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The AfLS and Bioscience in Africa

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The African Light Source has become an urgent continental priority as a priority. This large scale science research infrastructure is the leading example of a resource hosting multi/inter/trans- disciplinary research activities. These include the medical sciences, cultural heritage sciences, geosciences, environmental sciences, energy sciences, nano-sciences, materials sciences and mineral sciences, industrial R&D, amongst others. It is expected to have an enormous impact on socioeconomic development. The Bioscience area is a particularly strong motivation. For example, already, we know the HIV drug development was guided by the idea from structural biology that structural information helps to elucidate protein function and, in particular, the mechanisms of enzymes. This understanding inspires the design of new drugs. The same idea of course applies to many other diseases. The call for the AfLS was first sounded in 2002, and it is now rather mature, with a Roadmap, driven by a fully mandated international Steering Committee. Massive gains are now made, particularly in the expansion of the User Base, the profile at the African Government and Pan African Level, and the momentum of the progress on the Roadmap. A host of projects related to the light source and run by many stakeholders all with their own branding have mushroomed in the general AfLS space. The drafting of the CDR has begun. This talk will review the past, present and future prospects, as we drive the roadmap forward, and look at the synergy between the AfLS and Bioscience in Africa.

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