# LEARNING WORKSHOP REPORT



*IDRC GRANT / SUBVENTION DU CRDI : - STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF AFRICA'S SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCILS IN THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING*

SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCILS INITIATIVE SGCI IOSRS INITIATIVE DES ORGANISMES SUBVENTIONNAIRES DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

# Science Granting Council Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa

## Learning Consolidation Workshop Report

## 27 – 28 February 2023

## Accra, Ghana

Prepared by

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Foreign & Commonwealth Office · IDRC · CRDI Canada · NRF National Research Foundation · DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft · Norad Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation · Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

The Science Granting Councils Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI) - through the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) of Ghana - organised a two-day workshop in Accra, Ghana. The event reflected on the progress made in the second phase of the SGCI. It enabled Initiative members to share experiences on lessons learned and co-produce recommendations for future activities.

The two-day workshop also served as the final meeting of the first phase of the SGCI-2 (2018-2023). As well, it provided an opportunity for the Initiative to continue discussions started at the 2022 Annual Forum held in Cape Town, South Africa, on the SGCI-2 achievements and lessons. The first day of the workshop focused on the key findings, outcomes, and lessons from SGCI-1. The the second day focused on the takeaways so far and how they could inform the new Phase of activities to achieve the objectives of the SGCI effectively.

In total, 120 participants made up of staff from the 17 participating Science Granting Councils (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone) and Mali as an observer council, relevant STI and policy stakeholders, SGCI funders, representatives from Collaborating Technical Agencies (CTAs), and the Initiative Management Team attended the workshop.

The meeting had five objectives. Four of these are outlined below together with the main takeaway points from the meeting regarding each objective. The fifth objective relates to the physical meeting itself and the bringing together of Initiative members as well as other key STI stakeholders to share experiences.

| Objective | Main take aways from discussions and presentation during the workshop |
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| **Showcasing the achievements by Councils in progressing their mandates and strengthening national STI systems with research that contributes to inclusive development in Sub-Saharan Africa** | Snapshots of achievements from Councils. Full details are provided in the main report.<br><br>**Senegal:**<br>• Three calls launched because of the Initiative support (two collaborative and one national) funding nine projects involving Senegalese researchers.<br>• A new STI policy and implementation plan.<br><br>**Burkina Faso:**<br>• The Ivorian government has entrusted FONSTI with the establishment of a Steering Committee for the improvement of the competitive position of universities in Cote d'Ivoire.<br>• A co-published article on research excellence.<br><br>**Namibia:**<br>• Grants value chain now incorporates gender and inclusivity . The entire organisation is to undertake a gender and inclusivity assessment.<br><br>**Malawi:**<br>• Significant enhancement of systems including national technology transfer policy guidelines, the translation of research to policy, gender and inclusivity policy, online Grants Management System, review of STI Policy processes and updated MEL framework.<br>• SGCI funding stimulated the government to expedite action to operationalise the S&T fund by investing US$ 290,000. |

**Tanzania:**

- An impact study of funded Research and Innovation projects that will be used to build a case for more funding from central government.
- Enhanced international recognition, e.g. COSTECH was approached by UKCDR to prepare a case study on an 'Equitable Research Partnership'. The case study was presented during Science Summit at the 77 UNGA held in September 2022.

**Uganda:**

- Physical infrastructure development: The acquisition of a new server to support UNCST's ICT platforms and development of an Online Gateway for Technology Matchmaking.
- Certification in progress of grants management processes by the global grants' community for GFGP Standard (ARS 1651:2018) for platinum tier.
- There had been gradual increase in funding from 10% to 15% of its research budget.

**Mozambique:**

- Strengthened internal capabilities in monitoring and evaluation, technical coordination, gender inclusion and climate change.

**Zambia:**

- Its research funding has nearly doubled from around six million Kwacha (US$ 350 000) to 10 million Kwacha (US$ 600 000).

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| | **Côte d'Ivoire:**<br>• Government launched the National Fund for Science, Technology and Innovation (FONSTI) in 2018 and dedicated at least US$ 10 million to research. |
| **Pause and reflect on what has worked well and not so well.** | **WHAT HAS WORKED WELL:**<br>• **Overcoming language barriers** enabling partnerships between Francophone and Anglophone countries, e.g. Burkina Faso and Uganda.<br>• **Increase in co-funding and leveraging of funding**, e.g. Namibia and Mozambique provided US$ 50 000 each towards a research funding pot. Malawi and AUDA-NEPAD are working on a Grand Challenges Programme. The International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP) has increased support for research activities. In Tanzania, discussions are underway between COSTECH and NORAD for a possible partnership and funding. In Ghana, negotiations resulted in successful research awards under the OR Tambo Chairs Initiative.<br>• **Developing partnerships and PPPs have progressed**. Ghana has passed a PPP Law while Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Kenya have all embarked on new partnerships with bilateral funders, other Councils or other public bodies and the private sector.<br>• **Providing practically focused capability building worked best**, e.g. matching implementation of the online grants management systems to the actual issuing of calls by SGCs has made for concrete piloting.<br>• **Working with UNCST** was an example of leveraging resident capacities within the SGCs. |

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| | **WHAT HAS WORKED LESS WELL**<br>• **The short-term nature of funding** when the adoption of emerging grants practices is a long-term process and requires more time.<br>• **Time to finalise workplans (ensure joint understanding of needs and opportunities)** led to initial delays and reduced time available for capability strengthening.<br>• **Capacity gaps in Councils and/or human resource challenges** reduce opportunities for inclusion in activities and/or overburdens other already busy staff.<br>• **Poor internet connectivity** challenged some Councils in terms of participating in virtual events.<br>• **Access to materials produced and sharing** these across CTAs and Councils.<br>• **While harmonisation across CTAs is improving, more is still required** to reduce meeting burden as well as ensuring joined up messaging and support.<br>• **Engagement with policy still remains a challenge to solve for many Councils.** There is plenty of interest but a lack of skills, time and resources make this problematic. It is imperative given the political economy in which Councils operate. One option is to build it into grants management. Another is to ensure more focus and awareness of the impact on research. |
| **Reflect on efforts to institutionalise and embed the capabilities and capacities that** | **Researchers' capabilities and innovators** have been built but there is still the issue of the long-term maintenance of their activities. |

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| **have been built under the SGCI** | **Capabilities built on resilience to shocks** through experiences of COVID-19 and some countries, e.g. Mozambique working to embed that learning.<br><br>**Still some areas where capabilities lack notable communication of research results**. There is a need to include other stakeholders routinely in activities.<br><br>**Quality of training and certification** needs to be addressed to ensure that long-term capabilities are built.<br><br>**Suggestion to create a knowledge platform** to enable the sharing of training materials more broadly and debriefing sessions to colleagues to become standard when someone returns from training.<br><br>**Consider student interns and scholarships** to overcome the human resources capacity constraint some Councils face. |
| **Co-produce a series of recommendations that can be used to guide development of new workplans for activities post February 2023 between Councils and CTAs** | **Increase sub-regional activity** to enhance opportunities for collaboration and calls for joint research.<br><br>**Increase focus on R&D surveys** as part of the data and evidence required.<br><br>**Develop reviewer databases.**<br><br>**Training of researchers in grants management** (not just the Councils).<br><br>**Communication of research outcomes support** is still needed and strategies for reaching government and other stakeholders is still required.<br><br>**Even more sensitivity to the individual needs of Councils** in terms of language, time zones, staffing capacity, etc. |

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## Acronyms

| Acronym | Connotation |
|---|---|
| **AAU** | Association of African Universities |
| **ACFTA** | African Continental Free Trade Agreement |
| **ACTS** | African Centre for Technology Studies |
| **ATPS** | African Technology Policy Studies |
| **AU** | African Union |
| **CAD** | Canadian Dollar |
| **CFA Franc** | Communauté Financière Africaine (African Financial Community) |
| **COP** | Conference of the Parties |
| **COSTECH** | Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology |
| **CSO** | Civil society organisation |
| **CTA** | Collaborating Technical Agencies |
| **DFG** | German Research Fund |
| **DFRSDT** | Directorate for the Financing of Scientific Research and Technological Development |
| **DSI** | Department of Science and Innovation |
| **EMA** | Environmental Management Agency |
| **FCDO** | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
| **FNI** | Fundo Nacional de Investigação |
| **FONSTI** | Le Fonds Pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation |
| **G & I** | Gender and Inclusivity |
| **GDP** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **GEI** | Gender, Equity and Inclusivity |
| **GESI** | Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion Strategy |
| **GIRC** | Ghana Innovation and Research Commercialization |
| **GRC** | Global Research Council |
| **HSRC** | Human Sciences Research Council |
| **ICT** | Information and Communication Technology |
| **IDRC** | International Development Research Centre |
| **INASP** | International Network for Advancing Science and Policy |
| **IP** | Intellectual Property |
| **KM** | Knowledge Management |
| **M & E** | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **MCKT** | Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, Botswana |
| **MEL** | Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning |
| **MESTI** | Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation |
| **MP** | Member of Parliament |
| **NCSRT** | National Commission on Research, Science and Technology |
| **NCST** | National Commission for Science and Technology |
| **NFAST** | National Fund for Advancement of Science and Technology |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| **NORAD** | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation |
| **NREN** | National Research and Education Networks |
| **NRF** | National Research Foundation |
| **NSO** | National Statistical Office |

| Acronym | Connotation |
|---|---|
| **ODLS** | Outcome Diary Log Sheet |
| **PASRES** | Programme d'Appui Stratégique à la Recherche Scientifique |
| **PEA** | Political Economy Analysis |
| **PI** | Primary Investigator |
| **PNSTI** | National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy |
| **POTRAZ** | Postal Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe |
| **PPP** | Public-Private Partnerships |
| **PWD** | Persons with Disabilities |
| **Q & A** | Questions and Answers |
| **R & D** | Research and Development |
| **RCZ** | Research Council of Zimbabwe |
| **RPRAZ** | Radiation Authority Protection Authority of Zimbabwe |
| **RSTI** | Research, science and technology institution |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SGC** | Science Granting Councils |
| **SGCI** | Science Granting Councils Initiative |
| **SIDA** | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| **SPRU** | Science Policy Research Unit |
| **STI** | Science, Technology and Innovation |
| **STISA** | Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa |
| **TOC** | Theory of Change |
| **UK** | United Kingdom |
| **UNCST** | Ugandan National Commission for Science and Technology |
| **UNESCO** | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| **US$** | United States Dollar |
| **ZERA** | Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority |

## Introduction

The Science Granting Councils (and related organisations such as Commissions and Funds) perform crucial functions that contribute to the effective and efficient functioning of national science (STI) systems. These functions vary from country to country but include the disbursement of grants for research, development and innovation (RDI), building research capacity through scholarships and bursaries; setting and monitoring research agendas and priorities; issuing research permits, formulating/revising national STI policies; providing policy advice to governments; managing bilateral/multilateral STI agreements; monitoring and assessing the impacts of publicly funded research and as well as research funded from other sources.

The Science Granting Councils Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI) was launched in April 2015 with an initial five-year funding phase (2015-2020), with funding from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IRC), and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF). The purpose is to strengthen the capacities of Councils in 17 African countries to enable them to support research and evidence-based policies that can contribute to economic and social development.

Specifically, the first phase of the SGCI funding (SGCI-1) focused on strengthening the ability of the Councils to manage research, design and monitor research programmes, as well as to formulate and implement policies based on the use of STI indicators and support knowledge exchange with the private sector. In addition, under SGCI-1 establishing partnerships between Councils and with other science system actors was focused on. The participating countries included Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

A second five-year phase of the SGCI (SGCI-2: 2018-2023) was launched in July 2018 with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and IDRC to deepen ongoing work with the Councils in areas related to those covered under SGCI-1. Additionally, the German Research Foundation (DFG) joined the SGCI as an associate funder in 2019 to support (in partnership with NRF) specific activities including collaborative research projects and networking among the Councils. As well, FCDO provided some transitionary funding in late 2021 to deepen activities in two areas: the use of evidence and positioning research for commercialisation.

