



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 SENEGAL

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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 Science Granting Councils (SGCs) in driving research and innovation (R&I) for social and economic development. In West Africa, efforts are underway to strengthen existing SGCs and establish new ones to bolster regional R&I capacities. Partnering with the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) and the African University of Science and Technology (AUST), the SGCI aims 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, interviews, and focus groups have informed the development of draft reports for each participating country, with inputs sought from respective SGCs. A proposed 2-day validation and co-development workshop will refine and finalize a training program tailored to the needs of SGC staff, facilitating their capacity-building efforts and accelerating regional R&I progress.

The landscape of R&I funding, policy, and practice is dynamic, requiring Councils or their equivalent in West Africa to continuously adapt 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 programs often lack regional specificity and fail to address the unique needs of West Africa. Worse still is the fact that the Councils in some of the countries have not formally been established. Therefore, the proposed workshop aims to validate and refine training program content by engaging the Council staff or equivalent (in countries that do not have formal Councils) in reviewing and providing feedback on designed modules, prioritizing topics relevant to emerging R&I trends and specific West African contexts. Additionally, the workshop seeks to co-develop and tailor training delivery approaches in collaboration with the Councils and stakeholders, integrating innovative methods like 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 also 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 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:

- Validate the content and structure of the training programme designed to strengthen Science Granting Councils in West Africa.
- Facilitate collaborative refinement and prioritization of needs in order to develop the training programme through inputs from key stakeholders.
- Foster knowledge exchange and peer learning among participants to enhance the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts.
- 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 Dakar, Senegal at Good Rade Hotel. The project team actively participated in the workshop led by the Co-PI of the project Prof. Peter Onwualu, President of AUST supported by the Project Officer, Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo. Other project team members present included Alfred Nyambane (Programme Manager, ATPS) and Susan Mburu (Communication and Outreach Officer, ATPS). The team reviewed and refined the reports through presentations, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. The workshop involved a two-day engagement session with the Councils 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 Councils. This 2-day workshop employed highly interactive and collaborative approaches.. The focus was on co-developing training delivery methods and tools tailored to the councils' 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. 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

- Validated and refined training programme tailored to the needs of Science Granting Councils in West Africa.
- Enhanced collaboration and mutual learning among stakeholders involved in research and innovation capacity building.
- Actionable recommendations for the effective implementation and sustainability of the training initiative.

DAY 1: UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1 Opening remarks

The workshop started with introductions of the participants. They provided their designations and the institutions they represent. The session was moderated by Prof. Cheikhou Kane, the ATPS National Chapter Coordinator for Senegal. He was assisted by Dr. Dia Tine Seikhou, the head of the Council for Senegal.

Opening remarks were provided by Prof. Cheikhou. He highlighted the importance of the workshop and what Senegal is set to accomplish. He welcomed the Head of the Council Dr Dia Tine who welcomed the project team led by the Co-principal investigator Prof. Peter Onwualu, the acting president of African University of Science and Technology (AUST). The ATPS was represented by the Project Officer, Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo, the ATPS Programme Manager, Alfred Nyambane and the ATPS communication and Outreach Officer, Susan Mburu.

Providing her opening remarks, Dr. Dia Tine appreciated the effort made by the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) through the SRIFA project to support councils to be more effective in their service delivery in the research and innovation funding ecosystem. She urged the participants to participate effectively and diligently in the workshop to ensure that they provide all the feedback needed.

2.2 Workshop objectives and presentation of the findings

The workshop objectives were presented to the participants by the Co-PI, Prof. Onwualu on behalf of the project team. These are as provided in section 1.2 of this report. Dr. Cynthia then presented the findings of the

study to the participants which highlighted the key policies around research and innovation funding, Institutional Framework of Research and Innovation Funding, Needs Assessment, Training needs and the Technical Support required by the Council.

2.2.1 National Policies for Research and Innovation Funding

The government is currently developing an STI policy expected to be completed in 2023, which will enhance alignment with national goals, stakeholder involvement, and evidence-based approaches to foster economic and social development. The country does have some STI related policies and strategies for instance the National Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy (NSTIS), but this document is not a formal STI policy. The NSTIS is a framework for STI development, but it does not set out specific goals or objectives, nor does it provide a roadmap for implementation.

The Plan for an Emerging Senegal (PSE), (2015-2035): It was launched in 2015 and it sets out the government's vision for the country's development. The PSE identifies research and innovation as a key priority for Senegal's development. It states that "research and innovation are essential for Senegal's economic and social transformation."

