

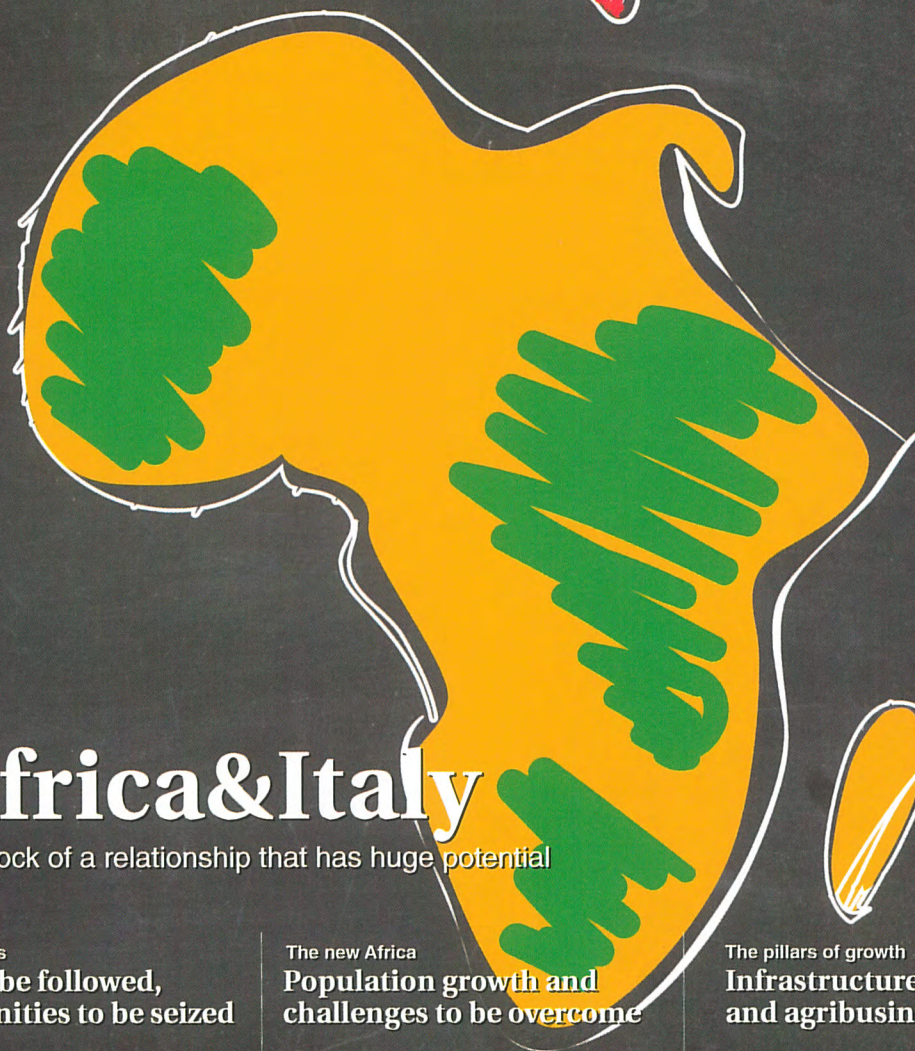
Africa e Affari

May 2016

ENGLISH



I quaderni di Africa e Affari / May 2016 / By Internationalia



#Africa&Italy

Taking stock of a relationship that has huge potential

Economic ties

**Paths to be followed,
opportunities to be seized**

The new Africa

**Population growth and
challenges to be overcome**

The pillars of growth

**Infrastructure, energy
and agribusiness**

"There is always something new out of Africa." Pliny the Elder



Cooperation between African countries and the Caporale Institute

International cooperation focuses on veterinary public health projects in the service of livestock farming, a resource involving 300 million people in Africa.

From Tunisia to Botswana, Mauritania to Eritrea, the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) has a historic and deep-seated presence in Africa. The global research centre better known overseas as the Caporale Institute has with dedication, skill and authority managed to create a tight network of productive and harmonious partnerships; a 'unique' relationship with governors, administrators and African populations to be preserved and extended. Livestock breeding in Africa accounts for approximately 30% of the agricultural economy and 10% of GDP, revealing itself to be a resource for survival for over 300 million people. IZSAM's involvement in Africa has grown over time, in parallel with the interest of African governments in livestock breeding as a potential development solution for their countries. We discuss this context and possible partnerships with Massimo Scacchia, head of the IZSAM Animal Health Laboratory and reference expert of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Dr Scacchia, tell us about IZSAM

IZSAM is an Italian centre of excellence. It is a public health body that conducts continuous research and testing within the integrated system for 'animal wellness and health – food safety – environment protection'. IZSAM operates as a technical and scientific tool of the Health ministry and Abruzzo and Molise Regions, providing high added value services and superior knowledge and innovation in the fields of animal health, veterinary public health and environment protection, to safeguard the health of animals and humans.

On an international level IZSAM, or the Caporale Institute, is a centre for collaboration and a reference laboratory in specific areas of activity for international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and OIE.

