

Strengthening the National Research and Innovation Funding Agencies in West Africa (SRIFA)

REPORT ON VALIDATION, CO-DEVELOPMENT AND CO-DESIGN OF TRAINING PROGRAMME AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT WORKSHOP IN BURKINA FASO

Event Dates: 16-17 April 2024

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Justification

The Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) in sub-Saharan Africa recognizes the critical role of national agencies in charge of funding of research and innovation referred to as Science Granting Councils (SGCs). The SGCs are responsible for driving research and innovation (R&I) for social and economic development. In West Africa, efforts are underway to strengthen existing SGCs where they exist as well as to establish new ones where they do not exist to bolster R&I capacities in the sub-region. With support from the SGCI, the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) in partnership with the African University of Science and Technology (AUST), is working to provide training and technical support to SGCs in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Preliminary studies conducted through desk reviews, surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions have informed the development of draft reports on each of the participating countries. With a 2-day validation and co-development workshop, the training needs and technical support is refined and finalised for subsequent delivery of tailored training and technical support to the Councils in the respective countries.

The landscape of R&I funding, policy, and practice is dynamic, requiring Councils or their equivalent in West Africa to continuously evolve and build their capacities. Despite their dedication to R&I, these Councils or their equivalent encounter challenges such as limited resources, policy inconsistencies, and knowledge gaps among staff. Existing training programmes often lack regional specificity and fail to address the unique needs of West Africa. Worse still is that some countries in the sub-region are yet to establish a research and innovation funding Council. Therefore, the proposed workshop aims to validate and refine training programme content by engaging the Council staff or its equivalent in the participating countries in reviewing and providing feedback on designed modules; prioritising topics relevant to emerging R&I trends. Additionally, to build capacity of the Councils and/or establish a new Council where it does not exist, the workshop seeks to co-develop and tailor technical support delivery approaches in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders; integrating innovative methods such as blended learning and peer-to-peer exchange. It aims to foster ownership and commitment among participants through active participation, open discussions, and shared decision-making, while developing strategies for long-term engagement and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the workshop aims to strengthen regional collaboration and partnerships by facilitating networking and communication between Council representatives and identifying opportunities for joint research projects, policy initiatives, and resource mobilisation within the sub-region.

1.2 Goal of the Validation and Co-Development of Training Programme Workshop

The goal of the workshop was to validate the preliminary results on policy and institutional landscape, comprehensive stakeholder mapping and analysis, and needs assessment of the research and innovation funding ecosystem in the participating countries and co-develop a tailor-made training and/or technical support programme for each of the Councils/funding agencies. Specifically, the Workshop seeks to:

- a) Validate the content and structure of the training programme designed to strengthen Science Granting Councils in West Africa.
- b) Facilitate collaborative refinement and prioritisation of needs in order to develop the training programme through inputs from key stakeholders.
- c) Foster knowledge exchange and peer learning among participants to enhance the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts.

d) Generate actionable insights and recommendations to ensure the relevance and impact of the training programme.

1.3 Methodology for the Workshop

The workshop was held physically and virtually for the benefit of those unable to join physically in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso at Palm Beach Hotel. The workshop involved a two-day engagement session with the Council and other relevant stakeholders including ministries and agencies in research and innovation funding. The first day involved presentation and the validation of results and prioritization of training needs and technical support while the second day involved the co-development of training and technical support programmes with the Council. This 2-day workshop employed highly interactive and collaborative approaches. The project team actively participated in the workshop including Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo (ATPS), Dr. Chukwuemeka Uwanaka (AUST), Alfred Nyambane (Programme Manager, ATPS) and Susan Mburu, (Communication and Outreach Officer). The team reviewed and refined the reports through presentations, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. The focus was on co-developing training delivery methods and tools tailored to the Council's preferred learning styles, national, and regional contexts. The workshop was expected to foster ownership and commitment by encouraging open dialogue, shared decision-making, and strategies for long-term engagement as well as gender equality and social inclusion. Additionally, the networking opportunities are expected to facilitate regional collaboration and knowledge exchange among SGCs and stakeholders, strengthening R&I ecosystems across West Africa.

