

ERFAN

ITALY & AFRICA JOIN FORCES

Africa is a continent of great opportunity and great challenges. In this arena, the world's most significant powers come together to compare notes on the global ripple effects that African development has the potential for, such as immigration, national security, economic development, business and investment. One such power is the Enhancing Research for Africa Network (ERFAN).

THE ORIGINS OF COLLABORATION

Since 1991, the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) has been active in Africa as a branch of the Centre for Foreign Animal Diseases (CESME), established by the Italian Ministry of Health. For IZSAM, Africa represents an opportunity to study exotic diseases in wildlife which do not occur in Italy. This has brought about collaboration between Italy and several African institutions, such as national laboratories and veterinary faculties. Today, 21 African countries maintain relations with IZSAM. Research and work amongst experts in biology, veterinary science, epidemiology and chemistry has resulted in international events and seminars in Africa aimed at implementing development projects in the field of public health and the support of African initiatives.

ERFAN'S CONTRIBUTION

Thanks to these long-term collaborations, IZSAM and its African partners have developed a scientific network to encapsulate their work together. The Enhancing Research for Africa Network (ERFAN) came into being in March of 2017. The network consists of nine African institutions from eight African countries, who met in Teramo, Abruzzo to share existing scientific knowledge and to seek out options for future cooperation in the field of veterinary science. Supported by the Italian Ministry of Health and the Director General for Animal Health and Veterinary Medicinal Products, ERFAN focuses on knowledge production in animal health and welfare, food hygiene and sustainable food

production. They generate solutions to global challenges and seek to incubate connected projects at a regional level.

ITALY & SOUTH AFRICA SIDE BY SIDE

ERFAN is based on two pillars: regional diagnostic and surveillance capacity, and joint operational research with Italian and African institutions. ERFAN produces research and development in several ways. They facilitate scientific solutions for global health and security, and formulate outbreak responses. They establish standardised laboratory protocols according to the World Organisation for Animal Health's (OIE) framework. They also support accreditation efforts for those seeking to work with the OIE Laboratory or Collaborating Centre. Lastly, they offer training and dissemination for the veterinary workforce for both areas. ERFAN therefore constitutes a valuable platform for animal and human health in Africa and Italy.

WORKING WITH THE OIE

ERFAN submitted to the OIE for funding in 2018. The OIE is an international organization with 181 member countries dedicated to improving animal health and welfare worldwide. It also assists developing countries with implementation in sanitation and phytosanitary measures. In October of 2018, the OIE agreed to provide funding for the project in the years to come. As a result of this they are able to operate in Tunisia, Tuni, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and counties in the South African Development Community (SADC).

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