



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 CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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



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 finalized 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; prioritizing 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 mobilization 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 prioritization 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 at Azalai Hotel in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The workshop involved two-day engagement sessions 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 led by the PI- Prof Nicholas Ozor. Other project team members included the Co-PI of the project Prof. Peter Onwualu, Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo (Project Officer), 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.
- 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 first day of the workshop provided an opportunity for the national stakeholders to focus on relevant changes related to the policies/strategic documents, the institutional landscape, stakeholders, and training needs and technical support requirements in the research and innovation funding ecosystem of Cote d'Ivoire.

First of all, the exchanges between stakeholders highlighted the significant shifts recorded in the ecosystem of research and innovation funding in Côte d'Ivoire last year. Indeed, the parliament has adopted a new law n°2023-429 of 22nd May 2023 governing Higher Education, Research and Innovation. This law implies some important changes in the legal status and the landscape of the ecosystem of institutions of higher education, research and innovation. These institutions become public administrative establishments of scientific and technological nature called "EPAST". By virtue of this new status, they are linked to the State by a performance contract.

Furthermore, these research and higher education institutions are authorized to participate in some enterprises, create production units, subscribe to contracts for scientific and technical services, manage research contracts, exploit patents and commercialize research products for economic valorization of research results. This legislative reform has led to a profound transformation of the research and innovation ecosystem in Côte d'Ivoire. This progress achieved after ATPS preliminary studies and first draft report was underscored by participants.

The recent adjustments relating to the national context and the multifaceted ecosystem of research and innovation include the funding mechanism dedicated to support scientific research, technological and agricultural innovation. The participants emphasized that the law has created scientific and technological entities which depend on the support of FONSTI for the funding of their activities and the implementation of their missions. These entities are the National Research Programs, the Poles of Competences, the Scientific and Innovation Poles, the Technopoles and the Communality Means for Research.

With regard to the funding policy, the State has reaffirmed, through this law, its commitment to allocate 1% of GDP to funding of research and innovation. This percentage includes the contributions of the State, the private sector and the technical and financial Partners. The current percentage of GDP allocated to R&I is around 0.35%. This is very insufficient and limited compared to the ratio of industrialized countries and OECD.

All these adjustments relating to the policies, institutions and stakeholders of the national research and innovation funding ecosystem were raised during the discussions. To sum up, the changes recorded these last two years in Côte d’Ivoire justify the relevance of this workshop, in a view to update data collected during the preliminary studies of ATPS and its partner.

Despite the outstanding progress, the R&I ecosystem (documents, institutions, actors and stakeholders) are facing critical issues, multifaceted challenges and stakes in terms of endogenous and autonomous funding capacity, perennity of resources, capacities building, STI data collection, updating of research and innovation national policy. Indeed, the country hasn’t proceeded to the national collection of STI data, for the time being. This is a significant shortcoming for the national STI ecosystem.

In particular, it was highlighted, that at the strategic and operational level, the National Fund for STI (FONSTI) is endowed with the following main policy documents: Policy related to conflict of interest, policy for gender and inclusion, anti-corruption policy, anti-money laundering and terrorism financing policy. Nevertheless, the discussions emphasized the fact that some policy documents aren’t available yet and FONSTI is working to address this specific issue (specifically, Intellectual Property policy document). In this prospect, FONSTI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ivorian Office for Intellectual Property (OIPI) in the view to addressing the critical issue of research results patenting and endowment of an intellectual property policy document.

In terms of the prioritized training needs and technical support required to enhance the capacities of FONSTI, the following table presents the outcomes of the working group one and two during the first day of the workshop.

Priority Training Needs	Level of Priority	Justifications
Commercialization of research results	1st	Abundance of research results; creation of employment and poverty reduction; Incentive measures for researchers; effective communication around research results; facilitation of Public-Private Partnership.
Public-Private Partnership (PPP)		Economic valorization of the potential of projects ; Improvement of populations living conditions with a strong societal impact ; competitiveness of enterprises ; Reduction of research activities cost at the level of private sector ; Mobilisation of funds

	2 nd	from private sector and research grants ; Concrete commitment of private sector in R&I ecosystem.
Mobilization of funding and research grants	3 rd	Funding has a crucial importance to carry out scientific research activities; Allocations of resources by funders are very selective; Availability of funders.
Quality assurance and research ethics	4 th	Ensure competitiveness at the international level; Funding and commercialization criteria.
Online management of calls for projects	5 th	Compliance with international standards; Improve the international reputation of the Council; Facilitation of management for the Council and projects holders.
Strategies for gender equality and social inclusion	6 th	Comply with international policies.
Monitoring, assessment and mutual peer to peer Learning	7 th	Allow the Council to be effective; Ensure pursuit of funding and reduce failure risks.