1.4 Expected Outputs and Outcomes of the workshop

- a) Validated and refined training programme tailored to the needs of Science Granting Councils in West Africa.
- b) Enhanced collaboration and mutual learning among stakeholders involved in research and innovation funding within the sub-region.
- c) Actionable recommendations for the effective implementation and sustainability of the training programme and technical support.

DAY 1: UNDERSTANDING POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE, COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER MAPPING OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUNDING ECOSYSTEM

The workshop commenced with registration of all participants, followed by general introductions. The general framework for the event was then summarily explained, so that participants will be up to speed with their expected responsibilities for the 2-day event. After these preliminaries, an overview of the research study on the funding environment for science, technology and innovation in Burkina Faso as conducted by the ATPS and its partner the AUST was presented. The prior expectation was that the feedback from participants will support the validation objective of the workshop.

The report on the study on the state of policies, the comprehensive stakeholder mapping and analysis, and the evaluation of the needs of the research and innovation funding ecosystem in Burkina Faso was presented by Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo. She succinctly presented the major results of the study. Following the presentation, the participants wanted to understand the interest of the project for FONRID first and foremost. In response to this question, Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo explained that her organization was mandated within the framework of SGCI to strengthen FONRID's performance based on existing practices and the functioning of the council. She also

emphasized that it is not for them to define the direction for FONRID or the ministry, but rather to provide technical support based on their experience to achieve FONRID's objectives in research and innovation funding.

Regarding the report, the participants proposed a review of the policy documents, taking into account the new guidelines of the transition in government in terms of research. Thus, it was suggested to include in the report the Action Plan for Stabilization and Development which was developed in 2023. They also suggested removing certain documents whose implementation deadlines have passed to be in line with the study period. These include the Priority Action Plan (PAP), the National Program for the Rural Sector (PNSR), and the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES). For these documents, the implementation period had passed. The new strategic document was shared with the SRIFA team for inclusion in the report.

Discussions also focused on understanding and appreciating the level of influence and power attributed to the various research and innovation institutions in Burkina Faso. For some participants, this does not fully align with the observed reality. Dr. Cynthia thus explained the functioning of the analysis tool and how the correlation is made based on the evaluation of the responses to the study questionnaire earlier distributed. Regarding the institutional landscape for funding, some participants noted that programs within the development ministries also contribute to funding research in Burkina Faso, as do NGOs and private companies. After these discussions, the participants validated the report, subject to incorporating the proposed amendments.

Some of the relevant policies and highlights from the report include;

The National Policy for Scientific and Technological Research (PNRST) 2013-2025: Launched in 2012, the National Policy for Scientific and Technological Research has as its main objective to develop research and development and the application and commercialization of research results. The policy guides all scientific and technological research activities in Burkina Faso. It establishes for the creation of a national research fund to coordinate research activities. The financial support for scientific research and innovation for sustainable development was allocated to the National Fund for Development Research and Innovation (FONRID). The PNRST is the guiding framework for government action in the sector for a ten-year period, allowing for it to contribute to the effective implementation of new aspirations for growth and development (Lill and Gaillard, 2014). Its key priority areas are to improve food security and self-sufficiency by boosting capacities in agricultural and environmental sciences.

The Priority Action Plan (PAP)2013-2015: the PAP outlines the government's planned research activities for departments. Its implementation aims to contribute to achieving the vision and direction of the science and technology sector by 2015. The PAP provides a framework for institutions and organisations to enable increased efficiency and effectiveness of Ministry of Scientific Research and innovation's (MRSI's) activities in the context of sectoral policy. It focuses on acting as a reminder of PNRT's broad vision; offering a presentation of programmes and priority actions of PNRST, funding of PNRST, providing strategies for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and addressing assumptions and risk management (Lill and Gaillard, 2014).