The National Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy (NSTIS): The NSTIS was adopted by the Senegalese government in 2017. It is a ten-year strategy aimed at promoting science, technology, and innovation as economic and social development drivers. The NSTIS encompasses a broader range of topics than the SNRST, including: Creating a scientific and innovation culture in the educational system; Assisting in the growth of science and technology-based firms; Investing in science and technology infrastructure, such as research laboratories and technology parks; Creating policies that promote science, technology, and innovation; and International collaboration entails forming alliances with other countries and organizations in order to boost research, technology, and innovation.

The National Strategy for Scientific and Technical Research (SNRST), adopted in 2014, is the main policy document that defines the vision, objectives, priorities and instruments for research and innovation in Senegal. It aims to promote a national research system that is responsive to the needs of the society and the economy, and that contributes to the achievement of the national development plan (Plan Senegal Emergent) and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Senegal Sectoral Policy Letter for the Development of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (LPSD): The LSPD is a document that defines the government's vision for the country's future higher education, research, and innovation. The LSPD establishes an array of objectives for higher education, research, and innovation in Senegal, such as improving the quality and relevance of higher education, encouraging research and innovation, expanding the number of researchers, and fostering international cooperation.

Plan d'Actions pour la Formulation de la Stratégie Economique et Sociale (PAFES): is a national development plan for Senegal that was launched in 2013. It aims to achieve an average annual growth rate of 7%, to reduce poverty by 50%, to create 500,000 new jobs, to improve access to education and healthcare, and to promote sustainable development. The plan is based on three pillars: economic transformation, social development, and good governance.

2.2.2 National Institutional Framework for Research and Innovation Funding

The following are some of the key institutions involved in the National Institutional Framework for Research and Innovation Funding in Senegal:

- *Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI)*: MESRI is the lead government agency for research and innovation in Senegal. MESRI is responsible for developing and implementing national research and innovation policies and strategies. MESRI through the General Directorate of Research and Innovation (DGRI) also provides direct funding to research institutions, as well as through competitive grants programs.
- National Agency for Research and Innovation (ANRI): ANRI is a public agency that is responsible for promoting and coordinating research and innovation in Senegal. ANRI provides funding for research projects, as well as support for researchers and innovators.
- *National Innovation Fund (FNI)*: FNI is a public-private partnership fund that provides funding for early-stage technology startups. FNI is managed by the Senegalese Investment Fund (FONSIS).
- Senegalese Foundation for Scientific Research (FSRS): This foundation supports scientific research and innovation activities, including funding and grants for researchers and innovators.
- National Institute of Pedagogical Studies and Research (INSEPS): INSEPS is focused on educational research and curriculum development.
- *International donors*: International donors, such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the European Union, provide significant funding for research and innovation in Senegal. International donors often support specific research programs or projects, aligned with their own development priorities.

The National Institutional Framework for Research and Innovation Funding in Senegal is still evolving, and there is a need to strengthen coordination and collaboration between the different actors involved. However, the framework has made significant progress in recent years, and is now supporting a growing number of research and innovation projects and initiatives.

2.2.4 Training needs for National Research and Innovation Funding Agency in Senegal

The Senegalese Council and stakeholders identified key training needs that can lead to the efficient delivery of services in the research and innovation funding ecosystem in Senegal. These are summarized and ranked in the table below. The table lists the training needs to strengthen the Council, ranked by priority. The top three areas identified are: 1) Fundraising and grantsmanship, ranking 1st, indicating a critical need for skills in securing funds and managing grants; 2) Online management of grant calls, ranked 2nd, highlighting the importance of digital proficiency in coordinating grant processes; and 3) Public-private partnership development, ranked 3rd, underscoring the significance of expertise in fostering collaborations between the public and private sectors. Other notable areas include capacity building on gender-responsive data collection (4th), strengthening the role of national intermediaries (5th), and grants management and disbursements (6th). The rankings extend to 18th place, covering a range of topics from effective communication of research results to policymaking processes. This prioritized list offers insights into the specific training needs perceived as crucial for enhancing the Council's capabilities.

