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The African Light Source Project

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The most transformative mega-research entity is surely the modern light source. Research is both fundamental and applied. Both streams lead to innovation, competitive industry, the solution of problems of particular relevance for Africa, high end human capacity development, building the culture of learning, the inspiration of young learners to greater efforts and building a new generation of competent and enabled youth. There are other aspects, such as science diplomacy, pan Africanism, the globalisation and democratisation of participation in new knowledge generation, the implication that the large scale research infrastructure is fed by a healthy regional and national capacity in terms of human and equipment infrastructure. The passionate belief in this positive role for mega-science in society has driven the momentum towards the African Light Source. The call was first sounded in 2002, and it has been repeated by many sources on many platforms. African scientists are strongly participating in research exploiting the power of modern light sources, both from within African institutions, and from other institutions, as the exercise of the African science diaspora. In addition, the global science community has also strongly supported the global proliferation of the benefits of access to large-scale research infrastructures, and to extending the collaborative participation totally. This combination of African and International leadership towards an African Light Source is embodied in the project for a Light Source in Africa. These COVID times have seen the Light Source designated as an essential service, remaining open during lockdown, as the front-runner in the fight against this greatest scourge of our decade. Indeed, we would like to see Africa extend its already significant contribution, to combating this disease, and especially others of particular relevance to Africa. This contribution details the progress on the Roadmap towards the African Light Source, and outlines the future projects, many of which will be discussed further in this meeting.

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