The Science, Technology and Innovation Act (2013): This Act establishes three mechanisms for funding research and innovation. The mechanisms are the National Fund for Education and Research, the National Fund for Research and Innovation for Development, and the Forum of Scientific Research and Technical Innovation. Funding comes from the national budget and various annual subsidies: 0.2% of tax revenue, 1% of mining revenue, and 1% of revenue from operating mobile phone licences, and from royalties on sales from the results of research and the patent licence agreement concerning inventions funded by public funds.

The National Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education (PNADES) 2014-2023: Officially adopted in August 2014, the National Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education is aimed at providing the government with a repository of programmes, monitoring and evaluation strategies and actions that will be taken over the period of 2014-3023 for the benefit of higher education to ensure its quantitative and

qualitative development. It aims to improve key national indicators in order to provide the country with efficient human capital for socio-economic development.

Strategic Plan for Scientific Research and Technology (2015-2024): The objective of this plan is to create favourable conditions to produce knowledge and technologies necessary for sustainable socioeconomic development in Burkina Faso. The plan was elaborated as a response to some identified needs including: i) strengthen coordination, synergy, and coherence of research within the different institutes of the CNRST; ii) greater linkage between the CNRST's research programmes and major national development programmes; and iii) mainstream emerging themes through collaborative research programmes.

The Oriental Law for Scientific Research and Innovation (LORSI) 2013: The LORSI sets a legal framework and fundamental guidelines for scientific research and innovations in Burkina Faso. It sets the general rules guiding the implementation of sustainable development in Burkina Faso.

Sectoral Research and Innovation Policy (PSRI) 2018-2027: Enacted in December 2017, the Sectoral Research and Innovation Policy is aimed at strengthening the productive system of Burkina Faso through the generation and intensive use of research and innovation results. The policy is set to guide all players in the research and innovation ecosystem of Burkina Faso.

National Strategy for the Valorization of Technologies, Inventions, and Innovations (SNVTII) 2020-2024: The National Strategy for Valorization of Technologies, Inventions, and Innovations (SNVTII) is aimed at promoting the intensive use of technologies, inventions, and innovations. The Objectives of the strategy are to ensure the firm protection of technology of Inventions and Innovations (TII); make technologies, inventions and innovations available and accessible to actors; set up and/or strengthen the valuing structures of TII and ensure their functioning; develop specialised human resources for valuing TII; and ensure effective communication on the valorization of TII (Banhoro et al. 2019). With SNTII, it is expected that by 2024, research results will be better valued and popularised for the socio-economic development of Burkina Faso.

The National Rural Sector Programme (PNSR) 2016-2020: This program is aimed at ensuring food and nutritional security through sustainable development of a productive and resilient agro-sylvo-pastoral, fishery, and wildlife sector that are more market oriented. It provides guidance for sustainable funding of research programmes for achievement of development goals. It also aims to strengthen the strategic and operational capacities of research structures through the improvement of human resources and management systems.

The National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES 2016-2020): adopted in October 2016, the overall goal of PNDES 2016-2020 is to achieve the structural transformation of the Burkinabe economy to attain strong, sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth that creates decent jobs and improves social welfare.. The PNDES 2016-2020 is a national reference for interventions by the State and its partners over the period 2016-2020. It aims at a cumulative growth in per capita income, reducing poverty, strengthening human capacities and satisfying basic needs, within an equitable and sustainable framework. Among its major target areas is to promote research and innovation to ensure structural economic transformation. In addition to the policy and institutional landscape presented, participants mentioned some few important institutions which were not contained in the report including the Fiber and Textile Company (SOFITEX), NAFASO, and Projects and programs of development ministries with external financing and within the framework of specific conventions.

A major observation after the presentation of the overview of the research study was that many participants had no access to the study prior to the presentation, and were therefore unable to provide informed feedback to support the validation process. The complexities arising from the relative level of high staff turnover at FONRID (the primary STI funding agency in Burkina Faso), was probably responsible for this scenario. The lack of access to the study by some participants, meant that the programme of events was slightly adjusted to accommodate this outcome. A commitment was made by the project team to share the report the same day, so that more informed discussions could be made the following day. Some feedback was however received, following the previous presentation.

