Experience from the AEEP

Adapting JAES structures and modalities to diverse partnerships

The eight JAES partnerships have their specific features, diverse stakeholders and varied rates of progress. Maximum flexibility should be allowed in terms of Partnerships' implementation set-ups, internal working and communication methods, key actors, priorities for action, etc. No "one size fits all" solution can exist. Finding optimal institutional arrangements may involve, according to the situation of each partnership, adaptation and simplification of structures. Partnerships should put to use any existing well-functioning tools. The AEEP, for instance, has made use of the EUEI Partnership and Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF) to provide technical support to the JEG and the Implementing Teams. Appropriate capacity building for the AUC and/or regional bodies (RECs and Power Pools, in the case of energy) is a key to success.

Many other cooperation initiatives with Africa exist. Given the scarcity of resources available for development, partnerships should strive for maximum efficiency by focusing sharply on their specific added value. Partnerships should avoid duplicating or competing with existing fora and instruments and look for synergies with other ongoing initiatives in Africa, involving both EU (and non-EU stakeholders).

Within the overall scope of the JAES, actions should best be implemented at the level that maximises their impacts: partnerships should apply the principle of subsidiarity by involving the most appropriate continental or regional stakeholders.

AEEP as a forum for political dialogue on energy

The AEEP, within the JAES framework, has created a much needed dedicated forum for energy dialogue between the EU and Africa and offers new opportunities for promoting joint action. In particular, the AEEP has led to valuable exchanges on issues such as energy access, renewable energy, business environment for PPPs, as well as inter-regional and inter-continental energy infrastructure.

Given the prominence of energy in both continents’ agendas and the results of the AEEP so far, participants believe that this framework should be maintained. "Dissolving" the AEEP into a group of partnerships would be counterproductive, losing the sharp focus among a group of actors who have specific issues to discuss.
The role of the Regional Economic Communities in the AEEP dialogue

In the field of energy, the majority of concrete projects and programmes are implemented at the national or regional level. Thus, the specific value added of a continental level political partnership such as the AEEP consists largely in the support to national and regional efforts. Specific threads of dialogue with the RECs, Power Pools and specialized institutions should be strengthened, with participation of both the AUC and EC, to discuss issues specific to each region.

Dialogue at multiple levels with multiple actors gives substance to the partnership. Private sector, civil society and research institutions' participation is necessary in achieving AEEP objectives.

While the JAES partnerships are political, launched at the Head of State and Government level, their success depends on close contact with the underlying reality. Injecting this reality into the political discussion requires involvement of competent economic and social actors: specialised institutions, business, research, civil society. This is clear in the energy sector, where the investments needed require privately held technologies, and capital flows at least an order of magnitude greater than all available public funds. Thus, private sector, civil society and research institutions' participation is necessary in achieving AEEP objectives.

Building PPPs is a challenging task, and requires sophisticated institutional arrangements that guarantee that both public and private objectives will be attained. The JAES needs to involve research and academic institutions, in order to accelerate the transfer of best practices, technologies and know-how which constitute an essential condition for the success of private investment in key areas.

Recommendations to the JAES

1. The JAES partnerships should be guided by the principles of flexibility, added value and subsidiarity.

2. JAES structures must be compatible with institutional capacity in Africa and the EU, and must be adapted to the specific conditions of each partnership.

3. Partnership objectives should be limited in number, concise and aligned with joint top political priorities: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

4. Civil society, the private sector and research institutions' participation should be strengthened in order to achieve JAES objectives:
   - Expand research, discussion, and exchange of experience to identify institutional models that allow effective cooperation between the public and private sectors;
   - Encourage dialogue between public and private sector actors in order to improve mutual understanding and trust;
   - Organise or participate in events that are focused on issues that are of specific concern to the private sector / civil society / research institutions.
Recommendations for the future of the AEEP

1. The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) should be maintained as a distinct entity within the JAES architecture. The second action plan of the AEEP, to be endorsed by the 3rd Africa-EU Summit, should reflect experience gained in work of the AEEP, and better reflect the principals of flexibility, subsidiarity and value added. Within the framework of the AEEP, the partners and stakeholders – AUC, EC, AU and EU member states, along with the private sector and civil society – will implement projects and programmes to support the agreed AEEP objectives and priorities. The Partnership will focus on its added values in the areas of:
   - Energy access, as a contribution to the African objective of achieving a continent-wide rate of access to modern and sustainable energy of around 50%, which means additional 250 million people;
   - Energy security (e.g. on inter-regional and inter-continental energy infrastructure, such as major electricity interconnections, gas and oil infrastructure etc.);
   - Continent-wide cooperation on renewable energy as proposed in the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme
   - Energy efficiency;
   - Improving the business environment for investment;
   - Cooperation for mobilizing adequate financial resources;
   - Expression in international fora of common Africa-Europe concerns on energy;
   - "Mapping, Monitoring and Evaluation" of Africa-EU energy cooperation, at an aggregated level.

2. As an expression of the subsidiarity principle, it is essential to strengthen the role of Regional Economic Communities, the Regional Power Pools and specialised institutions within the AEEP dialogue.

3. The AEEP must build a dialogue at multiple levels with the many actors – including civil society, private sector, academia, research – that have pertinent experience and knowledge, by:
   - organising or participating in events that speak to their concerns;
   - requesting concrete input within their domain of competence;
   - highlighting their contributions in partnership documents.