The SGCI's overarching theory of change (TOC) depicts how the Initiative's themes are linked to corresponding expected outputs as well as how these outputs contribute to the outcome and impact. The outcome expected in the medium term is effective investments by the Councils in research, development, and innovation (RDI), while the long-term impact is strong national science systems that contribute to economic and social development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Against this background, a two-day Learning Consolidation Workshop was co-organised by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) in Accra, Ghana. The workshop also served as the final meeting of the first phase of the SGCI-2 (2018-2023). The workshop provided an opportunity for the Initiative to continue discussions started at the 2022 Annual Forum held in Cape Town,

South Africa, on the SGCI-2 achievements and lessons. It also enabled Councils to reflect further on the key findings and recommendations of the recently concluded SGCI External Evaluation.

## Meeting Objectives

The Learning Consolidation Workshop ran from Monday 27 February to Tuesday 28 February 2023 and had the following objectives:

i. Showcasing the achievements made in the second phase of the SGCI by Councils in working towards their mandates and strengthening national STI systems with research that contributes to inclusive development in Sub-Saharan Africa.
ii. Formally pause and reflect on what has worked well, and what has worked less well, building on the findings of the external evaluation and discussions during the 2022 Annual Forum.
iii. Reflect on efforts to institutionalise and embed the capabilities and capacities that have been built under the SGCI.
iv. Provide an opportunity for the Councils, CTAs, and other relevant stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned from the activities of SGCI-2.
v. Co-produce a series of recommendations that can be used to guide the development of new workplans for activities post February 2023 between Councils and CTAs.

The workshop's expected output includes sharing of experiences in terms of leveraging SGCI support to strengthen national STI systems with research that contributes to inclusive development in Sub–Saharan Africa, enhanced input into the SGCI 2 final report and a series of recommendations that will enable the SGCI to improve its capacity strengthening and research activities with the Councils.

The event was attended by approximately 120 participants made up of staff from 17 participating Science Granting Councils and Mali as an observer council, relevant STI and policy stakeholders, SGCI funders, representatives of the CTAs, and the Initiative Management Team. The workshop focused on the activities across the entire spectrum of the SGCI thematic areas as well as all countries and the activities implemented from 2018-2023.

- Day 1 focused on the key findings, outcomes, and lessons from SGCI-1
- Day 2 focused on the takeaways so far and how they could inform the new Phase of activities to achieve its objectives effectively.

This report captures proceedings of the two-day workshop from 27 – 28 February 2023.

# WORKSHOP DAY ONE, FEBRUARY 27, 2023

The first day of the workshop began with reflection on the SGCI-2 from Mr Cephas Adjei Mensah (MESTI). The meeting opened with a welcome address from Prof. Tom Ogada, African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Dr Mamusu Harry-Seshie representing the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Dr Ellie Osir of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Mr Oliver Boakye, representing the Minster for MESTI and Dr Kwaku Afriyie (MP) Hon.

## Opening Remarks

### African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)

Prof. Tom Ogada welcomed all participants to the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) Learning Workshop 2023. In his speech he noted as follows:

- Participants gathered mainly to share knowledge, learn from one another on a topic that is of utmost importance to the development of the African continent - STI (Science, Technology, and Innovation) and the significance of investing in research and, most importantly, the role of Science Councils in this process.
- While major indices of STI capabilities in Africa are improving, the improvements remain low in comparison to other parts of the world.
- No African country had yet met the AU's R&D spending target of 1% of Gross Domestic Product. Scientific publications remain low with Africa having, in 2019, only 1.8% of the global share of scientific publications (up from 1.4% in 2015).
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 2015, positions STI as a key means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The AU has championed STI for development through the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), 2024. As well, the recent African Continental Free Trade Agreement provides an opportunity for STI investment through enhanced regional integration. Hence in order to realise these strategies and capitalise on the prospects of the ACFTA, African countries must continue to support and fund research as well as broader STI activities.
- The African Centre for Technology Studies is pleased to be member of the SGCI in helping build stronger science and innovation systems in Africa through providing support to Councils to strengthen their capacity of utilising evidence and data effectively and managing research projects.
- Investing in STI and research will allow for the better understanding of the most pressing challenges faced by the African continent, including poverty, hunger, and disease. In addition, this investment will allow for the development of new technologies and solutions that can help us achieve food security, improve health care, and increase access to education.
- To effectively ensure this connection between the SGCI's activities as actors in the science and innovation system – as well as ensuring economic and social development on the continent - requires periods of reflection and learning.
- Continuing the 30 year-mandate of ACTS, pursuing policy-oriented research towards strengthening the capacity of African countries and institutions to harness science and

technology for sustainable development would not be possible without taking every opportunity to learn and reflect on what has and has not worked.

- Science and technology have the potential to continue to revolutionise the way we live and advance in all fields from medicine and transportation to communications. However, to continue this progress it is crucial that research and development actors learn from the past and use that knowledge to inform our future endeavours.
- Participants should commit to using scientific knowledge to continue to make advances that benefit society, while remaining mindful of the potential consequences of such actions.

## Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK

Dr Mamusu Harry-Seshie, representative of the FCDO, welcomed all to the meeting and elaborated on the UK's vision of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI). She noted that the role of science partnerships, such as the SGCI, fit in a shared ambition and vision between the UK and its African allies. Dr Harry-Seshie made the following remarks:

- STI is at the heart of the UK's government policy. It underlines an integrated approach to achieving the global sustainable prosperity, security, and resilience.
- To reaffirm the UK's long-term commitment to STI, the UK government - in February 2023 - established an independent Government Ministry to consolidate government-wide policies, activities, and investments including overseeing unprecedented funding for research and development.
- Priorities of the FCDO include:
    i) Delivering high-quality research for development;
    ii) Strengthening the research and innovation ecosystem to create an enabling environment so that STI can flourish and be impactful;
    iii) Mainstreaming gender and inclusivity in project implementation to ensure social equality and inclusion for women and girls, as well as other marginalised and vulnerable groups; and
    iv) Increasing the accessibility and uptake of scientific evidence through open science and science communication.
- The science partnerships between the FCDO and the SGCI programme fit within the shared ambitions of confronting modern global challenges such as health pandemics, food insecurity and malnutrition, climate change and resilience, geopolitical threat to sustainable peace and shaping norms, standards, and regulations for new and emerging technologies

Dr Mamusu maintained that the UK's Development Office offers world-class expertise and robust capabilities in connecting scientific resources and industries to international partners, here in Africa, for tackling joint priorities. She concluded by acknowledging that the UK is

proud to be part of the coalition. It will continue to support the SGCI programme and view scientific research and innovation as integral to growing our economies, protecting our shared values, as well as strengthening collective resilience and security for sustainable and transformative impacts.

## International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada

Dr Osir welcomed participants to the workshop and recognised the roles of other colleagues in IDRC and other funders of SGCI such as FCDO, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Global Research Council (GRC) of Germany, and all Councils.

In his address, he remarked as that:

- The IDRC is a crown corporation and not a government agency but is closely related to government with funding from the Government of Canada and works with other funders.
- The IDRC supports research and innovation in developing countries, invests in research, shares knowledge, and mobilises alliances. The headquarters is stationed in Ottawa with African offices in Nairobi, Kenya and Senegal, and other regional offices in India, Jordan, and Uruguay.
- The IDRC works on food safety, global health, education and science, democratic and inclusive governance, sustainable inclusive economies.
- IDRC aligns closely with the SGCCI and intends to support it. This workshop is important because it marks the end of SGCI-2 phase 1, but also ushers in another initiative that will be launched in partnerships with other funders.

## Ministry of Environment Science Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Ghana


Mr Oliver Boakye extended regards from the Minister for Ghana's Ministry of Environment Science Technology and Innovation (MESTI). The Minister was engaged in another equally important national assignment and therefore sent his apologies . According to Mr Boakye, who delivered the Minister's speech:

- The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation was delighted to host the workshop, which is the final meeting of the SGCI-2 phase 1. The workshop would allow all stakeholders to discuss the achievements of SGCI-2.
- MESTI appreciates the role of ACTS, especially Profs Ogada and Hanlin, the funders, and CTAs for supporting the SGCI.

- The Ghanaian president's vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid aligns with the aims of the SGCI in pursuing an industrialised economy. STI has been placed at the centre of Ghana's industrialisation agenda.
- There have been efforts to establish the Ghana innovation fund for which Ghana has received support from the SGCI through ACTS.
- Through the Association of African Universities (AAU) and Uganda, MESTI has created and installed an online grant management platform as well as mainstreamed gender and inclusivity in its operations.
- MESTI has been awarded a grant, effective February 2023, under the SGCI. MESTI looks forward to engaging with the Initiative.
- MESTI has instituted the Ghana Innovation and Research Commercialization (GIRC) Centre and a three-year K-Innovation Programme to strengthen the STI ecosystem.
- A decade of innovation has been declared in Ghana, which is a strategy to use STI for national development.

## Introduction to the Workshop


Prof. Rebecca Hanlin presented a brief overview of the Science Granting Councils and the main objectives of the workshop. According to Prof. Hanlin, the objectives of the workshop include:

i. Showcasing the achievements made in SGCI-2 by Councils in progressing their mandates and strengthening national STI systems with research that contributes to inclusive development in Sub-Saharan Africa.
ii. Formally pausing and reflecting on what has worked well, and what has worked less well, building on the findings of the external evaluation and discussions during the 2022 Annual Forum.
iii. Reflecting on efforts to institutionalise and embed the capabilities and capacities that have been built under the SGCI.
iv. Provide an opportunity for the Councils, CTAs, and other relevant stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned from the activities of SGCI-2.
v. Co-produce a series of recommendations that can be used to guide development of new workplans for activities post-February 2023 between Councils and CTAs.

Prof. Hanlin added that at the end of the workshop, it is hoped that there would be shared experiences in terms of leveraging on SGCI support to strengthen national STI systems with research that contributes to inclusive development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, she expressed hope that workshop will come out with recommendations that will enable the SGCI

to improve its capacity strengthening and research activities with the Councils and enhanced input into the SGCI-2 final report.

## Highlights of SGCI-2's Major Achievement from the Councils' Perspective

This section presents a summary of the key achievements, lessons, and challenges as well as pathways for future development from the perspective of selected research Councils from SGCI-2-supported projects.

### Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Senegal

Mr Tafsir Ndoye, representing the Senegalese Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation remarked that Senegal participates in the SGCI through the Directorate for the Financing of Scientific Research and Technological Development (DFRSDT) of the General Directorate of Research and Innovation. He explained:

- The DFRSDT had benefited from all the activities carried out within the framework of five objectives of the SGCI.
- The DFRSDT had also benefited from several activities of the SGCI in strengthening its capacities in areas such as the management of research funding for development, research and grants management, participation in various training courses on grant management (AAU, ACTS, HSRC) and launched three calls for projects, two of which are collaborative and one national.
- Furthermore, the DFRSDT has been the beneficiary of nine funded research projects including six national ones on themes relating to health and nutrition, energy, and natural resource management; five collaborative projects on themes related to the development of sustainable agriculture and health with the science granting council of Burkina Faso; and a revision of the National Fund appeal documents (Procedures Manual, form and scoring grid) (ACTS).
- On STI Policy, Senegal benefited from training on the need for reliable data for development; training on how to conduct innovation surveys; R&D surveys to obtain evidence (NEPAD); the finalization of the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy document (PNSTI) of the Republic of Senegal and the development of the PNSTI implementation plan (Evi-Pol).
- The Directorate conducted Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) through MEL Capacity Building Series (AAU, ACTS), the development of the monitoring-evaluation

manual (Evi-Pol), communication of research results, project reports and scientific publications.

- The Directorate has signed an agreement with the FONRID of Burkina Faso to launch joint research calls and formed partnerships with SGCI member countries.
- In 2020 the Directorates received direct grants totalling approximately CAD 400 000 or 180 million CFA francs to fund research projects. Another grant application for an amount of CAD 575 000 or 258 million CFA francs was in the process of being approved by the IDRC. This amount will be used to co-finance other research projects following a call for projects to be launched by the DFRSDT.
- The DFRSDT faced limitations in its activities. These included:
    i) Administrative delays
    ii) Insufficient funds
    iii) Gap between the date of signature of the agreements and the actual start of the implementation of the projects.

Mr Ndoye concluded by recommending possible advancements from Senegal's perspective. These also include:

- Increasing the funds allocated to the financing of research projects,
- Increasing exchanges between SGCIs at the sub-regional level to make launching joint calls possible,
- Taking time differences into account when it comes to the scheduling of online meetings and providing support to councils to conduct surveys on innovation and R&D.