Training needs to strengthen the Council	Prioritisatio n
Fundraising and grantsmanship	1 st
Online management of grant calls	2 nd
Public-private partnership development	3 rd
Capacity building on gender-responsive data collection, management, reporting, and archiving	4 th

How to strengthen the role of national intermediaries	5 th
Grants management and disbursements	6 th
Financial reporting systems	7 th
Institutional risk assessment	8 th
Effective Communication of research results	9 th
Training and capacity building in research management	10 th
Commercialization of research outputs	11 th
Safeguarding intellectual property rights	12 th
Strategies for using evidence to inform policy such as how to write a policy brief	13 th
Quality assurance and ethics in research	14 th
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning in project management	15 th
Gender equality and inclusion strategies	16 th
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning in Council internal processes	17 th
Policymaking processes	18 th

2.2.3 Technical support needs to strengthen the National Research and Innovation Funding Agency in Senegal

According to the respondents in both the KII and FGD conducted in Senegal, the technical support needs for the Senegalese Council are identified and rated as shown below.

Technical support	Prioritisation
Stakeholder engagement and policy dialogue on topical issues of R&I funding of interest to Council	1 st
Commissioning of studies on specific STI issues relevant to Councils	2 nd
Support on advocacy for increased R&I funding in the country from policy makers and parliamentarians	3 rd
Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	4 th
Brokering SRI agreements with other Councils and actors in the ecosystem	5 th
Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing among critical R&I funding stakeholders in the country	6 th
Organising benchmarking/learning visits to other well-performing Councils	7 th

The second day started with a recap of day one activities. This was presented by Alfred Nyambane. Dr. Cynthia took the participants through the co-development process and guided the participants on how to go about it. Two groups were formed. Group 1 handled the technical support needed to strengthen the Research Council in Senegal and Group 2 handled the training needs required to strengthen the Council.

Co-developed and co-designed Technical support needed to strengthen the Council

Priority	Item	Content	Gender and inclusion	Challenges	Solutions
1	Strengthen the Directorate for the Financing of Scientific Research and Technological Development (DFRSDT)	- Strengthenin g human resources - Capacity building (information monitoring, project design, monitoring and evaluation, - Technical assistance	 Conduct a study on gender and financing Have a gender expert on the management team Implement a good gender policy 	 Staff control Resistance to change Women's Empowermen t Promotion of female researchers 	Staff motivation Awareness and training
2	Stakeholder commitment and policy dialogue on current issues related to R&I funding and Council interests	- Help create a framework including stakeholders	- Inclusion of institutions addressing gender issues	 Have an exhaustive map Collaboration and pooling of stakeholders 	- Implement joint projects
3	Organize benchmarking/learning visits to other successful councils	 Help identify successful models Benchmarki ng missions 	 Inclusion of institutions addressing gender issues Involvement of women 	- Allocate more funding for missions	- Mobilize PTF financing
4	Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks	- Conduct a study on good practices (policies, strategies, etc.)	 Inclusion of institutions addressing gender issues Involvement of women 	 Adaptability of good practices in the national context Stakeholder inclusion 	 Involve all stakeholders Translate good practices into national policy and strategy

5	Commission studies on specific STI issues relevant to councils	-Conduct an impact study of STI financing on industry development -Investigate the contribution of STI financing to GDP	 Inclusion of institutions addressing gender issues Involvement of women 	-Lack of statistics/data -Lack of collaboration between the private sector and research institutions -Inadequate resources	-Mobilize own resources and the contribution of TFPs -Recruit a Firm or Consultant for the impact study -Recruit a Firm or Consultant or collaborate with the ANSD for the investigation
6	Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing between key actors in R&I financing in the country	- Create a digital financing observatory - Have qualified personnel in information systems management	 Include gender in digital platforms Consider women inclusion and safety in digital technology 	-Lack of experience in creating and operating an observatory -Lack of qualified personnel in the creation and management of online information systems -Mobilization of financing	-Mobilize own resources and the contribution of TFPs -Recruit a firm or consultant for the creation of the financing observatory -Strengthen staff capacity in the management, coordination and security of information systems and the observatory
7	Negotiate STI agreements with other councils and ecosystem actors	Negotiation and signing of MOUs with Councils (successful model) and other stakeholders	 Inclusion of institutions addressing gender issues Involvement of women 	 Identification and application of good practices in financing Adherence of other actors to the strategy defined in terms of research funding 	-Benchmarking mission funding -Strengthen the Council's negotiating capacities -Technical assistance for defining collaboration and partnership management tools
8	Support for advocacy for increased funding for R&I in the country from policymakers and parliamentarians	-Help pool resources and interventions of institutions responsible for financing R&I -Spark political and parliamentary	-Engage women politicians and parliamentarians to advocate for increased R&I funding -Promote gender equality and opportunities in	-Weak culture of research and innovation funding in the political debate and among parliamentarians	Organize training workshops for politicians and parliamentarians on the importance of financing R&I

	debate on R&I funding	access to R&I funding	-Low percentage of women in the R&I field	
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The participants reorganized and prioritized the technical support needs for strengthening research and innovation financing in the country. The information was presented in a tabular format, with eight rows representing the prioritized areas for interventions. The top six priorities identified by the participants are:

- 1. Strengthen the Directorate for the Financing of Scientific Research and Technological Development (DFRSDT)
- 2. Stakeholder commitment and policy dialogue on current issues related to R&I funding and Council interests
- 3. Organise benchmarking/learning visits to other successful councils
- 4. Drafting of STI policy documents/frameworks
- 5. Commission studies on specific STI issues relevant to councils
- 6. Creation of physical and online platforms for knowledge sharing between key actors in R&I financing in the country

For each of those priorities, the participants outlined the specific content areas, gender and inclusion considerations, challenges faced, and proposed solutions. The content areas cover a wide range of topics, including research strategy management, policymaking processes, intellectual property rights, quality assurance and ethics, gender equality strategies, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, and partnership development.

The gender and inclusion considerations emphasize the need to involve women, young people, and individuals with disabilities in research activities, decision-making processes, and funding opportunities. The challenges identified include language barriers, lack of diversity in research questions, insufficient connections with stakeholders, lack of institutional support, and absence of gender-inclusive policies.

The proposed solutions involve upgrading infrastructure, research capacity building, policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, benchmarking missions, gender mainstreaming, and the creation of digital platforms and observatories. The solutions also highlight the need for technical assistance, resource mobilization, and collaboration with various actors, such as the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners.

Co-developed and co-designed Technical support needed to strengthen the Council in Senegal

Priority	THEMATICS / Training need areas	Content	Gender inclusion	Challenges	Solutions	Comments
			Take the gender dimension into consideration in all actions	- Language barrier	- Upgrading in English/French - research must address priority questions and stimulate economic and social development - Strengthen the organisation and harmonisation of research	- Cross-cutting aspects
1 st	Research strategy management	- Skills and Capacity building in research management		- Diversity of questions to be addressed	 Need for a multidisciplinar y team of experts to address all issues, Participation of all council members Inclusion and equality 	
2nd		- Policymaking processes (Advocacy tools and strategies)			- Raise awareness among authorities/ parliamentarian s	
3rd		 Safeguarding intellectual property rights for researchers Valorization of results of research (Communication, Commercialization, etc.) 		- Lack of institutiona l support and people in charge of these issues	 include the institutions involved (DIVPITT, ASPIT, etc.) and especially the researchers Mapping of researchers Involve the press, NGOs, PTF, and users 	_

		- Quality assurance and ethics in research		- Tools missing	- Designate someone responsible for these issues and - Develop tools	-
		- Gender equality and inclusion strategies		- Lack of policy addressing this issue	- Empower women, young people, and people with disabilities and encourage their participation in activities - Develop a Gender, Equality and Inclusion policy	- Low representation of women in the research ecosystem - Poor consideration of young people and people with disabilities
		- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning in Council internal processes		- Lack of digital tools	Set up adequate equipment (platforms)	
4th	Fundraising and financial management	- Fundraising and grantsmanship strategies	Involvemen t and empowerme nt of	-	Increase of available fundsCentralize funds	- Insufficient funding - 1 call/year (FIRST)
5th		- Partnership development	women	- Lack of knowledge of potential partners - Insufficien t connection s with the actors involved	- Benchmarking - Bring together all the stakeholders identified in the research ecosystem	- Increase donors - Diversify funding sources and methods (projects, mobility, scholarships, etc.)
6th		- Online management of grant calls		Lack of digital platform	- Equip and train the council	
7 th		- Grants management and disbursements		Lack of digital platform	- Equip and train the council	
8th		- Financial reporting systems		Reports	Periodic reports	

The participants at the validation workshop reorganized and prioritized their training needs areas to effectively address the challenges they face and align with their goals. The top priority identified was gender inclusion as a cross cutting issue across the training needs areas, recognizing the need to mainstream gender considerations across all activities and actions of the council. Participants acknowledged challenges like language barriers and aimed to upgrade English/French skills to facilitate this. Additionally, they emphasized that research efforts must address priority issues that can stimulate economic and social development in the country. Strengthening research organization, harmonization, and considering cross-cutting aspects were also highlighted under this overarching gender inclusion priority.