The participants were further divided into two working groups to deliberate and work on the training needs and technical support and prioritize them according to their importance to FONRID. Resource mobilization was identified as the top priority given the importance of grant requests not covered by the allocated budget, followed by effective communication of research results, public-private partnership, quality assurance and research ethics, commercialization of research results, and gender equality and inclusion strategies. After identifying these priorities, the group further justified their choices as presented in the following tables:

Priority Training Need Areas	Level of Priority	Justification
Mobilization of resources, negotiation techniques and granting	1st	-Major concern, because the national financial allocation for FONRID is insufficient to meet research funding needs; necessary to explore other sustainable sources of financing.
Effective communication of research findings Strategies for using evidence to inform policy, such as writing a policy briefing note	2nd	 Make the results known to potential users Use research results to inform policies
Private public partnership	3rd	-Arouse private sector interest in research -direct research on private sector research priorities
Quality assurance and research ethics	4th	- Equip research and innovation stakeholders on the issue of quality assurance and ethics
Commercialisation of research results/Safeguarding intellectual property rights	5th	-Ensure research funding -Ensure the use of the results
Gender equality and inclusion strategies / Capacity building for gender-sensitive data collection, management, reporting and archiving	6th	-Promote consideration of gender and inclusiveness in the granting of funding

The priority technical support and their justifications are presented below:

Priority Technical Support	Level of Priority	
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Support on advocacy for increased R&I funding in the country from policymakers and parliamentarians	1 st	Political commitments were made by the political office holders: - LORSI-mining fund, - 1% GDP commitment from Maputo-African Union) Advocacy to raise funds
Stakeholder engagements and policy dialogue on topical issues of R&I funding interests to the Council	2nd	Without the commitment of stakeholders, the funds allocated to research will not be used to achieve the objectives
Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing among critical R&I funding stakeholders in the country	3rd	Platforms to involve as many stakeholders as possible to facilitate information sharing
Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	4th	Documents for updating research themes but also future advocacy
Commissioning of studies on specific STI issues relevant to Council	5th	Depending on the priorities defined in the research & innovation policy, studies will clarify the areas of intervention of the Council
Organising benchmarking/learning visits to other well-performing Councils	6th	Sharing of information/experience and opportunity of networking
Brokering STI agreements with other Councils and Actors in the ecosystem	7th	To crown commitments/responsibilities

As a guide for the next day, a framework comprising content, challenges, gender and social inclusion, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues was developed. This was presented to the participants to guide discussions for the April 17, 2024 workshop.

DAY 2: CO-DEVELOPING AND CO-DESIGN OF TAILOR-MADE TRAINING PROGRAMME AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The second day began on a more informed basis for the participants, as they had had some time to review the previous study. The framework provided also ensured structured presentations and feedback, essentially on technical needs and training needs. For this activity, two working groups were formed: one group worked on co-development and co-design of training programmes, while the other group worked on co-development and co-design of technical support. Regarding the prioritized training needs, each group was to brainstorm on each of the priority areas under the five thematic areas of content, challenges, gender and social inclusion, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues.

The tables below present the expectations and insights from the participants on the prioritized training needs and technical support in terms of content, challenges, gender and social inclusion, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues by the Burkinabe participants.

Training Need Areas	Content	Challenges	Solution	Gender/Inclusivity
Mobilisation of resources, negotiation techniques and granting	 Elements of mobilisation of financial resources Fund trading techniques Technique for writing a financing request Project writing technique to respond to calls for funding Technique of searching for and maintaining the partnership 	Strengthen the financial capacity of FONRID to meet subsidy needs Low capacity in terms of resource mobilisation Insufficient Tools for mobilisation -Low capacity in writing Project request financing	Train FONRID agents Develop mobilisation tools	Gender and inclusion as means of resource mobilisation Promoting social justice
Effective communication of research findings \ Strategies for using evidence to inform policy, such as writing a policy briefing note	 -Development of communications supports focused on the results of research projects - Strategy for dissemination/popul arisation of project results -Technique for collecting evidence to inform policies - Technique of writing political notes focused on project results 	- Make the results known to encourage their use -Influence political decisions in favour of research funding	Train FONRID agents Develop results-based communications tools	Make research results accessible to women, men, young people and vulnerable groups
Private public partnership	- Identification of private partner	Getting the private sector to	Develop a digital platform for interaction between	Expand the field of possibilities/solutions by

