Gender, Equality, and Inclusion: Towards a More Gendered, Equal, and Inclusive Research and Innovation Ecosystem in Africa

Synthesis Report
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Executive Summary

The Gender, Equality, and Inclusion (GEI) report has been developed to track the actions and implementation of the aspirations of councils in the pursuit of a gender equal and inclusive research and innovation ecosystem at the national level. It details the goals set, the strategies employed, and the achievements made in this regard. The report has been structured to highlight success stories, share lessons learned across councils, identify best practices, and explore available opportunities, while also providing a platform to review and assess the progress achieved during the first year of the RIM project implementation. In summarizing the performance of councils in GEI, the report is useful as a project management tool, lifting the lid on the shortfalls for stakeholders to re-strategize and make stronger commitments and institute more effective practical actions.

The report was developed by analyzing data provided by the councils, drawn first from their concept notes - which outlined their aspirations and goals - and then from the research proposals of projects selected for funding. Together, these two sources offered a solid basis for assessing council performance and comparing the strategies presented in the concept notes. To complete the analysis and synthesis, a desk review was also conducted.

Preliminary findings show that:

1. At least 38% of the projects selected for funding councils are led by women Principal Investigators.

2. About 82% (14 of 17) of the Councils are funding at least one project led by a woman PI.

3. Nine (9) councils have attained the target of at least 30% of the projects selected by the Councils being led by women Principal Investigators.

Apart from women leading projects, they are actively involved in the other funded projects led by male PIs.

1. Out of 491 researchers being supported through the 82 funded projects, 230 or 47% are female.

2. At least 12 countries have managed to achieve 30% target of women representation in research teams.

3. Most of the Councils which scored low on women led projects (0-25%) have strived to ensure that they realize at least 30% women representation in the research teams.

On inclusivity, several Councils are funding projects that target early career academics, private sector, informal sector and SMEs and social sciences:

1. At least six (6) councils have selected to fund research projects that enhance the inclusion of other marginalized groups e.g., informal sector, small-scale producers/SMEs, as well as the general population into research designs and/ or teams.

2. At least eight (8) councils are funding eleven (12) 'gendered' research projects.

3. Nine (9) councils have incorporated an objective on gender inclusion in their finalized R&I frameworks.

4. Some Councils have incorporated innovative GEI strategies and approaches, including ensuring that at least 30% of the reviewers of the proposals are women, training of the beneficiaries on GEI, having in place gender related performance indicators, gender strategies and assigning weight on gender in proposal writing.

The report recommends the following actions:

1. The need for councils to develop clear GEI indicators and SMART objectives/ targets as a necessary step in ensuring that gender equality and inclusivity moves beyond tokenism into actual commitment and comprehensive aspirations.

2. There is still need for special support for these women researchers, many of whom may have little to no prior experience through securing active and capacity building roles of women within the research teams.

3. During the research project implementation stage, it is important to support women to build their skills in managing research project, for instance through the monitoring and evaluation functions.

4. There is need for a comprehensive and operational GEI toolkit at the councils (complete with performance indicators) that will support research teams to assess the progress, results, and outcomes of the project in achieving GEI objectives and goals.

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Contents

Abbreviations

ACTS	African Centre for Technology Studies
CO-PI	Co-Principal Investigator
COSTECH	Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology
ECA	Early Career Academic
FONSTI	Fonds pour la Science, la Technologie et l'innovation (Science, Technology, and Innovation Fund)
GEI	Gender, Equality, and Inclusion
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
MESRI	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur De La Recherche, Et De L'Innovation (The Ministry of Higher Education Research and Innovation)
MESTI	Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation of Ghana
MSc	Master of Science
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
NCST Rwanda	National Councils for Science and Technology of Rwanda
NRF	National Research Fund, Kenya
UNCST	Uganda National Commission for Science and Technology
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
PI	Principal Investigator
RGC-MInT	Research Granting Council – Ministry of Information and Technology of Ethiopia
RIM	Research and Innovation Management [Project]
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGC	Science Granting Council
SGCI	Science Granting Council Initiative
SMART Objectives	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic (Relevant), and Time-bound objectives
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Science, Technology, and Innovation
UK FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the synthesis report

Since January 2023, the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU), and University of Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (UCAD) Senegal, has been implementing a project on **Supporting Science Granting Councils to fund and manage research and innovation.** The goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Science Granting Councils (SGCs) to fund and manage research and innovation in areas aligned with their national development plans and priorities. To realize this goal, the consortium is supporting the councils to undertake the following key activities:

1. Refine, adapt, and use research, and innovation frameworks.
2. Design and manage high quality research competitions.
3. Mainstream gender equality, inclusivity, and ethical considerations in all the funded projects.
4. Conduct monitoring, evaluation and learning of the funded projects.
5. Synthesize research outputs and develop relevant knowledge products.

The implementation of these activities will contribute to strengthening the Councils' ability to support research projects that contribute to economic and social development in their countries. This will result in more effective national STI systems which contribute to inclusive development in sub-Saharan Africa.