Research strategy management emerged as the first key priority area. Building skills and capacities in research management was deemed crucial, along with assembling a multidisciplinary team of experts to tackle the diverse range of questions and issues. Ensuring inclusive participation from all council members and promoting equality were other important aspects under this priority. The second priority training needs area focused on policy making processes, with a need to develop effective advocacy tools and strategies to raise awareness among authorities and parliamentarians on critical research and development matters. Intellectual property rights, valorization of research outputs, quality assurance, ethics, gender equality strategies, and monitoring/evaluation of internal processes were also flagged as areas requiring attention and training. Financial management and fundraising took the fourth priority slot, covering strategies for fundraising, grantsmanship, empowering women's involvement, increasing available funds, and centralizing funding mechanisms. Partnership development with potential partners, donors, stakeholders through benchmarking was ranked fifth.

Finally, establishing digital platforms for online grant management, disbursements, and financial reporting systems were the lower prioritized needs to streamline council operations. The reorganized priorities demonstrated the council's commitment to gender-responsive research, strategic management, policymaking influence, sustainable financing, and collaborative partnerships to drive impactful research and innovation in Senegal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the reorganized priorities outlined during the validation workshop reflect a strategic approach to address challenges and align efforts with overarching goals. Gender inclusion emerged as a top priority, underscoring the need to mainstream gender considerations across all activities. Research strategy management was identified as crucial, emphasizing the importance of building skills and assembling multidisciplinary teams. Policymaking processes, intellectual property rights, quality assurance, and financial management also featured prominently, highlighting the council's commitment to fostering impactful research and innovation in Senegal. Through collaborative partnerships and strategic planning, the council aims to drive sustainable development and positive societal change.



A Group photograph of participants during SRIFA validation workshop in Senegal

Workshop Programme

Day 1: Understar	nding the Research and Innovation Funding Landscape	12th March 2024				
	Morning Session: Opening and Overview					
9:00 - 9:30	Registration	Susan Mburu				
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome Remarks.	Prof. Cheikhou Kane				
9:45 -10:00	Opening Remarks.	Dia Tine Seikhou				
10:00 - 10:30	Introduction to Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcomes.	Prof. Peter Onwualu				
10:30 – 11:00	Tea Break					
	Session 1: Presentation of Preliminary Resul	ts				
11:00 – 11:45	Presentation of Senegal report	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo				
11:45 – 12:45	Interactive Q&A Session.	Alfred Nyambane				
12:45 – 2:00	Lunch Break					
	Afternoon Session: In-depth Stakeholder Engago	ement				
2:00 – 3:30	Breakout Sessions: Stakeholder Group Discussions on Prioritization of Training Needs and Technical Support.	Alfred Nyambane/ Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo/				
3:30 – 4:00	Group Presentations on Identified Challenges and Opportunities.	Prof. Peter Onwualu/ Susan Mburu				
4:00 – 4:30	Plenary Discussion: Key Themes Emerging from Stakeholder Engagements.					
4.30 – 6.00	Networking Session					
Day 2: Co-Develo	oping Tailor-Made Programs	13 th March 2024				
Morning Session: Recap and Objective Setting						
9:00 - 9:30	Registration	Susan Mburu				
9:30 – 9:45	Recap and review of Day 1.	Alfred Nyambane				
9:45 -10:30	Introduction to Co-development Process.	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo				
10:30 - 11:00	Tea Break					

Session 2: Co-Development Workshops					
11:00 – 11:40	Workshop 1: Designing Tailor-Made Training Programs.	ALL			
11:40 – 12:20	Workshop 2: Identifying Technical Support Needs.	ALL			
12:20 – 1:00	Cross-Group Discussions and Insights Sharing.	ALL			
1.00 – 2.00	Lunchbreak				
	Afternoon Session: Implementation Planning				
2:00 -2:30	Presentation of Co-Developed Program.	Council Representative			
2:30 – 3:30	Feedback and Iterative Refinement.	ALL			
3:30 – 4:15	Roadmap for Implementation: Timelines and Responsibilities.	Dr. Cynthia Nwobodo			
4:15 – 4:30	Closing Remarks and Next Steps.	Prof. Peter Onwualu			

List of Participants

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