Table 1: Co-develor	ment and co-design	of training programm	e to Strengthen FONRID

	 Arouse the interest of the Private Sector in research Create a framework for dynamic public-private dialogue 	participate in funding research	research stakeholders and the private sector	taking into account gender and inclusion Promoting social justice
Quality assurance and research ethics	 -Know the elements of quality in a research project - Know the code of ethics and professional conduct for research 	Finance quality projects to impact socio-economic development	Train agents, the CST, expert evaluators in the selection of quality projects for financing -Develop a guide and evaluation criteria based on quality assurance	Expand the field of possibilities\solutions by taking into account gender and inclusion Promoting social justice
Commercialization of research results/Safeguarding intellectual property rights	-Know the rights and the process of acquiring intellectual property -Know the mechanisms of technology transfer and commercialization of research results	Promote the use of research results	Train agents, the CST, expert evaluators in quality selection for financing	Expand the field of possibilities/solutions by taking into account gender and inclusion Promoting social justice
Gender equality and inclusion strategies / Capacity building for gender-sensitive data collection, management, reporting and archiving	 Technique for collecting and managing data sensitive to gender and inclusion in projects Advocacy on gender equality and inclusion in the granting of funding 	Institute positive discrimination measures focused on sex and age in the selection and financing of projects Facilitate access to financing for all	Capacity building in gender equality and inclusion data collection, management	Expand the field of possibilities\solutions by taking into account gender and inclusion Promoting social justice

Co-development and Co-design of Technical Support to Strengthen the FONRID

Priority	Content
Priority 1: Support on advocacy for increased R&I funding in the country from policymakers and parliamentarians	 1- Technical assistant by external expertise 2- Strengthening the capacities of teams in terms of advocacy
Priority 2: Stakeholder engagements and policy dialogue on topical issues of R&I funding interests to the Council	1- identification of challenges (MEL, funds), percentage to include gender in financing based on the law Financing sustainability: budget fluctuation, Prob: budget sustainability Devdocs on themes
Priority 3: Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing among critical R&I funding stakeholders in the country	 Facilitating networking and collaboration Implementing effective knowledge classification systems Building and maintaining a community of practice
Priority 4: Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	 Stakeholder engagement and consultation Writing clear and concise policy statements Prioritizing resource allocation
Priority 5: Commissioning of studies on specific STI issues relevant to Councils	 Establishing project management frameworks Monitoring progress and ensuring quality Ensuring research ethics compliance
Priority 6: Organizing benchmarking/learning visits to other well-performing Councils	 Build relationships with counterparts in other agencies Explore opportunities for joint projects or initiatives Establish channels for ongoing knowledge exchange
Priority 7: Brokering STI agreements with other Councils and Actors in the ecosystem	 Facilitate international research partnerships Access global knowledge networks and expertise Develop joint training programs and workshops

1. Conclusion

The political and institutional landscape in Burkina Faso gives great importance to research and innovation. Funding efforts are therefore being deployed for the development of this field. Similarly, it is expected that research results and innovations will contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. The institutions set up in this framework work in tandem to make research an engine of socio-economic development despite limited financial resources. After an analysis of FONRID's strengths and weaknesses, it can be concluded that the training and technical support needs identified above are the gaps to be filled for the effective functioning of the Council as well as the entire research and innovation ecosystem in Burkina Faso. Indeed, substantial funds, committed policies and well-equipped actors are the basis for the development of the expected research and innovation in Burkina Faso. As previously mentioned, high staff turnover at FONRID stood out as a challenge, with its implications for sustainability. Though it is an extraneous factor for ATPS and therefore beyond its orbit of control, concerted efforts are required to ensure that capacity is developed and sustained, within the Burkina Faso research and innovation funding ecosystem. Participants suggested that the training and technical support should accommodate staff from other sister agencies, ministries and parastatals to ensure that capacities are retained in the ecosystem. The FONRID and other participants were asked to

nominate some countries in Africa they would like to visit, for shared lessons and capacity building. In response, they asked to be given some time to provide the feedback.

