



# Gender & Inclusivity

A PROJECT OF THE SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCILS INITIATIVE

## NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MALAWI

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The Gender & Inclusivity Project, a component of the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI), is led by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa in partnership with Gender at Work (G@W), Jive Media Africa and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). G@W's unique methodology, Gender Action Learning (GAL), together with the Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA) process designed by the HSRC, supports a unique participatory process that responds to councils' needs, builds partnerships and encourages ownership of the change process.

## 'Starting from scratch': A new gender policy informed by local context

A new institutional gender policy informed by the Malawian context and designed to respond to local needs has been developed by the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) change team members.



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The NCST change team members, supported by the Ministry of Gender, undertook to draft a Gender Policy for the commission using the Gender@Work integral framework and drawing on the visioning exercises that were used in the Gender Action Learning (GAL) process. The issue of inclusivity, as informed by the GAL process, was included in the policy.

### Policy aims

The policy, approved by the NCST's board of commissioners, is intended to promote the inclusion and empowerment of women through the mainstreaming of gender issues within the NCST as an institution, including its policies, plans and operations.

The policy was a response to a gender analysis of the NCST which revealed that positions at senior management level are dominated by men, with a yawning disparity of 67% men vs 33% women. In middle management there is 86% men vs 14% women.

The policy, which includes an implementation plan, identifies six key priority areas:

- Basic service delivery;
- Corporate image and partnerships;
- Employment, career development and promotion;
- Sexual harassment and gender-based violence;
- Capacity strengthening and gender mainstreaming; and
- Good governance and public participation.

### Sensitive to context

A major strength of the policy is the fact that rather than using an existing gender policy as a basis from which to work, the team started the policy 'from scratch', noting the importance of the specificity of the Malawian context.

The team is confident that the policy will support, coordinate and advance gender equity and equality within the NCST and these successes will serve as an enabler for the achievement of gender equality in the wider science, technology and innovation sector in Malawi.

