

“ ... as central role players in national systems of innovation, Science Granting Councils are key to advancing gender transformation... ”

Strengthening Capacities of **Science Granting Councils** in advancing **Gender and Inclusivity Transformation**



Gender & Inclusivity
A PROJECT OF THE SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCILS INITIATIVE

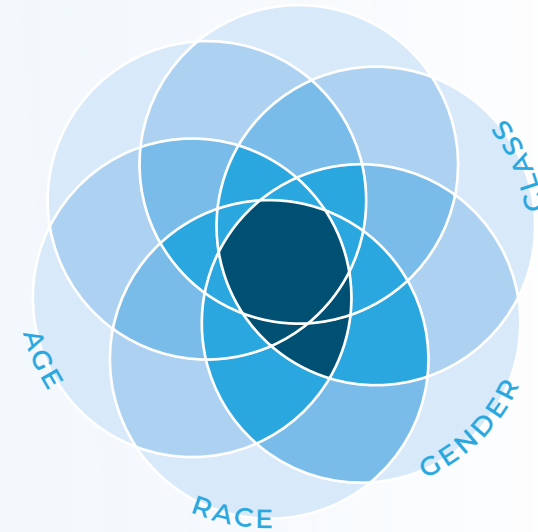


About the project

The **Gender and Inclusivity Project** aims to strengthen the capacities of Science Granting Councils (SGCs) in Sub-Saharan Africa to advance systemic change towards greater gender inclusivity in the science technology and innovation (STI) sector.

As central role players in national systems of innovation, SGCs are key to advancing gender transformation. SGCs contribute to setting and monitoring national research agendas and stimulate research designs and content responsive to gender inequality through funding projects informed by a gender transformative lens.

Building on existing work of SGCs, the **Gender and Inclusivity Project** supports the mainstreaming of an intersectional transformative approach in the development, implementation and monitoring of gender policy, programs and research in the functions of SGCs.



What is 'Intersectionality'?

Introduced by feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, this framework deepens understanding of the interplay between people's diverse identities and experiences, to explore how this interplay shapes and mutually reinforces oppression and exclusion. It expands the focus on gender to recognise inequalities related to other forms of diversity such as age, race, class, (dis)ability and sexuality, amongst others.



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The project is led by the **Human Sciences Research Council** (HSRC) of South Africa in partnership with **Gender at Work** and the **Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa** (CODESRIA), harnessing extensive and complementary experience in gender transformation in STI.

The **Gender and Inclusivity Project** is a component of the **Science Granting Council Initiative** (SGCI), now in its second phase (SGCI-2, 2018-2023). The **SGCI** is a multi-funder capacity-building initiative which has been running since 2015 and is geared towards supporting the development of research and evidence-based policies that contribute to economic and social development.

Key facts at a glance

30%

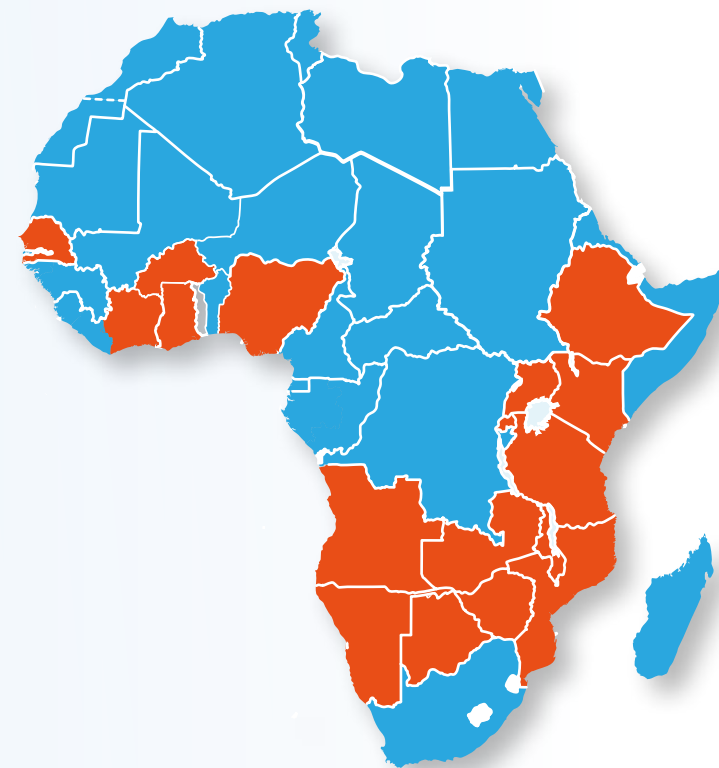
Only 30% of researchers in the region are women (Huysler, 2019)