References

- Lill M. and Gaillard J. (2014). Science Granting Council Country Report: Burkina Faso. Accessed from: https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/divers14-04/010061547.pdf
- Banhoro F. A., Nana R., Ouedraogo M. H., and Sawadogo M. (2019) Valorization of Research and Scientific Innovation Results as Factor of Sustainable Development of African Agriculture: The Example of Burkina.



A Group photograph of participants during SRIFA validation workshop in Burkina Faso

Table 4: Workshop Programme

Jour 1: Comprei	Jour 1: Comprendre le système du financement de la recherche et de l'innovation 16 Avril 2024					
	Session du matin: Ouverture et aperçu genera	1				
9:00 - 9:30 Enregistrement		Susan Mburu/Chukwuemeka/Représ entant de CNC				
9:30 - 9:40	Mots de bienvenue	Aminata Kabore				
9:40 - 9:45	Presentation des participants	Tous les participants				
9:45 -10:00	Discours d'ouverture.	Dr Jibrin Yonli				
10:00-10:20	Dr Cynthia Nwobodo					
10:20 - 10:30	Photo de groupe	Tous les participants				
10:30 - 11:00	Pause-café					
	Session 1: Presentation des résultats préliminai	res				
11:00 - 11:45	Presentation du rapport du Burkina Faso	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo				
11:45 – 12:45	Session interactive de question-réponse.	Alfred Nyambane/Dr Cynthia Nwobodo				
12:45 - 2:00	Pause déjeuner					
	Session de l'après-midi : Discussion de fonds avec les parties prenantes					
2:00 - 3:30	Séances en petits groupes : Discussions des groupes de parties prenantes sur la priorisation des besoins de formation et de soutien technique	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo/Alfred Nyambane/Dr. Chukwuemeka Uwanaka				
3:30 - 4:00	Présentations des groupes sur les défis et les opportunités identifiés.					

4:00 - 4:30	Discussion plénière : Thèmes clés émergeant des engagements des parties prenantes.			
4.30 - 6.00	Session de réseautage			
Jour 2: Co-dévelo	ppement de programmes sur mesure 17 Avril 2024	•		
	Session du matin: Récapitulatif et Définition des ob	jectifs		
9:00 - 9:30	Enregistrement	Susan Mburu/Chukwuemeka/Représ entant de CNC		
9:30 - 9:45	Récapitulatif et revue de la première journée	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo		
9:45 -10:30	Introduction au processus de co-développement	Alfred Nyambane/Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo		
10:30 - 11:00	Pause-café			
	Session 2: Atelier de co-développement			
11:00 - 11:40	Atelier 1: Conception des programmes de formation sur mesure.	Tous les participants		
11:40 - 12:20	Atelier 2: Identification des besoins en assistance technique	Tous les participants		
12:20 - 1:00	Discussions inter-groupes et partage d'idées	Tous les participants		
1.00 - 2.00	Pause déjeuner			
Session de l'après-midi: Planification de la mise en œuvre				
2:00 -2:30	Présentation du programme codéveloppé	Représentant du conseil		
2:30 - 3:30	Retour d'information et affinement à travers un processus itératif.	Tous les participants		

3:30 - 4:15	Feuille de route pour la mise en œuvre : Calendrier et responsabilités	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo
4:15 - 4:30	Discours de clôture et perspectives	Dr.Chukwuemeka/ Dr Cynthia Nwobodo

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