The priority technical support and their justifications are presented in table below:

Priority Technical Support	Level of Priority	Justifications
Support for advocacy for increased funding for R&I in the country among policy makers and parliamentarians	1st	1. It is the foundation and departure of research 2. Legal documents arise from this point to allow the sector to research and obtain funds 3. National research policy will depend on this point 4. One of the certain ways to obtain financing. (Through negotiations and presentation of a budget to parliament)
Stakeholder engagements and policy dialogue on topical issues of interest to Council R&I funding	2 nd	-
Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	3 rd	These are the first points that are put forward by donors for partnerships with the outside world.
Organization of study/learning visits to other successful Councils	4 th	Because this is a prerequisite for developing policies drawing on the experiences of

		predecessors in the field; draw inspiration from them also for the management model in order to ensure sustainability
STI Memorandum of Understanding with other Councils and ecosystem players	5 th	Allows co-financing, sharing of experience, and know-how
Commission studies on specific STI issues relevant to Councils	6 th	Experience the excitement of research and stay up to date
Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing between parties	7 th	Allows to consolidate your knowledge

The richness of sharing these experiences with the ATPS SRIFA project team and the mutual peer-to-peer learning, the quality of various contributions and the strengthening of the capacities of national stakeholders have been the added value of this national workshop in terms of profound understanding of policy and institutional landscape, comprehensive stakeholders mapping of R&I funding ecosystem of Cote d'Ivoire.

DAY 2: CO-DEVELOPING TAILOR-MADE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Day two of the discussions on enhancing the capabilities of the research and innovation funding agency of Cote d'Ivoire involved a brainstorming session in each of the working groups. These group discussions focused on the revised priority training needs and technical support, providing insights in terms of content, challenges, solutions, gender and social inclusion, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues in the proposed capacity building of stakeholders and institutions in the R&I ecosystem.

The prioritization of training needs and emerging issues by the first working group resulted in seven most important training needs as summarized in the following table:

The stakeholders in the second working group discussed the revised technical support under each of focus areas as presented in the table below:

Co-developed and Co-designed Technical Support to strengthen Council

Priority	Content	Gender equality and inclusion strategies	Challenges	Solution	Emerging Issues
Support for advocacy for increased funding for R&I in the country among policy makers and parliamentarians	Revision of the STI policy in Côte d'Ivoire	Include all stakeholders	Lack of private sector interest. Insufficient interest in the MESRS. Centralization of STI policy at MESRS level.	Taking the private sector into account Decentralization of STI policy Organize a stakeholder roundtable to	Invite all Ministries, Universities and research centers, CCI, civil society, NGOs Finance & budget

				discuss the importance of STI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Economy & planning ☞ national education ☞ MESRS ☞ Patronage Etc.
Stakeholder engagements and policy dialogue on topical issues of interest to Council R&I funding	Research project writing (several modules exist and the need must be more precise and must take into account the researchers themselves)	Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers) with or without a disability	In the context of challenges concerning gender, the cessation of women's careers for maternity reasons is preponderant. - The problem of African researchers facing international projects due to the language and training barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage policies: facilitate teleworking - Study the possibility of extending maternity leave for women by favouring their teleworking - Increase training in project writing from the 2nd Cycle (Master) 	Monitoring or impact of capacity building on the number of projects won
Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	English formation	Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers) with or without a disability	Language barriers	Immersion course in English-speaking countries	How to target listed journals
Organization of study/learning visits to other successful Councils	Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis tools	- Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers) with or without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited access to data collection and analysis tools - Lack of laboratory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage transdisciplinarity - Improvement of working conditions 	How to target listed scientific journals
STI Memorandum of Understanding with other Councils and ecosystem players	Strategies for scientific valorization of research results	- Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers)	- Motivation of researchers to publish in listed journals	Upgrading the status of researchers	How to target listed scientific journals

		with or without a disability			
Commission studies on specific STI issues relevant to Councils	Economic valorization strategies for research results	Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers) with or without a disability	Non-innovative search result	Establish collaboration between researchers and the private sector	
Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing between parties	Policy briefs	Encourage the training of as many men and women (Researchers) with or without a disability	Disinterest of public authorities	Lobbying with decision-makers	

1. Conclusion

Participants highlighted the fact that the R&I institutional landscape has recorded profound shifts with the creation of the legal status of EPAST which allows the institutions to participate in various enterprises and create economic production units. However, the funding policy is facing a major challenge related to the low percentage of GDP allocated to R&I ecosystem. Emphasis made about the lack of national STI data collection which should help decisions and policy makers to shape an up to date national STI policy. The PASRES is now subsumed into FONSTI as a programme targeting women and marginalized communities.

Finally, the issue of weak economic valorization, commercialization and patenting of research results were prominent. To address these challenges, the workshop proposed significant support in the areas of capacity training and technical support to enhance the performance of the research and innovation funding ecosystem in Cote d'Ivoire.



A Group photograph of participants during SRIFA validation workshop in Côte d'Ivoire

Workshop Programme

Jour 1: Comprendre le système du financement de la recherche et de l'innovation		21 Mai 2024
Session du matin: Ouverture et aperçu general		
9:00 - 9:30	Enregistrement	Susan Mburu/Représentant de CNC
9:30 – 9:40	Mots de bienvenue	Dre Annette Ouattara
9:40 – 9:45	Présentation des participants	Tous les participants
9:45 -10:00	Discours d’ouverture.	Dr Yaya Sangare
10:00-10:20	Présentation des objectifs de l'atelier et des résultats attendus.	Pr Nicholas Ozor
10:20 - 10:30	Photo de groupe	Tous les participants
10:30 – 11:00	Pause-café	
Session 1: Présentation des résultats préliminaires		
11:00 – 11:45	Présentation du rapport Côte d’Ivoire	Dr Cynthia Nwobodo
11:45 – 12:45	Session interactive de question-réponse.	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
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-développement de programmes sur mesure		22 Mai
2024		
Session du matin: Récapitulatif et Définition des objectifs		
9:00 - 9:30	Enregistrement	Susan Mburu/Représentant 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	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	Prof. Peter Onwualu

List of Participants

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