## Le Fonds Pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation (FONSTI), Cote d'Ivoire

Dr Annette Ouatara, representing FONSTI of Cote d'Ivoire, presented a brief overview of the mandate of the organisation. FONSTI is a competitive support fund for research and innovation with the Programme d'Appui Stratégique à la Recherche Scientifique (PASRES) as its foundation. FONSTI's main activities include financing research projects and innovation; strengthening researchers', innovators' and inventors' capacities; financing exchange missions for scientists (South-North and South-South cooperation); and limitations of research results.

According to Dr Ouatara, during the period 2018-2023 FONSTI, and previously PASRES, benefited from several types of support under the SGCI. These included learning with peers, capacity building, and project financing. The support from SGCI made it possible to manage research better as well as understand the improved application of STI indicators to draw up calls for projects formulated around the needs and expectations of the country.

According to Dr. Ouatara:

- Participation in the SGCI activities enabled FONSTI to free itself from linguistic and cultural barriers. That is before the SGCI. FONSTI had no professional relationship with a Portuguese or English-speaking country or Council. This new dynamic has resulted in a signed partnership agreement between the PASRES and the Ugandan council that led to the financing of two projects by the two countries.
- Through the SGCI, FONSTI was able to initiate Public-Private Partnerships for research with the financing of two projects as part of a call for PPP projects. This is a work in progress given the lack of partnerships between the private sector and scientific research in Africa.
- As well, a support grant from the SGCI enabled FONSTI to increase the number of its beneficiaries.
- Support from the SGCI has helped FONSTI to update its project management system following international standards. This support also aided FONSTI's board on Ranking Improvement Questions. In this context, the Ivorian government has entrusted FONSTI with the establishment of a Steering Committee for the improvement of the competitive position of universities in Cote d'Ivoire.
- The exchanges organised by the SGCI on the context of Excellence in Research enabled FONSTI to improve submission for project calls that highlight FONSTI has co-published an article in the dedicated collective work for this purpose.

## National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCSRT), Namibia

Ms Luiza Mazarire, representing the National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCSRT) of Namibia, presented the mandate of the organisation that included industrial and commercial outputs; capacity building; provision of research grants, loans and bursaries; the management of science and technology system and the national system of innovation; the commercialisation of innovation; the funding of research, science and technology; and advising the Minister, the President, and Parliament of Namibia.

Ms Mazarire noted that the NCRST participated in the SGCI-1 from 2015-2020. During this time the SGCI-2 was launched in July 2018 and lasted for another five years (2018- 2023). Under the auspices of the SGCI, the NCRST funded research and innovation projects. They strengthened their capacity in grant management to secure funding for investment in research projects that are responding to Namibia's national priorities, to make efforts toward women empowerment programmes as well as equal gender representation.

Furthermore, Ms Mazarire remarked that the NCRST and other research councils have signed collaborative research grant agreements to strengthen partnerships among Africa's Science Granting Councils and the Private Sector. Particularly, FNI and NCRST jointly mobilised US$100 000 through the SGCI, with the FNI and NCRST contributing US$ 50 000 each.

On mainstreaming gender equity and inclusivity, Ms Mazarire noted that the NCRST has seen the importance of gender equality and inclusivity as well as the need to include this intentionally in their activities. Hence, in the future grants to be reviewed will incorporate and integrate the issues of gender and inclusivity in the entire value chain from applications, reviews, to monitoring and evaluation. The entire organisation is to undertake a gender and inclusivity assessment.

Lessons learned from the perspective of Namibia, according to Ms Mazarire, include:

- Better workshopping of grant agreements with grant recipients, ensuring Councils have a clear understanding of their roles and what is expected of them,
- Developing a database for reviewers by having committed database members and developing an automated (online) grant management system to help track activities,
- There is a need to have postdoctoral fellows who will be committed to research projects and engage with institutions to reconcile project expenditure timeously, and
- There is a need to vet the credibility of the service providers chosen by innovators.

## National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST), Malawi


Mr Kondwani Gondwe spoke on behalf of the NCST of Malawi. He noted that the objective of Malawi Phase 2 of the Initiative was to support management of the research calls and research in agricultural biotechnology through bilateral joint research proposal calls for researchers from the two countries by NCST and the Research Council of Zimbabwe. He added that the major outputs and outcomes of NCST cut across all the four SGCI objectives. Some outputs had been delivered through collaboration with CTAs, mainly ACTS, AAU and partner SGCs such as Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Uganda UNCST (on the Grants Management System).

Lessons learned by the NCST include:

- There has been significant research collaboration between the PIs of research projects in Malawi and their collaborators. This has helped in developing national technology transfer policy guidelines; the translation of research into policy, gender, and inclusivity policy (Health Sciences Research Council of RSA); an online Grants Management System which is on their server and in the cloud supported by AAU; and the review of STI Policy processes.

- Through the SGCI, the M&E system has been strengthened using the MEL Framework developed under SGCI-2.

Mr Gondwe shared information on a biogas project, the use of Invasive Alien Species for energy production and metagenomics research on pre-release of sorghum rhizosphere as well as tolerance to heat and drought projects funded through the Initiative which were successful.

However, he noted that there were some barriers faced by the NCST including:

- Natural causes/climate disasters floods, hurricanes/cyclones,
- Procurement challenges internal to PIs, and
- Delays in the disbursement from source even after submission of financial returns.

He recommended that CTAs can improve monitoring of the SGCs so that they enhance delivery of the targeted outcomes and increase multi-stakeholder engagement with SGCs partners to be able to help SGCs address challenges, for instance in reviews of policies since these are high-level processes.

## Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Tanzania

Presenting on behalf of COSTECH, Ms Neema Tindamanyire said the mandate of the organisation is to act as the principal advisory organ of the government on the application of science technology and innovation for national development. She noted that COSTECH has been a member of the SGCI since 2015 and joined the Initiative with the aim of sharing expertise, learning, and advancing STI with actors from the Initiative and beyond. In terms of benefits to COSTECH, Ms Tindamanyire outlined the following:

- COSTECH had an opportunity to attend several capacity building trainings with the aim of strengthening capacity in research management.
- The Commission reviewed their M&E plan facilitated by a consultant under the support SGCI.
- The organisation conducted a study on the impact of the Research and Innovation projects funded by National Fund for Advancement of Science and Technology (NFAST) that is aimed at helping to build a case for more funding by the central government as well as science popularisation.
- The training interventions and studies undertaken have enhanced the capacity of staff in the collection and use of data as well as analysis and information dissemination.

In addition, Ms Tindamanyire mentioned that:

- COSTECH has supported four research institutions in terms of undertaking collaborative research projects to the tune of US$200 000.

- In addition, COSTECH funded a project under the SGCI for the Development of Avocado oil mini-extraction plant by TEMDO. This was pitched at the previous annual SGCI Meeting and attracted partners.
- There is enhanced collaboration between higher learning institutions/research and development institutions and private sectors/industry with enhanced working relationship between COSTECH and industry having also been achieved.
- Tanzania hosted the Fourth Annual African SGC Meeting attended by more than 300 participants from 40 countries to support strategic communications, the uptake of knowledge outputs and networking.
- COSTECH was approached by UKCDR to prepare a case study on 'Equitable Research Partnership'. The case study was presented during Science Summit at the 77 UNGA held in September 2022.

Lessons learned, according to Ms Neema, included:

- COSTECH's participation in the Initiative which has brought several opportunities not only to COSTECH staff but to researchers, policy and decision makers.
- An area for improvement will be in the management of research grantees. This should be done by the respective Councils to allow the documentation of the ongoing activities.

## Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), Uganda


Mr Sempiri presented for the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), a Ugandan government agency. It was established with the mandate of facilitating and coordinating the development and implementation of policies and strategies for integrating Science and Technology into the national development process.

Presenting on some highlights of UNCST's involvement in the SGCI-2, Mr Sempiri mentioned the following:

- The Initiative has strengthened UNCST's Research Management Capacity through the full digitisation of the Grants Management System with AUU.
- UNCST developed partnerships with other councils and is working on collaborative multi-national research grants, e.g. the Uganda-Kenya collaboration (Locust4Industry) and Uganda-Ivory Coast call.
- The acquisition of a new server to support UNCST's ICT platforms for science granting and assessment (and certification-processes in progress) by the global grants community for GFGP Standard (ARS 1651:2018) for platinum tier.
- UNCST also developed an Online Gateway for Technology Matchmaking for matching innovation with commercial potential private sector uptake.
- The Initiative also strengthened UNCST's capacity in gender and inclusivity and helped UNCST to develop Public-Private Partnership in manufacturing and Innovation. For

example, the commercialisation of Propolis Powder and Infused Tea bags for Improved Health and Income in Uganda and other projects.

## Fundo Nacional de Investigacao (FNI), Mozambique

Eng. Dirce Madeira ended the session with a presentation from a Mozambican perspective. She noted that in the second phase of the initiative, there were seven projects approved and implemented internally in Mozambique, some with bilateral collaboration. Three were in health care with Zambia and one bilateral agreement in agriculture with Namibia. Through the management of these projects, FNI helped with capacity building through training and the investigation funds. FNI also coordinated the collaboration of councils in the sub-region.

Furthermore, Eng. Madeira noted:

- With the assistance of the SGCI, the impact of research funding has been great.
- Regarding gender and inclusion, FNI has strengthen dialogues among all actors to streamline the subject into project activities.
- FNI had been strengthened in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, technical coordination, gender inclusion, and climate change.
- The research funds have been very important for the Council and especially in the area of gender inclusion.
- FNI appreciates the opportunities provided under the SGCI as the activities under the Initiative have resulted in growing interest in policies, socio-economic development, interest from the ministries (e.g. finance, etc.,) which are important for guaranteeing policy implementation.

On lessons learned by the FNI, Eng. Madeira added that:

- The FNI has learned more about the roles of the private sector in funding research.
- The FNI has also entered into a dialogue with the private sector and will soon sign MoUs with respect to their participation and investment in R&D.
- On some challenges, Eng. Madeira noted that:
    i) FNI was in talks with the Mozambican government and has noted that there are issues with the mass communication of research outcomes in ways which are easily understandable by the public. FNI is addressing these.
    ii) COVID-19 created a lot of problems for the organisation thus FNI has paid a lot of attention to the inclusion of shocks in future planning.

## Questions and Answers: Major Achievement for Councils Perspective

The following table summarises the interactive session following the country presentations.

**Table 1: Q&A for Highlights of SGCI-2's Major Achievement**

| No. | Questions | Answers |
|---|---|---|
| i. | What is the connection between FONSTI and PASRES? What are the type of partnerships that exist between these two? | The link between PASRES and FONSTI is that the former existed before FONSTI. So, the idea was that after the establishment of FONSTI, PASRES would be absorbed into it. |
| i. | Is there any possibility of giving a token for best research? Or has anyone been acknowledged for their research work? | • From Malawi, there is no such incentive or token. But we will adopt that and develop frameworks for national research Malawi award for scientific research.<br>• In Senegal there is the Head of State prize for research, innovation, and digital start-ups. |
| i. | For Malawi, they started the projects and I did not see future partnerships. For Tanzania, they have a $1 million grant. What is it for? Did they mobilise additional resources? Can Burkina Faso have a partnership with Tanzania? | • For Tanzania, the research chairs get money directly from the IDRC. We monitor the implementation. With respect to activities on the SDGs, we put all the money into one basket and it is distributed to researchers from here.<br>• For Malawi, yes, there are elements of PPP in our research, e.g., the biogas project is a PPP and a social enterprise, and we welcome Burkina for collaboration |
| ·. | This is the first time Mali is participating and thanks to the organisers. My question is on the Ugandan presentation. He talked about an online supermarket for innovation solutions. I want to ask him to explain how it works. | • On the tech supermarket, we have an online platform for matchmaking. There's a window for research institutions to go and register their outputs with IP. Then there is another interface where the general public/private sector can see the innovations based on the themes of interest to the viewer. The platform also has a module for research equipment sharing. There was a problem about lack of knowledge of existence of research equipment in-country. There is another model for STI human capital—expertise for consultation. The platform is 60% done but we haven't yet uploaded all the data. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Tanzania welcomes Mali for collaboration. |
| ⁄. | The research results are very inspiring for those of us yet to start. Can the speakers elaborate on what they mean by research valorisation? | • With regards to the valorisation, we are still thinking about this. So, we need more funding for the scale-up/uptake. |
| i. | Do the councils carry their scientists? Do they provide feedback on their proposals? Do they fund research integrity? | • For research integrity and feedback, we give feedback to all applicants. In most cases, those not successful get generic comments. For successful ones, we give them input for improving their proposals based on review comments.<br>• For integrity, we do plagiarism checks. There is a committee that reviews complaints of researchers against fellow researchers. We organise a national conference on research integrity.<br>• In Senegal, when we select the project, a scientific committee examines it and then we inform the participants based on reports from the scientific committee. There is always feedback. |
| i. | What is the level of market penetration of some of the projects? From the commercialisation, do we have challenges with market access? On IP, how are the benefits shared? | • In Tanzania, on market access, we are still working on that and trying to upscale the product. We are looking at benchmarking with other institutions' best practices as well. |
| i. | | |

## Highlights of CTA's Projects: Activities and Achievements

The CTAs presented about their activities and achievements in the initiative. The session was chaired by Prof. Soukèye Dia Tine of MESRI, Senegal.

