2020, in the training center of La Barge (Metropole de Lyon), a strategic meeting of USF-AWB was held with 9 members (and 9 others excused for various reasons). The main objective was to carry out a debriefing of activities for the past 10 years, particularly in Africa.

At first, the president made a quick history and gives some figures. We currently have 135 solicitations involving 20 missions (excluding prospecting) and 16 agreements have been signed with universities or higher education schools, not counting those with other NGOs. 41 newsletters were sent in French and English, and more recently, 3 in Spanish. In total, the number of recipients of our newsletters and calls for collaboration reaches 9800.

Then is analyzed the situation of each of the countries in which we intervened: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea (Conakry), Mali, Senegal, and Togo. These activities range from the simple Master course, to the design and implementation of a Master course, to the organization of laboratories and doctoral schools, to the assistance of setting up faculties and engineering or business schools.

A more effective strategy to meet expectations

More than just a review of the cooperation signed, the meeting established a more effective strategy for cooperation with African higher education institutions. The relationships established with African universities prior to this meeting have revived new areas of cooperation. It is essential that objectives and action plans be associated with cooperation agreements. It is from now on, on that basis that mutual cooperation takes place.

It is in the cooperation undertaken together in the medium term that it is possible to measure the effectiveness of the programs put in place. Priority will therefore be given to

support for research, the setting up of Master courses, and the arrangements and processes for gradually facilitating the employability of students. Wherever possible, the steps taken in the context of calls for projects facilitate the implementation of these mechanisms.



A division of responsibilities in the monitoring of African projects was also decided. It will allow for more direct links between USF project coordinators and university leaders in Africa. This is now very necessary because the number of African universities involved in cooperation with USF-AWB has increased considerably in recent months. Results of the mechanisms for matching and sponsoring laboratories were then analyzed.

The result is that negotiations are long, sometimes a year or more for a week-long course. Relations with French embassies are generally excellent. The opening on Latin America decided at the last General Assembly is beginning to bear fruit: collaborations are emerging with Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

Decisions

A reorganization was carried out at the Coordinators' level by better specifying the procedures.

It was decided to put on the website (<http://www.usf-awb.org>) the list of the services offered, namely: Specialized courses of Master, Design of Master courses, Creation of research centers or laboratories, Training of doctoral students and researchers, Doctoral School Set-up, Laboratory Sponsorship, Laboratory Twinning, Engineering School Set-up, International Engineering Training, Student Employability and Strengthening Links with Industries and the Economic World.

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