This report is on the analysis (synthesis) of the extent to which gender equality and inclusivity considerations have been mainstreamed during the first year of the implementation of this project (January-December 2023). By the end of the year, councils had successfully completed the process of designing and managing high quality research competitions and have selected to fund some 82 projects under this RIM project.

1.2 Rationale for the synthesis

To ensure mainstreaming of gender and inclusivity in the project, the project document has provided the following strategies:

1. All research teams have adequate representation of female researchers, while at least 30% of the projects funded are led by female researchers. These include:

   i. Special calls targeting women researchers.
   ii. Ring-fencing projects to be led by women.
   iii. Special workshops to sharpen their proposal writing skills.
   iv. Special outreach to mobilize women to respond to calls for proposals and defining the inclusion and integration of women researchers in research teams.

2. Proposals to embed gender and inclusivity in the research methods.

3. During the implementation of research projects, there will be efforts to ensure that data collection and treatment are not biased against minority groups in terms of gender, color, affluence, education, among other factors.

4. Where possible, at least 30% of the reviewers of the proposals funded under this project, should be women.

To ensure inclusivity in terms of barriers and economic disparity, the following strategies were adopted: First, the evaluable grant resources were shared nearly equally amongst the participating Councils. Secondly, when working with the councils to refine the research and innovation frameworks, the consortium encouraged them to consider sectors and areas that have traditionally not received adequate attention. For example, the informal industrial clusters, early career academics, and industrial research institutions. From experience, it is known that the informal sector normally receives less attention compared to formal local industries in terms of access to skills and innovations. In addition, compared to universities, fewer industrial research organizations have received research and innovation grants, since previous support has focused mainly on universities. Similarly, early career academics have been disadvantaged, since traditionally, more competitive grants are won by seasoned researchers. There is therefore a need to determine the extent to which these strategies have been implemented and what has been the outcome.

1.3   Goal and objectives

The overall goal of this synthesis is to document the extent to which gender and inclusivity considerations have been mainstreamed during the design and implementation of research competitions by the councils. The specific objectives are:

a. Document the extent to which the 30% strategy has been realized and the approaches the councils have taken.
b. To identify success stories, challenges, and perceptions in the councils' efforts to realize the 30% targets.
c. To prepare and disseminate the findings and recommendations.

1.4   Methodology

This work has relied on desk review of the existing documents. These included seventeen (17) concept notes prepared by the councils, seventeen (17) collaborative agreements signed by the councils and the ACTS and 82 funded project proposals. The desk review has been complemented by online data collection from the councils.

2. Findings

2.1 Women led projects.

Finding 1: 31 of the 82 projects (38%) selected by the Councils are led by women Principal Investigators.

During the design and implementation of research and innovation competition, the councils made deliberate efforts to ensure gender and inclusivity are reflected in the projects they would be funding. In this, the councils have adopted various approaches. These ranged from ringfencing specific projects for women researchers; setting up a minimum quota for women-led research projects,; encouraging women PIs to apply; giving gender aspects a significant weight in terms of project proposal evaluations; ensuring gender representation in proposal evaluation teams; ensuring research teams are gender inclusive in terms of composition;ensuring women hold substantive roles within research teams. Beyond meeting gender inclusion requirements as a team member, there are projects that were designed to address gendered themes, and the integration of gender inclusion as part of the research and innovation frameworks of councils. These are illustrated below:

% of women-plus (headcount)

38%

17 -country average

a. A unique case is that of Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire which ring-fenced their entire calls for women-led researchers. Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) launched a call to upscale research outputs produced by women with a focus on food and nutrition security while Cote d'Ivoire's FONSTI launched calls focusing on 3 thematic areas: health; environment, climate change, & sustainable development; and agriculture, food & nutrition security.

b. Ghana and Zambia launched a bilateral call aimed at upscaling projects by women researchers in agro-processing/food-processing.

c. Namibia – Gender consideration and inclusivity within the project team has been given a 15% weight in the proposal evaluation.

d. Sierra Leone – At least 30% of the reviewers of the proposals funded under the RIM project are women.