## Theme 1: Research Management Association of African Universities (AAU)

Ms Nodumo Dhlamini presented on behalf of the Association of African Universities. She shared that the AAU has been leading a project, in collaboration with the African Academy of Sciences, to support the SGCs so that they can effectively manage their research activities. The objective of this project was to strengthen the capabilities of Science Granting Councils in specific areas of research management, namely research excellence, research ethics, emerging scientific practices, and the development of online grant management systems.

The key activities implemented by the AAU and the AAS included providing training and technical support for research excellence and emerging scientific practices, supporting the development, and deployment of digitised grants management systems; conducting national and regional research ethics studies in the African context; supporting the development of various frameworks and manuals; and facilitating platforms for peer-to-peer learning among SGCs.

Based on the previously agreed-to SGCI indicators, Ms Dhlamini reported that the project had exceeded its targets. Some of the success stories were reported to be 14 SGCs trained on the value of online grants management systems; seven SGCs – Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda and Zimbabwe have successfully installed the Online Grants Management System (Zimbabwe issued a call using their digital system); technical teams from seven SGCs trained to support their online grants management system; 75 staff from the six SGCs trained on the use of the generic Online Grants Management System; five SGCs have completed the pre-certification process (Kenya, Namibia , Uganda , Zambia and Zimbabwe); four SGCs are going through the pre-certification process (Mozambique, Tanzania , Senegal and Ghana); three SGCs have attended planning meetings to prepare to undertake the pre-Certification exercise (Botswana, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire); 25 SGC representatives were trained using the digital Research Quality Plus Course developed as part of the project and 117 online unique reads of the Research Ethics Manual were recorded.

Ms Dhlamini indicated that there have been requests by Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Burkina Faso to conduct follow-up national level research quality plus workshops for their researchers. Trainers indicated potential trainers of others from Botswana, Zambia, Ghana, Namibia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique SGCs.

At a knowledge exchange meeting in Uganda, COSTECH of Tanzania shared that they now have an annual budget for taking care of customisation and maintenance of their digital grants management system

Key knowledge products were produced under this project. These included four press releases and news items, four manuals and frameworks translated into French and Portuguese, one RQ+

course on implementation on the Moodle learning management system, two workshop reports, six URLS to digital online grants management systems, four flyers, banners and brochures, three videos and one staff exchange guideline.

Ms Dhlamini concluded by sharing three top learnings and takeaways from work done by the AAU and the AAS. These were: (i) the value of matching implementation of the online grants management systems to the actual issuing of calls by SGCs, (ii) working with UNCST was an example of leveraging resident capacities within the SGCs and (iii) the adoption of emerging grants practices is a long-term process and requires more time.

## Theme 2: Evidence and data for decision making, African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)

Dr Agnes Lutomiah presented on behalf of the ACTS. She noted that the aim of the theme on using evidence and data for decision making was to strengthen capacity of Science Granting Councils to use data and evidence in policy and decision making; develop robust organisational-level monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks; and promote peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange among councils.

Dr Lutomiah outlined the following in her presentation:

- Highlights of some examples of progress against SGCI indicators.
- The documented numbers of SGCs developing robust MEL and data management systems was planned to achieve at least 10 SGCs being supported to develop/update MEL plans and at least six SGCs being supported to develop data management frameworks.
- These targets were partially met with six Councils (Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Senegal, Kenya, Malawi) having completed updates or developed new MEL frameworks and plans. Uganda and Burkina Faso were also supported to develop online dashboards. Two councils (Mozambique and Namibia) were yet to finalise updating their MEL frameworks.
- ACTS expects to achieve 80% of target reached by the end of the project.
- On the documented numbers of SGCs using data and evidence in programme management and policy/decision making, ACTS planned that at least six STI country-level policy reviews would be conducted. This target was met with four councils (Senegal, Namibia, Burkina Faso, Mozambique) having successfully completed full reviews of their STI policy. In addition, Kenya completed redrafting and validating the STI policy under an ‘additional activities’ contract. Ghana’s STI policy is being finalised.

- In addition, ACTS developed an STI policy review methodology and design framework. It was developed as research for impact funding decision protocol and a toolkit on research to policy process.
- Trainings and capacity building workshops on STI policy review methodology, data management systems framework, policy process and SGCs' trainings as Boundary Managers had also taken place.

On what worked well, Dr Lutomiah cited the following:

- The agency where councils were allowed to have input in the direction of the work and co-develop the workplans, the flexibility of the SGCI to allow councils to change workplans based on their needs, longer consultation time allowed for thorough workplan development and in-person workshops worked well for relationship-building and facilitating moving workplan activities forward.
- The practical engagements with Councils regarding the tools developed showed better understanding and learning. Creating tools is good for expanding research impact, uptake, skills development and transfer.

However, on a few of the things that worked less well, Dr Lutomiah outlined:

- The fact that workplans are constrained by timing.
- Lengthy consultation times led to delays in workplans development.
- Lack of capacity within councils especially regarding data management led to lower participation from Councils.
- Councils did not necessarily have clarity on project goals and objectives from the start especially regarding data management systems work package.

Dr Lutomiah recommended that project timelines should be flexible to align with the readiness of Councils to undertake the work. The CTAs should allow for longer consultation time with councils to develop workplans and hold in-person engagements earlier within the project to facilitate relationship-building.

## Theme 4: Strategic communication and knowledge uptake, The Scinnovent Centre

Presenting on behalf of The Scinnovent Centre, Dr Maurice Bolo explained that the objective of strategic communication and knowledge uptake is to provide training and other forms of technical support to participating Councils in strategic communications as well as facilitate the development and uptake of knowledge outputs. Dr Bolo outlined the main activities towards achieving this aim:

- Conduct specialised training on communications with the private sector,
- Support SGCs to design communication strategies, document change and showcase impact,

- Review and update existing SGCI strategy to facilitate and monitor the uptake of knowledge/learning products and support its implementation, and
- Influence policy through effective policy briefs and related knowledge products.

In doing these, some key achievements Dr Bolo outlined include:

- The publishing and promotion of a review of the SGCI communication strategies.
- Development and finalisation of the SGCI knowledge management (KM) strategy.
- Development and publishing of country-specific communication strategy using Kenya as a case study – the KARIBU SCIENCE Booklet.
- Development of the Online MEL framework.
- The Scinnovent Centre ensured collaboration and Support to other CTAs through participation in other CTA's inception and virtual events/workshops including AAU/ACTS/HSRC.
- The Centre hosted a virtual creative workshop on "Strategic Communications and Knowledge Management".
- Published impact stories and the SGCI Newsletter. So far, four issues have been published of the Footprints Newsletter in English, French and Portuguese.
- The SGCI Communication Strategy (2020-2025), Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion Strategy (GESI), Knowledge Management Strategy, Model Communication Strategy (KARIBU Science) and Communication strategies and plans operationalised in Botswana and Kenya were developed.
- The target of organising at least four events was achieved with the organisation of the 2021 SGCI Annual Forum (16 – 17 November 2021), Masterclass 2021 (30 March 2021), Virtual Creative Workshop (10 – 11 November 2020), Regional Meeting (29 – 30 June 2021) and Masterclass on Foresight (Cape Town; Dec 5th, 2022).

On constraints, Dr Bolo noted that:

- Poor internet connectivity challenged some country Councils from participating in virtual events.
- More generally, COVID 19 challenges limited participation in the CTA's activities.
- Owing to a lack of physical meetings, there were limited networking/socialisation opportunities.
- The slow unlearning of habits, practices, and behaviours was observed.

Dr Bolo concluded by sharing three main takeaways from the theme, including:

- Unforeseen effects of COVID 19: programme costs and changes in implementation approach/strategies
- Connectivity and inclusivity: translation/linguistic sensitivity, visibility and reach.
- Harmonisation (content and logistics): planning meetings/retreats for CTAs to discuss content/offerings jointly.

### Theme 5: Gender equality and inclusivity (HSRC)

Dr Ingrid Lynch of the Human Sciences Research Council explained that the aim of the gender equality and inclusivity theme was to strengthen the capacity of SGCs to advance systemic change towards greater gender equality and inclusivity in the STI sector. She added that this was formed around the main learning question: "*What will it take for Science Granting Councils to fully develop and implement policy commitments around Gender and Inclusion (G&I)?*" According to Dr Lynch the approaches employed included:

- Activating gender action learning through Peer Learning, and
- Targeted Technical Assistance by in-person peer intensive and focused action plans for joint reflection and identifying learning statements in a learning summit.

According to Dr Lynch, the main aims in terms of advancing gender and inclusivity outcomes were popular media articles published on SGCI website, news media (e.g. The Mail and Guardian) and social media, Council's gender and inclusivity project posters, newsletters, targeted videos, gender and inclusivity country profile reports, policy briefs, journal articles as well as through the World Science Forum panel and intersectionality report launch.

Dr Lynch shared examples of knowledge outputs, such as the *Gender and Inclusivity for Quality Research and Innovation Management in Tanzania* report and a YouTube channel aimed at advancing gender and inclusivity by the Councils.

She observed that opportunities exist for peer learning and partnerships in gender and inclusivity. There is the need to improve synergies further between CTAs. Regional and global gender, equity, and inclusion (GEI) initiatives are responsive to Councils' own priorities as well as deepening strategic knowledge translation and impact activities.

On next steps for GEI 2023-2025, Dr Lynch recommended that there is the need to build on momentum from the initiative on gender and inclusion and use the grant-making cycle institutionalise GEI.

## Discussions of Highlights from CTAs

Table 2 summarises comments and responses to the presentations by the CTAs

**Table 2: Comments and response to CTAs' activities**

| No. | Comment/Concern/Question | Response from CTAs |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | • I must commend how the workshops are organised. We need to improve communication. Capacity to draw policy briefs | • We have produced some communications materials, but what it means is that some of us in this room have not accessed them. So, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | are lacking and that we are happy with the capacity for writing the policy briefs.<br>• I have a problem with ACTS. I believe there exists a lack of transparency in some processes | we must find ways to ensure that these are disseminated widely.<br>• We have discussed reviewing the SGCI communication strategy.<br>• We have worked on the SGCI's website for better communication and have developed a new communication strategy for 2022-2025 to strengthen social media dissemination for faster propagation of information.<br>• Several of the Councils are funding research and researchers are doing well in writing their reports. But these reports (voluminous) are often not in the format the policy makers would want to read. That is where we advocate for training our researchers to better communicate their research outputs.<br>• Based on work with Councils, we need to make sure that they update their data, create mailing lists for sharing data, as well as having dashboards for sharing data. For Mozambique, a template framework will be shared for your use. |
| **2.** | For us from Côte d'Ivoire, we have felt no impact from ACTS with respect to this project. | The projects are targeted and there were six, which have been achieved. Côte d'Ivoire did not ask for help so they did not receive any. That is why the country seems to be left out. |
| **3.** | On gender and inclusivity, it seemed the term inclusivity has been limited to gender (male and female) only, whereas I would have wished that those with disabilities are captured and represented. | The criticism of other marginalised groups (disability) not included in the inclusivity is correct. It is a limitation of the study. We have plans for that. In future, it would be good for Councils to address this in their research. Even where there are studies on disability, it is not highlighted, so we need to take that up. |
| **4.** | With regards to financial practice, some councils have been through financial training, but my observations show that none of the Councils have been granted a certificate. Why? If there are difficulties, how can we reach the ultimate goal of been certified to access more funds? | Currently, there are discussions with IDRC for extension so that we can address the problems of those who have not been certified. It would include an audit of their financial practices. |
| **5.** | • There is a problem of inclusion and data. We need to create an online database so that we can all access it for implementation and for exchange of ideas.<br>• On gender inclusion, there is insufficient information on | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | gender. We need to make award-winning programmes for gender. We need flexible gender training because PhD training is too rigid | |
| **6.** | We need to have certificates that attest to our capacity building when we attend workshops and meetings. | |

## Summary of the key points from the MEL session during the 2022 Annual Forum in Cape Town

Mr Donnelly Mwachi, the MEL Consultant for SGCI, presented key points from the MEL Session at the 2022 Annual Forum in Cape Town. He noted that the two-day conference discussed suggestions around the questions of: to what extent funding from the SGCI has enabled Councils to access research and innovation funding from government and other sources, how the SGCI has promoted various partnerships for research and innovation, and what were the results from research projects funded by the SGCI and Councils?