4-13%

Female representation in science academies in the region ranges from only 4% to 13% (Ngila et al., 2017).

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Most of the countries in which participating SGCs are situated lack national gender disaggregated data to monitor attainment of gender-related SDGs (UN Women, 2021).



Participating councils

Participating SGCI Councils are based in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



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Why the project

Addressing gender disparities in STI is not only a question of rights and justice; it is crucial to producing more inclusive teams in organisations, higher quality research, and greater relevance and impact of research and innovation – not only for women but for society broadly. In other words, addressing gender equality is essential in advancing the continent's STI agenda. Despite an increasingly enabling policy and legislative environment for gender transformation, inequalities in STI remain:

- Women are under-valued and under-represented in scientific disciplines across the world especially in key leadership and decision-making positions.
- Research still carries the legacy of masculinist norms in both method and content.
- In Africa, regional policy frameworks have only partially filtered down to national level, particularly so for STI-specific national policy. While women are increasingly joining science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) educational programmes, their representation dwindles the further they proceed through the 'leaky' STI pipeline.
- There are limited intersectional approaches to gender transformation that consider diversity related to other marginalised identities and experiences.



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Existing policy landscape

- African Union's Agenda 2063
- Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024
- 2015 as the 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa Agenda 2063'
- Global Research Council (GRC) Statement of Principles and Actions on Promoting the Status and Equality of Women in Research in 2016 and Gender Working Group (GWG)
- IDRC's Equality Statement (2019)
- SSCI Gender Mainstreaming Framework and Action Plan (2018)

“ ... In Africa, regional policy frameworks have only partially filtered down to national level, particularly so for STI-specific national policy... ”

Objectives of the project

- 1 Review and consolidate information about the regional, national and institutional environments within which SGCs operate, including the work already conducted in SGCI-1;
- 2 Co-identify capacities and needs of the 16 participating organisations, as well as key principles and targets that inform their work in advancing gender and inclusivity;
- 3 Provide action-based learning opportunities and support to resource SGCs towards advancing gender and inclusivity in their work; and
- 4 Develop mechanisms and an evidence base to monitor and evaluate the impact of gender and inclusivity initiatives.

“ ... the Gender and Inclusivity Project offers a unique approach for sustained structural change... ”

Dr Ingrid Lynch and Prof Heidi van Rooyen,
Principle Investigators, Gender and Inclusivity Project



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The Gender and Inclusivity Project offers a unique approach for sustained structural change through

- Integration of an **intersectional lens** to recognise diversity beyond gender, such as age, race, class, (dis)ability and sexuality, amongst others.
- A **participatory methodology** that is responsive to councils' own change agendas, which builds meaningful partnerships within and beyond the SGCs and encourages a sense of ownership over the change process.
- A unique **peer-learning methodology** – Gender Action Learning – developed by partner organisation Gender at Work and underpinned by a customised, participatory process of co-creating strategies focused on both individual and systemic change.

References

Huyer, S. (2019). Is the gender gap narrowing in science and technology? In *UNESCO Science Report* (pp. 85-103). Paris: UNESCO.

Ngila, D., Boshoff, N., Henry, F., Diab, R., Malcom, S., & Thomson, J. (2017). Women's representation in national science academies: An unsettling narrative. *South African Journal of Science*, 113(7–8), 1–7.

UN Women. (2021). *SDG monitoring*. Available from: <https://data.unwomen.org/sdg-monitoring>



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