

The Africa Initiative for Planetary and Space Science – Five years later

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The Africa Initiative for Planetary and Space Science was launched in 2017 and endorsed by several institutions and more than 300 individuals in Africa and outside Africa [1,2]. The initiative was conceived as a network with several goals. The first goal was to reduce the isolation of well-identified individuals or small groups of planetary scientists in Africa, already known for remarkable scientific achievements and/or for public outreach and communication of science. A second goal was to contribute to the structuring of an African community of planetary scientists. A third goal was to initiate several new research projects based on the strong assets of the African continents for planetary sciences. The fourth goal was to strengthen the public outreach activities in planetary science in Africa. The presentation will highlight the activities that have developed over the last 5 years in the wake of the Africa Initiative for Planetary and Space Science and place these achievements in the context of vibrant developments of space sciences and astrophysics in Africa [3]. The focus will be placed on scientific and outreach activities in the fields of meteoritics, impact science, and geo/cosmochemistry. More specifically, research activities in geochemistry are still impeded by the lack of analytical capabilities and human capacities in African universities. In addition, student and staff mobility are limited by lack of funding, delays and conditions for the obtention of visas, especially for Schengen visas. These difficulties may be, in part, and for specific applications, overcome by promoting the use of portable tools such as portable XRF, or portable gamma spectrometers. We will discuss the achievements, advantages and limitations of this approach for training young researchers in geochemistry and the possible steps toward the development of more sophisticated analytical capacities.

References

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