On question one, the key strategies and findings for Southern Africa was that for Zambia. The research and innovation funding had nearly doubled from around 6 million Kwacha (US$ 350 000) to 10 million Kwacha (US$ 600 000). In Malawi, the SGCI funding motivated the government to operationalise the S&T fund by investing US$ 290 000. In addition, the National Council for Science and Technology of Malawi - through AUDA-NEPAD - is working on the Grand Challenges Programme which was to be finalised in January 2023. In Botswana, the SGCI support had accelerated the government's efforts to fund research. A national call for research projects was issued in 2022 and its review is on-going.

In East Africa, specifically Uganda, there has been a gradual increase in funding from 10% to 15% of its research budget. Funding from the SGCI had also encouraged other financiers such as the International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP) to support research activities. Universities such as Makerere are now able to dedicate some funds to research directly. In Tanzania, discussions are underway between COSTECH and NORAD for a possible partnership and funding.

In West Africa Côte d'Ivoire, which since 1971 has sought to establish a national council for research but lacked political will, established and instituted the National Fund for Science, Technology and Innovation (FONSTI) in 2018 and dedicated at least US$10 million to research. In Ghana through the SGCI, initiatives such as OR Tambo Research Chairs has helped to establish a number of grants that have benefitted major universities in Ghana.

Regarding how the SGCI has promoted various partnerships for research and innovation, Mr Mwachi noted that in West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire - though FONSTI - has formed partnerships with private sector organisations to launch joint calls for research.

At the regional level, FONSTI has signed a partnership agreement with the UNCST (Uganda) and FNI of Mozambique. MESTI has also formed partnerships with selected universities in Ghana, the Ministry of Finance of Ghana, and the private sector. As a result, a PPP law was established. At regional level, MESTI had entered into a partnership agreement with the UNCST (Uganda).

In Southern Africa Malawi, through the NCST, has formed - at national level - partnerships with public and private universities, research institutes, government agencies (Bureau of Standards), the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Registrar General.

At regional level, the NCST had signed partnership agreements with NSTC (Zambia), RCZ (Zimbabwe) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) of South Africa. In Mozambique, the participation of FNI in the SGCI had increased the visibility of research in the country and strengthened existing partnerships with the World Bank and Sweden. Other partnerships emerged between the FNI and DFG.

In Zimbabwe, the SGCI has led to partnerships and collaborations with the Postal Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), Radiation Protection Authority of Zimbabwe (RPRAZ), Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA). In East Africa, Kenya - with the SGCI's support - has established partnership opportunities with the NRF and Newton Fund (UK) as well as Horizon 2020 (France).

Focusing on the research projects funded by the SGCI and Councils, Mr Mwachi noted that the results from research projects have created visibility to the extent that the Councils are now working with more private sector partners to establish joint calls. In case of Malawi, PPP partners involved in SGCI projects pitched the results from Biogas Plant in Tsangano at CoP 27 held in Egypt (the Youth Adapt Challenge Competition) where they won US$ 100 000 because of the impact the project is creating to curb climate change challenges. Moreover, local partnerships with research organisations have provided more capacity improvements in IP management and access to Internet connectivity for Public Universities via National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) - Uganda, Malawi, Zambia.

## Group Discussions on issues and recommendations from External Evaluation

The meeting broke into four groups to discuss recommendations for enhancing Private Public Partnerships, the uptake of SGCI knowledge outputs and how SGCI products can influence policy. The make-up of the groups are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Groups composition to discussion recommendations

| Groups | Moderator |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| **Group 1:** Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda | **Dr Annette Outtarra (Côte d'Ivoire)** |
| **Group 2:** Ghana, Uganda, Namibia, Malawi and Zambia | **Atridah Mulonga (Zambia)** |
| **Group 3:** Kenya, Mozambique, Botswana and Sierra Leone | **Mr Jacob Njagih (Kenya)** |
| **Group 4:** **N**igeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe | **Mr Josephat Katiyo** |

## Outcomes of Group Discussion: Group 1 (Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda)

The recommendations from Group 1 on how Councils can further promote partnerships with the private sector were split at the macro and micro level. At the macro level, the group reported that regulatory and organisational legislation (permanent consultation framework) should be put in place. At the micro level, the group recommended that the private sector should be integrated into decision-making and financing bodies. Joint funding themes for private sector and research could be identified. The private sector should be involved in the process of managing calls for projects.

On measures to make the SGCI knowledge products more adaptable and useable by Councils, the group recommended that a platform should be created for sharing and organising the knowledge produced by the SGCs and improve accessibility (e.g. make multilingual) to existing platforms. The aim of this to facilitate the use of the tools offered. The SGCs could lobby governments for the integration of all decision-making councils in research and innovation to identify possible funding.

## Outcomes of Group Discussion: Group 2 (Ghana, Uganda, Namibia, Malawi, and Zambia)

Group 2's recommendation on how Councils can further promote partnerships with the private sector include clearly identifying the incentives for the private sector to increase the appeal of research and innovation to the private sector and areas of intervention for the private sector (roles, needs and benefits). Moreover, research can be demand-driven through a two-way approach by the private sector voicing their needs and the research sector ensuring that the private sector can see what the latter can provide. Researchers can take into consideration other products that have an impact on the public and strengthen the communication of research outcomes. For example, adopting Uganda's model of an online matchmaking website for research and the private sector. The researchers and the private sector should – during the course of developing the IP – should trust each other.

On recommendations for SGCI knowledge products uptake, the group recommended that research products uptake should be contextualised by conducting needs assessments with Councils and adopting participatory approaches. The Group further recommended that the SGCI should upskill the Councils so that they can understand science communication. Lastly, the Councils could influence STI policy by including policy stakeholders in their work process; align development plans of global, regional, and national policy bodies to research goals and advocate for adopting knowledge products targeting political leadership. Councils should act as custodians of the national research agenda.

## Outcomes of Group Discussion: Group 3 (Kenya, Mozambique, Botswana, and Sierra Leone)

Group 3 recommended that prototypes of new ideas should be shared with the private sector. For example, the commercialisation of patents should be handled by the private sector. In Tanzania, the Council has piloted this by putting the private sector and research in a cluster of the triple helix model, where five projects have been funded, to see how research outputs can

be taken up the private sector. Also, projects funded by the SGCI could have partnerships with the private sector as a core requirement. This would ensure that research and industry interact from project inception. It becomes easier for private sector to buy the IP of products that will be developed. The government could give some incentives. For example, tax and credit incentives to private companies that use locally generated IP instead of imported IP. In Ethiopia, R&D products are sold to private sector companies. Additionally, there should be continuous engagements between research and the private sector. This is important to get early buy-in easily from the private sector.

To ensure SGCI knowledge uptake, timing and policy should be aligned. In addition, the learnings from the SGCI should include customisation according to different governments. Councils should also have indicators to operationalise issues better. There should be enabling environments that will facilitate the uptake of knowledge products. The SGCI knowledge products should come to the Councils as templates and models that can be adapted to the Councils' specific needs. Further, the people who are expected to take up the projects should be part of the design of the projects and local language. Infographics should be used so that all information is understandable by the general public, especially the local people.

### Outcomes of Group Discussion: Group 4 (Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe)

The recommendation from Group 4 on how to promote PPPs include:

- Categorising Public Private Partnerships in thematic groups before engagement,
- Allowing tax incentives,
- Co-creation of policy, for example, the STI policy,
- Involving the private sector in co-funding, and
- Applying proper communication channels to improve transparency.

The group also recommended that the SGCI could apply customisation of its knowledge outputs, improve ways of communicating knowledge outputs, ensure accessibility and availability of knowledge products as well as improve the quality of knowledge products to improve uptake by the Councils.

Group 4 recommended that to influence STI policy debate and practice, platforms such as workshops can be used to increase awareness along with the media. There could be periodic national policy reviews by the Councils and SGCI as well as a good understanding of the political economy countries.

# WORKSHOP DAY TWO, 28 FEBRUARY 2023

## Looking into the Future 1

Ms Albertina Ngurare of NCRST, Namibia, chaired the session. It began with a recap of the first day of the workshop, followed by a presentation that gave an overview of the themes under the new SGCI-2 partnerships and CTAs.

### Overview of Themes under new SGCI-2 Partnerships and CTAs

Dr Ellis Osir listed the present SGCI partner countries. These include Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Regarding the themes under the SGCI-2, Dr. Osir mentioned the following:

- Strengthening the ability of SGCs to manage research (Theme 1),
- Strengthening the capacity of SGCs to use data and evidence in policy and decision-making (Theme 2),
- Supporting SGCs to fund research and innovation (Theme 3),
- Supporting strategic communication and research uptake (Theme 4), and
- Strengthening the capacity of SGCs in gender equality and inclusivity (theme 5).

Dr Osir then noted that building on and deepening SGCI-1/SGCI-2 activities and achievements will need greater ownership of – and investment in - SGCI activities by the Councils. In addition there will be need for co-implementation of activities with Councils, including through:

- Peer-to-peer learning and mentoring,
- Focusing on tailored technical support based on the SGCs' specific needs/interests, and
- Ensuring a collaborative and coordinated approach to training and providing technical support.

He noted that the new partnership areas have combined some of the themes under SGCI-2. Collaborating agencies were conducting projects aimed at the new thematic areas as shown in Figure 1.

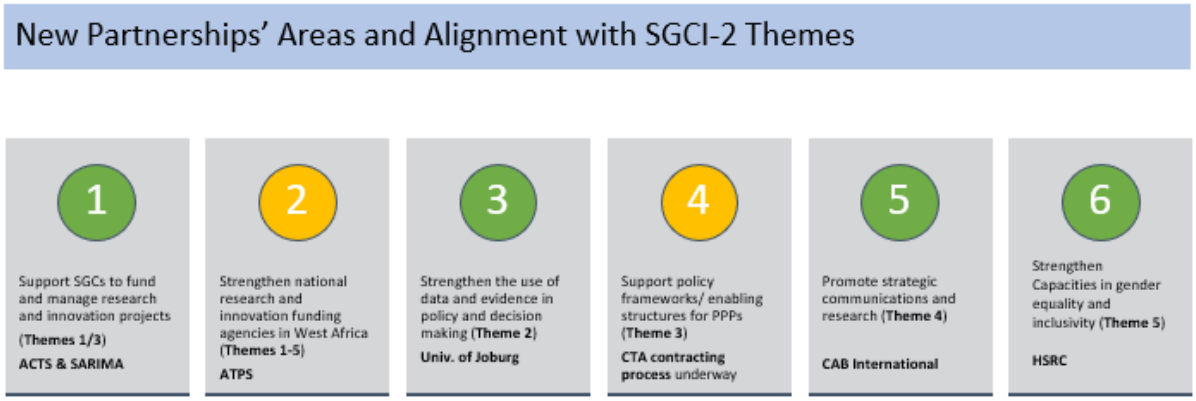


Figure 1: New Partnerships' Areas

On the status of Councils' proposals, Dr Osir showed which Councils had completed grant agreements and those that were underway (Table 4). He explained that the management of funds by the SGCI includes two options. In Option 1 funds are channelled from the SGCI through the Councils and then to the research institutes and universities. In Option 2, funds are channelled from the SGCI through the CTAs to the research institutes and universities.