How long has Africa been part of the Caporale Institute's development plans? How important is this collaboration for

you today?

Some time ago IZSAM adopted an international policy involving a supranational approach to the protection of animal and human health and to the analysis of risk resulting from the international trade of animals and animal products. The vocation for international development cooperation with what was then known as the world's South dates back to 1989, the year in which the national reference centre for the study and verification of foreign animal diseases (CESME) was established. However, IZSAM actually began providing products and services on an international level alongside its classic activities in the early 1990s. IZSAM has been historically engaged in international cooperation with numerous African countries both in the Mediterranean basin and in sub-Saharan Africa. The institute devotes considerable human, financial and instrumental resources to the implementation of development projects aimed at supporting technical and management growth in the fields of animal health and welfare, food security, veterinary public health, epidemiological surveillance and information systems. Through long-term development projects, scientific partnerships and twinning projects funded by OIE, our institute has managed to establish continuous and deep-seated cooperation relations with the African continent over time. We at IZSAM are firmly convinced that cooperation needs to be based on reciprocity and on the direct involvement of local staff at different levels, in order to put their direct participation in activities into practice. We pursue this conviction while also underlining the central role that local governments need to play in formulating and implementing policies within the sector.

You are on record as saying that this policy of international cooperation has been so successful that now it is the African governments that are approaching you for projects

Yes, exactly! The approach and development of this collaboration between IZSAM and African countries has certainly generated an understanding and reciprocal trust that have increasingly led African governments to ask us to launch or continue technical-scientific cooperation projects directly, without going through international organisations. The fundamental point is that IZSAM offers valid and decisive support for improving the health standards of livestock production and capacity. Over the years the activities of the institute have expanded from more traditional to more innovative fields, ensuring the training and refreshing of veterinarians, other health operators and many other professional figures. Believe me... a big effort giving important results.

Tell us about a cooperation project that has been particularly significant

In Namibia, for example, in 1996 we started working with the central veterinary laboratory of the ministry of agriculture, water and forestry in the field of scientific research into exotic diseases. In 2005, the Namibian centre for the study of exotic diseases set up its own virology laboratory at the Windhoek laboratory. Following a request from the Namibian government to the Italian Health ministry, an IZSAM director was invited to manage the Namibian veterinary laboratory. In 2010 we introduced the project SILAB for Africa (SILABFA), a laboratory information management system developed by IZSAM's IT department, to Namibia. This had notable success, to the extent that the Namibian department of veterinary



services subsequently provided direct funding for it to be integrated into the system of animal identification present in the country. This project was completed in October 2015. Collaboration continues with the request from the Namibian government for an information system for managing epidemiological data, the first of its kind to be adopted in Africa.

An excellent result for IZSAM

I would say so. Just think that the success obtained by SILABFA in Namibia drove numerous other countries to approach IZSAM for the same project. In fact recently it has also been made available to Zimbabwe, where an OIE twinning project on Brucellosis has just ended. Besides Namibia and Zimbabwe, SILABFA is currently also operational in Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania. The excellent references that these countries have given us have led FAO to fund its extension to seven other countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Senegal. I am keen to point out that the information system was created by IZSAM in Teramo and that it will have been introduced into some 12 African countries in the space of three years. This is a credit to our Institute and to Italy.

Other partnerships... other countries?

In the past mutual-interest partnerships have been implemented thanks to funding from the Italian ministry of health. These involved the national veterinary laboratories of Angola, Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Now, following an OIE twinning project with IZSAM, Botswana's national veterinary laboratory has been nominated OIE reference laboratory for contagious bovine pleuropneumonia. Its nomination as a global centre of excellence has led Botswana and IZSAM to establish a network of national laboratories funded by the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources with the involvement of Namibia, Angola, Zambia and Tanzania as well. Since 2015, thanks to an agreement

between the Zambian agriculture ministry and the Italian health ministry, IZSAM has been working with the Zambian veterinary services on legislation for identifying and registering cattle in order to improve public and animal health and the capacity for commercialising and exporting meat products. This activity is financed by the World Bank.

In Angola, the Caporale Institute works with the southern provinces of Huila and Benguela on identifying the local cattle population and improving the network of municipal abattoirs in order to improve the level of meat hygiene. This activity is funded by the provinces themselves.

Another priority area for activities is constituted by the countries of North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia. In these countries, as in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Eritrea, we have been engaged in research activities involving the OIE reference laboratories present within IZSAM and in twinning projects financed by the European Union. Tunisia is an example. In fact in 2013 an important technical-scientific cooperation agreement was signed between IZSAM and the Institut de la Recherche Vétérinaire de Tunisie in the field of animal health, food security and cross-border disease. Under this five-year agreement both institutes have committed to developing mutual interest research programmes in the priority areas for Tunisia and, more generally, for the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

Dr Scacchia, IZSAM can be said to be truly at home in Africa

We have a reciprocal preferential relationship. I am proud of this and take pleasure in reaffirming it.

