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Political economy of science granting councils in sub-Saharan Africa

Brief introduction of the study

The Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex and the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), based in Nairobi, will examine key political and economic factors influencing Science Granting Councils in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The study is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the South African National Research Foundation (NRF). The research will support the Science Grants Council Initiative (SGCI) which aims to strengthen the capacity of Science Granting Councils in the SSA region.

The research team will work to identify patterns of institutional development and understand the main influences on SGC behaviour at a regional and sub-regional level and will look in more detail at how SGCs operate and why in five case study countries. Four countries, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania will be studied in depth. A fifth case study of Senegal will be included as a lighter touch case study.

We will be publishing the results both in a final report and in a journal article. BUT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND ANY QUOTES WILL BE ANONYMISED.

The interview should take between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

Questions

The questions in **bold** are priority questions and so we aim to ask all of these if possible.

Section 1: Personal details

Please tell us what your job involves and about your responsibilities with regard to science funding or science policy

Section 2: Questions relating to SSA SGCs and regional level influences

- **What in your view are the most important Science Granting Councils or SGC related initiatives (bodies and initiatives that fund and support science and research in SSA) at the SSA regional level?**
- **Why are they important? What kind of influence do they have?**
- **Do you think the landscape at the SSA regional level will change significantly in the next 10 years? Who will be the main winners and losers?**
- What are the actors and institutions that have most direct impact on SGC activity at the SSA regional level?
- Are there important actors, policies and initiatives that indirectly impact on SGCs (for example regional and sub-regional economic organisations)?
- Is their influence institutionalised (embedded in formal relationships between institutions and organisations or in law) or is it informal?
- What are the most important SSA regional sources of data and information about SGCs?

Section 3: Questions relating to SSA SGCs and global/international level funding and influence

- **In relation to SSA what in your view are the most influential international Science Granting Councils (bodies that fund and support science and research in SSA)?**

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- **How do those actors and institutions exert their influence? Is it through economic power? Political power? Or both?**
- Is their influence institutionalised (embedded in formal relationships between institutions and organisations or in law) or is it informal?
- What are the most important international/global sources of data and information about SGCs in SSA?
- Do you think the landscape of relationships between global/international level institutions and actors and SGCs in SSA will change significantly in the next 10 years? Who will be the main winners and losers?

Section 4: Questions about the formal systems of funding flows: sources, mechanisms, amounts.

- **How are decisions about SSA regional level SGC initiatives (and any associated funding) made? How are priorities set?**
- **Are there formal mechanisms? Are the mechanisms based on coordination? Collaboration? Or do competitions determine where resource go?**
- Do you know the details of how much financial resource is attached to specific initiatives? If not, do you know where we could find this information?
- Do you think there will be significant change in the next 10 years? Who will be the main winners and losers?

Section 5: Questions relating to sub-regional similarities and differences

- **What are the main similarities and differences between the sub-regions? Is one sub-region stronger in relation to science policy and funding than others?**
- To what extent are SGC related funding flows from the SSA regional level and sub-regional levels (West, East and Southern Africa) similar? What are the main differences?
- To what extent are influences from the SSA regional level on sub-regional levels (West, East and Southern Africa) similar? What are the main differences?
- Are some international/global actors and institutions particularly important in some sub-regions? Which and how?

Section 6: General questions to cover things that haven't been discussed

- With regard to SGCs in the SSA region are there significant institutions or relationships that we have not already discussed?
- Are there any other major economic or political factors and influences on science and research priorities and funding that we should consider?
- Are there any changes that you foresee on the horizon that could change the landscape significantly that we have not already mentioned?