Table 4: Status of Councils' Proposals

| No. | Country | Council | Grant Agreements |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Botswana | BIDH | ✓ |
| 2 | Burkina Faso | FONRID | Underway |
| 3 | Côte d'Ivoire | FONSTI | Underway |
| 4 | Ethiopia | BETin | ✓ |
| 5 | Ghana | MESTI | Underway |
| 6 | Kenya | NRF | ✓ |
| 7 | Malawi | NSTC | Underway |
| 8 | Mozambique | FNI | ✓ |
| 9 | Namibia | NCRST | ✓ |
| 10 | Nigeria | - | - |
| 11 | Rwanda | NCST | ✓ |
| 12 | Senegal | MESRI | Underway |
| 13 | Tanzania | COSTECH | ✓ |
| 14 | Uganda | UNCST | Underway |
| 15 | Zambia | NSTC | Underway |
| 16 | Zimbabwe | RCZ | ✓ |

## Questions and Answers on new SGCI-2 Partnerships and CTAs

Table 5: Q&A on New SGCI-2 Partnerships

| No. | Comment/Concern/Question | Response from CTAs |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | In the list of countries, there were 16 participants. I did not see Sierra Leone. What is the status of Sierra Leone since ATPs oversees West Africa Councils? | Dr Osir noted that some responses were to be bilaterally discussed with the responsive Councils.<br><br>Nigeria and Sierra Leone are new members of the SGCI so it takes a bit of time before they apply and are funded. It will not affect the work of ATPs with the Councils in West Africa |
| **2.** | In Ethiopia, it is the Ministry that represents the Council, there is some miscommunication and disconnect One organisation was delegated to represent the country. | In Ethiopia the SGCI does not typically fund ministries but we fund Councils. So, in Botswana and other countries there are dedicated institutions to represent them and receive funding. |
| **3.** | In Tanzania, the experience with the CTA was not good in SGCI-1. We need to look at the past and improve on that. | The CTA funds researchers directly so we cannot do much about that because it is a funders' policy issue. But hopefully, we have learned lessons for the next phase. |
| **4.** | For Zambia, the capacity building in the new phase is welcomed because we have been needing that. However, when we presented our budget, it was rejected because we had exceeded the CAD125 000 cap. Our budget went up because of postgraduate training. But we were told to embed that in the main research. | |
| **5.** | For us at FNI, we had problems with finance in the first phase in our country. Is there any way that we can have direct funding from the SGCI? We would like to continue with the work of the SGCI. Can the budget of the SGCI be reviewed? | The issue of direct funding is not popular but it is driven by funders' policies. We have learned a lot of lessons and so, we will do it better. On Thursday, we will discuss this in more detail. Bring your ideas on how to make it better.<br><br>More money, yes, and we are always looking to increase funding through the Councils. |
| **6.** | Burkina is yet to be signed because there has been a change of personnel. What should we do? | Regarding Burkina Faso, Dr Diakialia will discuss with them on how to resolve changes in personnel at their ministry. |
| **7.** | Please elaborate on the West Africa support activity project. Why the focus on West Africa? Are we going to see the same going around in other subregions? | On the West African support, there is a special meeting coming so be there and ask the questions. But the project was designed as a special programme for West African Councils. We are not thinking about East and Southern Africa yet. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8.** | There is no PPP in the new thematic areas. Are we still thinking about it? It is an area we in Senegal want to strengthen.<br><br>Secondly, regarding the new way of managing funding: in the first instance, we had problems because the funds were given directly to researchers and we did not have oversight for monitoring. So why do we want to go back to that approach? | PPP is very important and many Councils are interested. It is still a theme and there is a major project on PPP.<br><br>As previously explained, it is the funders' policies and the SGCI has no control over that. |
| **9.** | Burkina Faso supports the two means of receiving funding from the SGCI. As mentioned, lots of lessons have been learned. So, we should be able to improve on the concerns. | |

## Looking into the future 2

### Approaches to training and technical support

Mr Souleymane Thiam of IDRC shared various type of training and capacity building activities that Councils can choose. He added that the training programmes may require online or in-person approaches. Following his short presentation, four groups were formed to discuss the pros and cons of various approaches to training and technical support as well as how to enhance the quality of training.

Group 1 came up with the following points:

- All stakeholders should agree on the timing for the training because of differing time zones.
- The training programme should be participatory.
- The SGCI should recruit experts in language for translation or the trainers must be able to speak multiple languages for ease of understanding.
- Training should provide certification and an attendance certificate.

For Group 2, the following were recommended:

- To ensure quality, the training must be needs-based and tailored to the sub-region.
- Monitoring mechanisms must be added to ensure that the impact of the training is realised.
- Depending on the type of training, the SGCI can save on costs by only requiring physical attendance only if the training is technical. If this is not the case training can be held virtually
- The Initiative could create a knowledge platform for sharing materials accumulated for training so others can access with a Q&A module on such a platform.

The quality of the training depends on time of training provided. So it is important to focus and do little that can be expanded upon thematically.

Group 3 suggested that:

- The elaboration of the training objectives and plans helped participants to be well accustomed to the workshop goals.
- Holding debriefing sessions after the training, as well as the peer-learning, encouraged regional learning. Translation services helped make previous trainings very successful.
- The human resources capacity of training is limited. Low online participation and opportunities to increase capacity were factors that inhibited training being successful.
- SGCI should evaluate training and sustainable training models for future workshops.

For Group 4, their recommendations included:

- The continuous training and exchange programmes for staff was a way to go to improve training generally.
- There should be student scholarships to address human resources deficiencies.
- There should be inception training for grantees to improve capacity and networking between grantees and agencies.
- The training should include Councils and grantees. Grantsmanship should be monitored to see how many trainers have been trained. Training should be prioritised according to country needs.

## Greater participation by the SGCs in SGCI activities

Ms Lesego M Thamae presented approaches to enhance greater participation by the SGCs in the SGCI. Ms Thamae facilitated participants in group sessions based on the same country groups as for Day One. The aim was discuss the barriers to greater participation and collaborations. The groups included:

- Group 1: Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda
- Group 2: Ghana, Uganda, Namibia, Malawi and Zambia
- Group 3: Kenya, Mozambique, Botswana and Sierra Leone
- Group 4: Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

The group discussions are captured in in tables 6-13.

### Group 1

Group Oje discussed the barriers to collaboration and participation of the SGC in SGCI activities. The discussions were focused on the internal and external factors to participation and collaborations. As well, the group recommended interventions. Tables 6 and 7 capture highlights of the discussions in Group 1.

Table 6: Barriers to Collaboration: Barrier (**Intervention**)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| • Restrictive governance process (Joint Projects) | • Funding (Joint Planning) |
| • Group dominance by certain individuals/entities (Strengthen SGCI) | • Human Capacity (MEL – agreed) |
| • Limited Education (Local collaborative research networks) | • Network Lack (using networks) |
| • Lack of funds (ensuring the board members understand) | • Lack of identifying joint theme (annual visits for planning of evaluation) |
| • Internalisation of funds (awareness creation) | • Lack of political will (de-politisation of research) |
| • Lack of National Research Fund | • Geo- political issues affecting trade between countries (engage policy makers) |
| • Perceived lack of own contribution | • Limited fiscal ability (joint fund) |
| • Capacity | • Language and culture (learning new language and google translations) |
| • Resource limitation | • Group dynamics |
| • Lack of guidelines | • Restrictive legislation |
| • Lack of standards | • Mismatch in properties |
| | • Language barriers |
| | • Non-cooperating collaborating partners |
| | • Different mechanisms policies and approaches |
| | • Different priorities |
| | • Lack of formalised collaborative agreements |
| | • Unstable exchange rate |
| | • Dwindling government subvention |

Table 7: Barriers to Participation: Barrier (Intervention)

| **Internal** | **External** |
|---|---|
| • Certificates for training not given to participants (document learning products) | • Miscommunication with SGCI (joint planned agreement on the activities) |
| • Low staff capacity (strengthen SGC, local training) | • Lack of network (continuous communication with SGCI) |
| • Lack of awareness (local collaborative research networks) | • Lack of similar institutions (create national representative platform) |
| • Capacity (enhance capacity in terms of numbers) | • Participation guidelines |
| • Poor prioritisation (awareness creation) | • Establishing networks |
| • Resource limitation (operationalise STI policy instrument, establishment of national research funds) | |

## Group 2

According to the posts from Group 2, the barriers to collaboration and participation - focusing on internal and external factors and their respective interventions - are shown in Table 8. Table 9 shows barriers to participation.

Table 8:Barriers to Collaboration: Barrier (Intervention)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| • Funding (Work towards mobilising funds for the Council) | • Weak dissemination among the partners from different Councils/countries (interpretation and work on at least one official language they use) |
| | • Language differences |
| | • Exchange rate (CAD, US$) |
| | • Local currency |

Table 9: Barriers to Participation: Barrier (Intervention)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| • Finances | • Poor publicity (defining themes together with NGO) |
| • Intervening opportunities | • Disbursement of funds to researchers direct undermines the role of Council. (continuous communication with SGCI) |
| • Access to information and communication | • Lack of political will (government commitment) |
| • Clash in meetings (Need for consultation with institutes/councils SGCI activities are planned for.) | • Political influences |
| • Lack of confidence owing to a lack of capacity (training) | • Funders criteria (clearly state gender equality as a key criterion.) |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Corruption | • Culture |
| • Weak or non-implementation of policies | • Inadequate financial resources |
| • Lack of legal instrument to facilitate the participation | • Language |
| • Lack of awareness | • Capacity of existing people in position (Share drafts calls with NGOs and CSOs for initial evaluation for appropriateness and feasibility) |
| • Biased perception | • Language barrier (interpretation - provide language trainings) |
| • Different levels of knowledge (Look for pro-gender civil society that is aligned to the themes. Look at the core mandate of NGOs and civil society organisations that are focusing on gender, equity, and people with disability) | • Virtual meeting |
| • Language | • Internet connectivity |
| • Differences in priorities | • Time of communication |
| • Capacity on content of topic to be related (capacity building) | • Time zone management for unofficial meetings (planning) |
| • Lack of continuity | • Lack of transparency towards reaching a mutual interest between Councils |
| • Language versus interpretation | • CTAs are from one area (West Africa) (diverse representations from broader parts of Africa maybe adopted) |
| • Money culture | • Scheduling of the meetings because some of the same people must attend (CTAs should issue annual workplans before the end of the last quarter of the year so that Council's plan for those activities in the new year.) |
| • Lack of dedicated capacity to manage council work/competing priorities | • Access to project results from other countries |

## Group 3

The discussions from Group 3 on the barriers to collaboration and participation were also divided into the internal and external factors:

Table 10: Barriers to Collaboration: Barrier (Intervention)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| • Individual ownership of research in most public institutions. (Researchers may see themselves as one/working for the same goal) | • Language barriers (interpretation/ translation) |

Table 11: Barriers to Participation: Barrier (Intervention)

Internal

- Inadequate Capacity (training of stakeholders)
- Less executive support (development of regional immigration frameworks through relevant regional blocks)
- Permission sought from technical and administration heads (improved planning)
- Funding: limited financial resources that curtail travel/accommodation (provide funds towards initiative)
- Late notice (calls/interventions are sent early enough so that permission will be sought earlier and plans are made in good time.)
- No clear goals/agenda (research to be part of our national policy)
- Lean staff so the same activities are done by one person (involvement of different staff in the work)
- Technical expertise (improve technical capacity)
- Experience sharing among local partners
- Lack of teamwork appreciation (promote team spirit)
- Political will
- Awareness (improve communication)
- Untimely communication vs bureaucratic approved processes (submission of reports and continuous briefings)
- No management autonomy

External

- No clear objectives/goals (involvement of other stakeholders to clear all misunderstandings)
- Language barrier (remove language barrier)
- Limited resource (increase resources)
- Cross-cutting STI Mandate (education will reduce the duration of break)
- Unclear coordinating STI structure in the country (engage all stakeholders)
- Conflict among the agencies of who does what (mandate)
- Formulation of policy - not all Councils are on the same page (have a coordinating committee)
- Certain criteria set for the participation may not be met (work towards meeting the set criteria for participation)
- Bureaucratic immigration process
- Competing priorities that demand time and resource


## Group 4

Lastly, Group 4 also presented their assumed barriers to collaboration and participation. Considerations were made for internal and external barriers as well as their respective interventions.

Table 12: Barriers to Collaboration: Barrier (Intervention)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| • Government policies | • Funding (provide more resources to finance research collaboration) |
| • Administrative delays | • Language barriers |
| • Language (translation/interpretation) | • No measure of impact of collaboration (exchange visitation programme; clearly define terms and conditions for collaboration; re-align policies and address issues that come in the way of collaboration) |
| • Movement restrictions during Covid-19 (virtual meetings) | • Silo mentality (joint calls) |
| • Communication of calls (awareness creation) | • The duration of online training |
| • Financial constraint | • Dominance of the other Councils owing to high representation of CTAs from such region |
| • Structure of Councils with some having autonomy and others not | • Lack of trust (improve trust and honesty) |
| • Level of experience and infrastructure is limiting | • Limited resources (improve resource mobilisation) |
| • Different needs and interests (identify common interest) | • CTAs should have knowledge of who is doing at what time (regional research chairs) |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Different levels of expertise (training) | |
| • Bureaucratic process and government regulations | |
| • Sometimes the activities are dealt with at almost the same time making it difficult to get full participation | |
| • Membership and the workforce of sub-Councils | |
| • Poor teamwork skills | |
| • Conflicting mandates (needs assessment) | |
| • Lack of budget allocation to travel (peer-to-peer learning has an advantage as it opens up doors) | |
| • Lack of institutional frameworks to guide (determine the responsibilities) | |
| • Political economy landscape | |
| • Lack of coordination (teamwork) | |

Table 13: Barriers to Participation: Barrier (Intervention)

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| • Human resources – Councils operate with a few staff (strengthen internal systems) | • Growing SGCI components |
| • Work overload | • Vertical planning of CTA's Councils |
| • Limited manpower in the Council to participate in SGCI activities effectively | • Dealing with too many themes at once |
| • Inadequate skills to implement certain SGCI projects | • Language barrier |
| • Retention of information | • No collaboration with Anglophone and Francophone countries |
| • Organisation of the events | • Training overlap |
| • Weak or non-implementation of policies | • The duration of training sessions during the week |
| • Carrying out trainings for thematic policymakers at the same time even during the week | |
| • Limited HR capacity | |

## SGCI-Level MEL

Mr Donnelly Mwachi led a facilitated discussion about "what has worked well and what has not, and why?" with respect to the SGCI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). He explained that the objective of the session was to make sense of what is working well and what is not as well as reasons for such assessments. He added that the Council-level monitoring of SGCI (CTAs and Councils) has produced Outcome Diary Log Sheets (ODLS). Mr Mwachie explained that the Overarching Theory of Change along with eight SGCI indicators were applied by the SGCI MEL Consultant.

Following Mr Mwachi's explanation, participants engaged in a brainstorming session where Councils shared experiences on monitoring and evaluation and learning.

- From Tanzania, there is no specific method for monitoring SGCI-specific activity; however, there is an existing Council MEL framework that is broader in focus.
- From Mozambique, FNI adopted some activities that came with indicators for measuring the achievements of SGCI activities. In the process, MEL exercises and documentation were provided for review.
- In Zimbabwe, at the beginning of each year the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) develops an M&E framework for all programmes/projects including SGCI. In that framework, RCZ monitors the SGCI projects along all other projects but not in silos.
- In Malawi, projects are monitored altogether but these also do SGCI-specific monitoring when there is funding. The commission (NCSRT) also has a plan that includes quarterly monitoring of SGCI projects.

- In Côte d'Ivoire, FONSTI does not have a mechanism specific for each type of MEL or capacity project. Nonetheless, there is a structure by the state for measuring the performance of the Council. What FONSTI does as MEL is to meet research targets. It was recommended that the SGCI should take cognisance of each Council's objectives and practices because their governments have expectations of them.
- Another recommendation was to integrate MEL and gender into the various projects. This makes it easier to carry out the MEL.

## Responding to GESI in the External Evaluation

The fourth facilitated discussion focused on how to enhance capacities of SGCs to initiate and/or deepen cross-cutting work in GESI and measures to adapt for integration of GESI concepts and practices across the science grant-making cycle. As such the aim of the session was to co-develop a common SGCI GESI Policy Roadmap for advancing GESI in research environments. Dr Ingrid Lynch, who led the facilitated discussion of this session, explained the importance of Councils' strategic partnerships when implementing actions towards advancing GESI in STI (with universities, government departments, public sector, etc.) were aimed at supplementing Councils' skills and capacities. In addition, Councils' strategic partnerships increase the relevance and impact of activities as well as fostering change in the entire the STI ecosystem.

Dr Lynch's explanation paved the way for group discussion sessions to discuss how strategic partnerships can be drawn to support GESI integration throughout the grant making cycle. The groups were encouraged to consider where in the grant-making cycle partners can have the most influence/relevance, mutual relations as well as how Councils can benefit. The following groups were formed:

- **Group 1:** Universities, research institutes - Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Rwanda
- **Group 2:** Private and productive sectors - Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique
- **Group 3:** Government - Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania
- **Group 4:** Non-governmental organisations and civil society - Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone
- **Group 5:** Development partners and other funders - Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Burkina Faso

After deliberation, the following were outcomes from the groups:

- Group 1 suggested:
    - In determining themes, universities should come in as key stakeholders as well as reviewers. The universities and research institutes should encourage female researchers and PWDs to participate in the cycle.

- Furthermore, in receiving applications a quota system could be encouraged to deserving but marginalized researchers.
- In monitoring the impacts on research grants, the deliberate analysis of gender should be conducted to understand its impact.

- For Group 2:
  - The grant cycle should capture the private sector's research and innovation expectation so that their interest can be attracted.
  - Calls can also be shared with R&D units as well as other private experts and evaluators in PPPs.
  - In monitoring the impact of grants, the group called for inclusive evaluations of all stakeholders and particularly, return on investments for the private sector.
- Group 3 presented on where in the grant-making cycle government has most influence/relevance. The group suggested:
  - Since the government determines national goals/plans, it could align GESI by creating national gender policies or related sectorial gender policies.
  - In sharing calls, announcements could be disseminated through government platforms as well as engaging gender focal persons in the government machinery.
  - The government could also use specific windows to receive applications from marginalised groups, e.g. special needs.
  - Affirmative action criteria should be applied to determine which research projects to fund.
  - National-level gender indicators should be reviewed in projects' impacts monitoring as well as providing feedback to the government and other stakeholders.
- Group 4 recommended that to include NGOs and civil society organisations in the grant cycle, focus should be on the core mandate of NGOs and civil society to ascertain if GESI concepts were mainstreamed into their activities. Furthermore, the following recommendations were submitted by the group:
  - The processes of grant making/funding should identify and profile relevant civil society organisations and NGOs.
  - In sharing calls, the announcements should explicitly require gender, equity, and social inclusivity as key criteria.
  - Calls should be shared with NGOs and the civil society organisations for initial evaluation.
  - NGOs and civil society organisations should be involved in the information sessions and dissemination.
  - Calls targeting the marginalised should be introduced.

Group 5 recommended that development partners and other funders should favour research themes that take into account the issue of vulnerability.

## Looking into the future 3

### Research to Policy

Prof. Erika Kraemer-Mbula of the University of Johannesburg presented on bridging research to policy by expanding on the summary findings from some case studies. Prof. Kraemer-Mbula noted:

- There has been an increasing emphasis on measuring the wider impacts of research.
- Scientific expertise, despite being available, is not generally utilised for informing policy decisions.
- Increasingly, research funders are asking their grantees to address the uptake of research findings into decision-making processes and policymaking.
- After a selection of case studies of funded research projects across Africa, a framework (see Figure 2) to capture the use of evidence in policy and decision-making has been developed to understand better how research uptake happens and how research activities may influence policy in the African context.

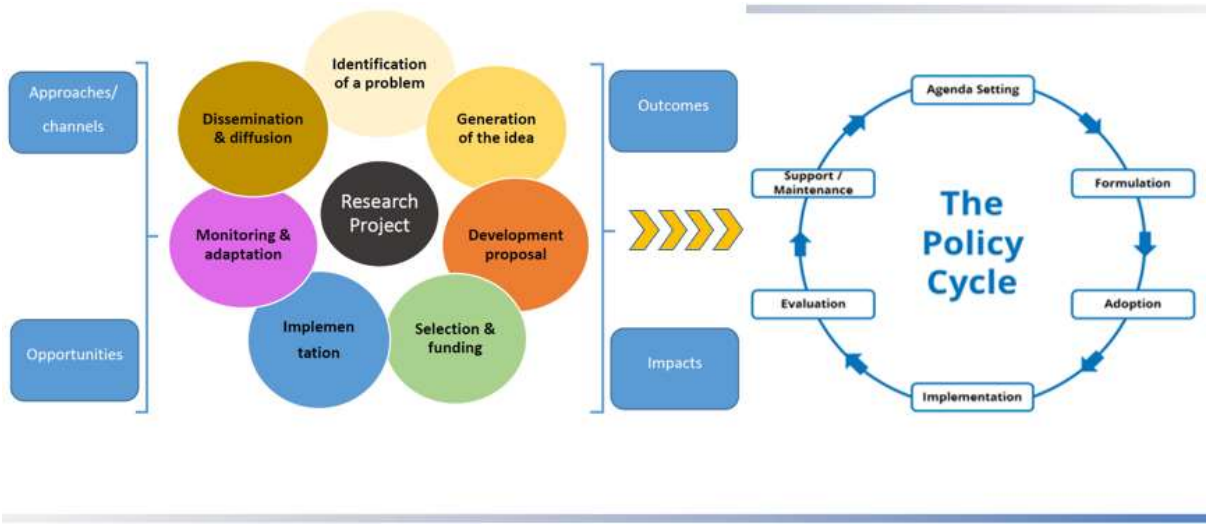


Figure 2: Framework to capture pathways for research uptake

The case studies cited (five) by Prof. Kraemer-Mbula included: (i) Optimisation of Rice Production in the Nanan Rice Perimeter (Yamoussoukro - Côte d'Ivoire); (ii) Maize Germ and Bran as Raw Materials for High Fibre Value Added Bakery and Confectionery Products (Uganda); (iii) A New Technique for Locust Mass Culture for Food and Feeds Industry (East Africa); (iv) Biomass Gasification For Decentralised Electricity Generation (Malawi); and (v) Chronic Disease in elderly persons (Burkina Faso and Senegal).

Prof. Kraemer-Mbula noted that the channels used by the Optimisation of Rice Production in the Nanan Rice Perimeter (Yamoussoukro-Côte d'Ivoire) project, for example, embedded the

project within the broader policy advocacy efforts of Côte d'Ivoire to influence the development of enabling policies.

From the perspective of the SGCs, Prof. Kraemer-Mbula noted that that the SGCs aligned projects to strategic policy priorities - deliberate calls targeting key themes/areas. This also presented opportunities for crafting outputs that speak directly to the needs of policy for the project and support for the development of human resources for policy influence by the SGCs.

Some evidence of policy impact included leveraging existing advocacy efforts of participating research organisations (e.g. Locus Project). However, there were recorded limited documenting/monitoring of all aspects of policy influence.

Key observations by Prof. Kraemer-Mbula were that:

- SGCs were instrumental in developing strategic long-term research capabilities in specific policy-relevant themes and aligning research themes with strategic policy priorities.
- SGCs can be a channel for policy uptake.
- The SGCs could also ensure that the policy community is aware and understands the value of the knowledge generated through research and how it could feed policy processes.

## Questions and Answers

| *No.* | **Comment/Concern/Question** | **Response from CTAs** |
|---|---|---|
| ***1.*** | • From Burkina Faso, how can the SGCI help to get more resources to amplify our impacts/ | On increasing the possibility of funding, look beyond the country at sub-regional levels for more findings. Looking at the regional level also leads to international visibility. |
| *2.* | • What was the role between the researchers and the Councils in translating the impacts? Were there meetings? Monitoring about how the projects evolved from initial objectives? | On the researcher-Councils relationship, the challenge for the Council is to engage with the policy process a lot longer and earlier than at the end of the projects. |
| *3.* | • Among the case studies selected, they look technical, which means the drivers of the projects were the development of solutions, not policy. Maybe the results could've been different if the studies had been social science? | On the need for social science: There was a social science project in Burkina Faso that had different approaches, different outcomes (creation of participatory approach to research). So, it is important to establish a community of practice beyond the life span of the projects for continuity. |
| *4.* | • How do you advise Councils to unlock the bottleneck of time between calls, results, and relevance for policy? | The time lag between release of calls and uptake: The Councils have an overall view of the system. They can play active roles on building the system. So, there are possibilities for the Councils to create a space for the connections to be made before the calls are released. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *5.* | • The Councils, before they release calls, can make connection to policymakers so that the researcher aligns proposals with needs of policymaker. | |
| *6.* | • There are two types of call announcements - free open calls where the researchers apply and thematic ones that rely on national concerns for solution to Côte d'Ivoire's problems. Now, the question is in Africa, our governments have not taken cognisance of the real importance of science for enhancing our competitiveness. What can we do so that STI can play an important roles in our national development? | The Councils have the job of raising awareness within the policy community on the importance of STI as well as scientific knowledge for informing policymaking though capacity building and making connections. |

## Research Funding Impact

Dr Tommaso Ciarli of SPRU, Sussex University, reflected on decisions that were taken during the process of designing and evaluating competitive research funding programmes. Dr Ciarli explained that the aims of the Research Funding Design and Evaluation Protocol:

- To provide an overview of the evidence, thinking, and practice on the design and evaluation of competitive research funding,
- Systematise the literature on research funding design and evaluation into key features in order to consider in each step, and
- Improve the capacity of SGCs to fund impactful research.

Dr Ciarli noted that the objectives seemed obvious, but these were not. As such, to revise the design in steps down the line, funders may need to consider revising decisions taken in the initial steps.

He provided a step-by-step recommendation for the design of competitive research funding programmes:

- Distinguish between two main macro-objectives: scientific excellence and societal impact.
- Specific priorities for the scientific excellence and social impact must be set.
- Conceptual models for research funding should be designed to help link theoretically macro-objectives, specific priorities and expectations of scientific excellence and societal impact.
- To help operationalise macro-objectives and specific priorities in the design of a competitive research funding programme, the insights from the literature on the features that are relevant to consider in the design of research funding programmes should be organised around five cross-cutting variables.
- Reviews and assessments of research proposals.
- Awarding of the grant.

Dr Ciarli further outlined an eight-point step-by-step checklist for the evaluation of competitive research funding programmes:

i. Consider the design of the research funding programme,
ii. Consider main impacts expected (objectives and priorities),
iii. Assess the key features to design the evaluation,
iv. Define the aims of the evaluation based on its design,
v. Data providing information to measure impacts of the funded research,
vi. Build indicators to interpret the impacts of the funded research,
vii. Analysis of the impacts of the research funded, and
viii. Analysis of the results of the impact evaluation.

Sharing key lessons derived from the pilot, Dr Ciarli noted that completeness and quality of the funder's data is the basis for any evaluation. Also, a wealth of open access data can be used (e.g., OpenAlex and Lens) although this process requires an informatic infrastructure and data science skills. Further, infrastructure for the evaluation is required but flexible (cloud) computing can be more affordable. Lastly, documenting the data construction processes is crucial to establish a knowledgebase for further evaluations and to interpret results.

On key lessons about indicators used, Dr Ciarli noted building indicators that match the design of the evaluation may require combining different sources of data. Additionally, it is necessary to consider the exact definition of indicators carefully as different operationalisations may have different meanings. He emphasised that clarifying the calculation of indicators helps to make the evaluation transparent and reproducible in the future.

Dr Ciarli also shared key lessons on interpreting results. He noted that if the estimated project impacts are negligible, it should not be interpreted necessarily as a failure of the research funding programme. This non-impact could be attributed to an incorrect evaluation design. Also, a discussion of results is important for considering an alternative design of the impact evaluation (e.g., different indicators), or of the programme (back to the black box of the funding cycle).

In conclusion, Dr Ciarli hoped that the step-by-step guidelines would be useful for the designing of competitive research funding programmes in the next years to make research impactful in line with impact priorities and evaluation of such programmes as well as macro aims and specific priorities.

## Questions and Answers

| *No.* | Comment/Concern/Question | Response from CTAs |
|---|---|---|
| *1.* | • From what you have said about designing, evaluation is key. Usually, we are asked what the return on investment (RoI) for evaluation. Eighty percent of research in our countries are based on the SDGs, why are 80% of our issues based on the SDGs? | On why 80% on SGDs it is because those pieces of research are applied and respond to hunger, poverty, and inequality. |
| *2.* | • I like the steps in terms of designing a programme that can lead to impact (participant), especially for the new programmes. But the bosses of the funders want to know the return on investment on previous research. Can this method be used to evaluate past projects implemented? | On ROI, let me turn the question: (i) what data do we have about what have been invested? Without this we can't measure the ROI (what has been spent to do what and what has not been spent to do what?); (ii) what kind of return does the funder want? Before we go to measure returns on ROI, what was the project designed for? What was the aim? That is why I stress the initial design and what we do along the way. |
| *3.* | • It is possible that a research outcome may not be making impact owing to time, resources, and a monitoring framework. At which point can you say an impact is not significant? | On when I know if impacts have not been met: The initial goal is important, but we know things are complex, and we time-bind targets that tell us when the impacts/objects can be met. So, I need to understand the theories underlying my intervention. It is in the design of the programme that you can determine when impacts are expected and if they have failed. |
| *4.* | • When we open calls, researchers tell us the objectives and the method for achieving the objectives, but beyond this, how can we also include impact plan of the research? The aim of the research must be known. What is the impact that this research will make? Who are the actors that can influence the decision? If these are included in the proposals it would give a better orientation of the project and help audience appreciate the scientific results? | I think we need to add that to the cycle to indicate when researchers would contribute to making impact. That is for funders to think about whether to include them. But the problem is how to assess them in the research proposals. |

## Political Economy Analysis

Dr Julius Mugwagwa's presentation on the above topic was delivered by Mr Remy Twiringiyimana, also of the University College London. Presenting the emerging insights from the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) of SGCs and implications for the SGCI, Mr Twiringiyimana outlined the following:

- The Political Economy Analysis-3 (PEA3) commenced at the point of transition to Phase 2 of the SGCI from June 2021 to February 2023.
- The PEA3 draws from and expands on PEA1 & 2 from SGCI-1. PEA1 established a ‘‘baseline’’ understanding of the working contexts and PEA2 examined what had changed from the initial “baseline” study.
- The PEA3, thus, seeks to inform SGCI programming and thematic areas through a nuanced analysis of national research and innovation ecosystems as well as the regional and international contexts.
- The PEA1 and PEA2 - which were applied in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania - revealed key lessons on the need to explore widely held concepts on innovation and innovation systems as well as move away from a linear science-push approach to systems thinking.

Mr Twiringiyimana presented findings from studying key themes of PEA3 within 15 African countries by applying the SGCIs Theory of Change and a three-pronged methodological approach. The themes include:

i. Research excellence versus development goal,
ii. Research quality and measurement of impact,
iii. Industrialisation narratives,
iv. Covid-19 responses and cross-cutting themes of gender, inclusivity, and intersectionality concerns, and
v. Adoption of digital technologies.

The results, according to Mr Twiringiyimana, showed that:

- RSTI is a central policy debate and funding is a recurring constraint that shapes RSTI policy.
- On research excellence, the results presented from desk studies showed that there is a scarcity of research infrastructure. This was corroborated by results from stakeholder interviews that showed the lack of policy frameworks and metrics for research and development alignment.
- On gender and inclusivity, stakeholder interviews showed that there had been increasing political commitment (policies and laws) for gender mainstreaming.
- On digitalisation, the results showed that while the desktop studies revealed the lack or limited data management policies and infrastructure, stakeholder interviews showed increasing uptake. Countries were at different levels of digital tech adoption.

For Mr Twiringiyimana, key lessons for the SGCs beyond the PEA3 include:

- The moral economy is a useful way of capturing informal, tacit interactions that are not currently being considered.
- On RSTI systems as multidisciplinary areas, he added that there is a need to explore opportunities for democratising systems of knowledge production.
- Embedding PEA would present SGCs the opportunity to reflect on and adjust their own practices on an on-going basis.

Key lessons for both SGCs and the SGCI include:

- Establishing innovative collaborations during Covid-19 to address gaps in capacities was useful.
- Explore resolutions for ease of doing ethical research, balancing know-how and best practice with context specificity.
- The SGCI acts as a mediator of the ecosystem, knowing when to act and when to step down.

In summary, Mr Twiringiyimana noted that the SGCs and SGCI had demonstrated agency, relevance and resilience across the thematic areas. Opportunities and learnings exist for both SGC and SGCI to leverage political economy and other factors to make RSTI systems more inclusive, agile and leverage their vantage location and current science momentum to influence national and regional agendas.

## Question and Answers

| *No.* | **Comment/Concern/Question** | **Response from CTAs** |
|---|---|---|
| ***1.*** | The research is relevant for the SGCI. Are you going to present results about how the findings can help us measure impacts of the SGCI or redirect or finetune our efforts to implement SGCI activities better? | On how the findings show the political economy could have changed in different countries, our approach has been a problem-based approach and what we have presented is a snapshot that is not country specific. There are findings in the country-based case studies showing a change in political economy. |
| *2.* | Can you point out something from your study that you didn't expect to find? Any surprises? | |
| *3.* | Elaborate on the data reported by Malawi. It shows that the country is spending around 1% whereas actual conversations with researchers in Malawi reveal that no African country has reached 1% of GDP. I agree that here there is public support for increased funding for research. | On the literature source of 1% GDP funding of R&D, the figure was sourced from reports (UNESCO [G0-SPIN], AU, World Bank) and key informants. Even if the number is wrong, it is also good to show it for the right thing to be done and corrected since it appears on documents from credible organisations |

## Closing Remarks

### Dr Diakalia Sanogo (IDRC)

In his closing remarks, Dr Diakalia noted that participants had engaged and understood the need for funding through the CTAs with recommendations on approaches to factor into future training and activities. He was pleased with the levels of participation in the workshop and how partners were eager to participate in the activities of the SGCI. He emphasised that partnerships are important and as Science Councils there is the need to keep connections. Dr Diakalia then underscored the importance of gender and inclusivity and urged the SGCs to work to streamline gender and inclusivity in all projects. Concludingly, he thanked the funding partners (FCDO, NRF, NORAD, DFG, IDRC) and all Councils of the SGCI for their participation.

### Prof. DIA TINE Soukeye

Prof. Dia Tine thanked the SGCI for the workshop and the activities of the SGCI further expressing that the second day of the workshop had seen very fruitful discussions on partnerships. The thematic areas were emphasised. Prof Tine added that, with the new partnerships, it is hoped that all projects will conclude and have increase impacts. Furthermore, she emphasised the need to work on PPPs and training as key elements of the activities of the SGCI. Prof Tine pointed out that the workshop has revealed challenges with online training such as:

(i) Time zone difference,
(ii) Linguistic barriers, and
(iii) The need to improving participation in SGCI activities.

In conclusion, Prof Tine expressed gratitude to the funders for all the support and explained that the learning consolidation workshop is an initiative that will enable Councils improve on their research and capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Mr Cephas Adjei Mensah (MESTI)

Mr Cephas Adjei Mensah, on behalf of the Minister for the Ministry of Environment Science Technology and Innovation, expressed appreciation for the participants' energy. He noted that the Ministry looks forward to welcoming all participants to future workshops and activities. He expressed gratitude to ACTS for selecting Ghana to host this workshop. Mr Mensah explained that the Minister could not be at the closing of the workshops because he had been called to Parliament. He concluded by asking participants to provide feedback in terms of their entry into Ghana (visa/immigration, etc.).

## Photo Gallery


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Learning Consolidation Workshop