Figure 1: Percentage of women led projects per council
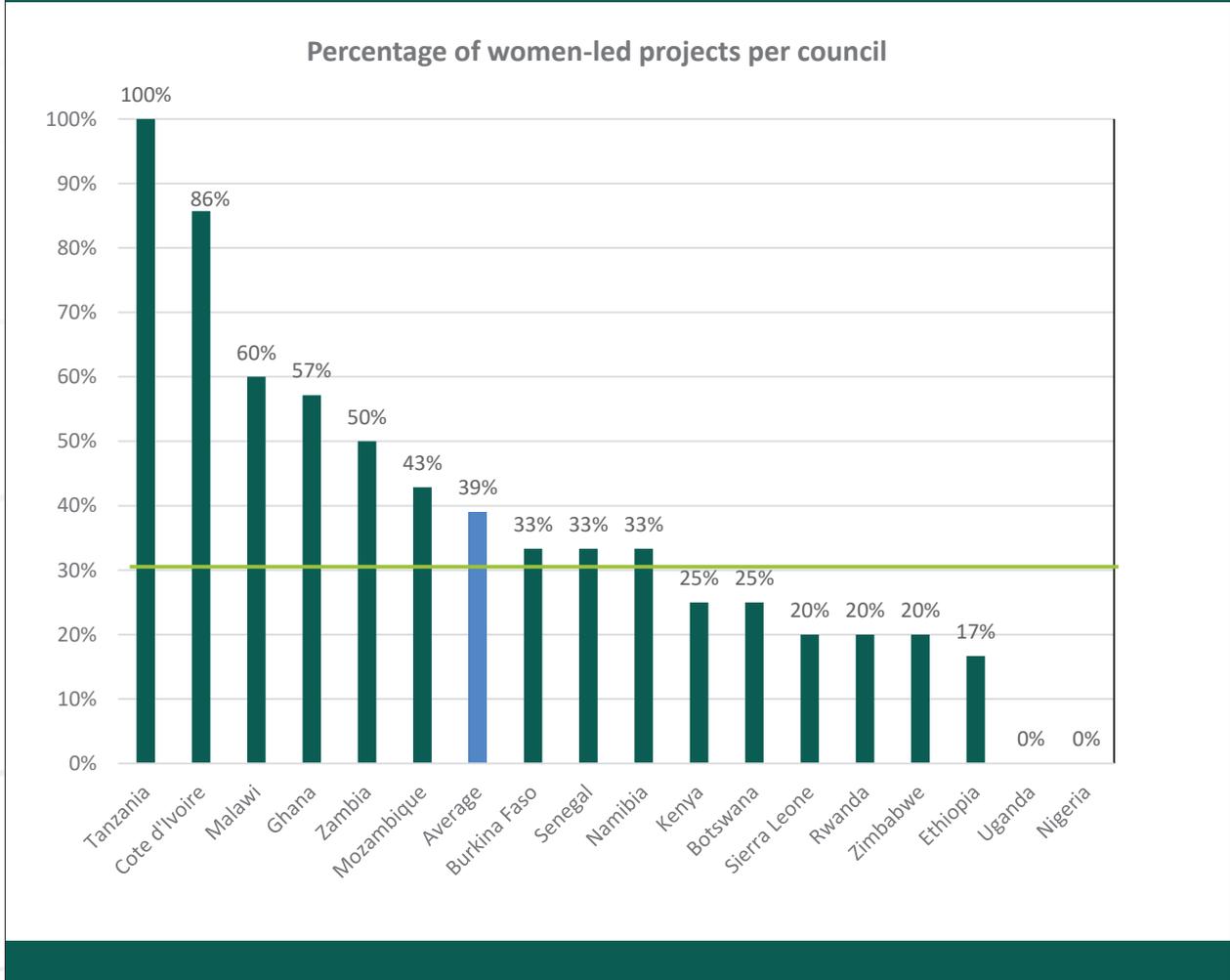
2.2 The Performance of Science Granting Councils (SGCs)

Finding 2: Fourteen (14) Councils (82% of the Councils) are funding at least one project led by a women PI, while 9 Councils (53% of the Councils) attained the desired target of at least 30% of the projects selected by the Councils being led by women Principal Investigators.

Fourteen (14) SGCs (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia) are funding at least one project led by women researchers. As shown in figure 1 below, nine (9) councils have attained 'at least 30%' of the funded projects being led by women. Notably, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, Mozambique, and Zambia have significantly surpassed this target.

Nine (9) councils fell short of this target, notably Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Uganda who do not have any women-led research projects.

2.3   Composition of Research Teams

Finding 3: Further analysis shows that apart from women leading projects, they are actively involved in the other funded projects led by male PIs. Out of 491 researchers being supported through the 82 funded projects, 230 (47%) are female. Furthermore, at least 12 SGCs have managed to achieve 30% target of women representation in research teams.

% of women-plus (headcount)

47%

17 -country average

So far, there are a total of 31 selected projects that are women-led (women PIs). On average, women PIs recruit more men than women into their project teams. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the research team composition of women-led research projects:. Who are they mentoring? Does a woman PI necessarily ensure that women researchers are empowered or does the empowerment only end at the woman PI? From the results, it is clear that a woman PI must be backed by other initiatives to ensure that other women researchers are also empowered, and their capacity built. From Table 1, we notice that even under women PIs, men researchers are still being empowered more than women. However, the gender gap is significantly lower, which is mainly attributed to the woman PI even though a lot more can still be done in pursuit of gender equality. It is important to note that 6 out of 7 PIs in Cote d'Ivoire are women, who have empowered significantly more women (55%) than men (45%). While 100% of PIs in the Tanzania case are women, they have empowered less women (40%) than men (60%).

Mozambique is leading in terms of empowerment of women researchers by women PIs – the 3 women PIs have together empowered more women (83%) than men (17%) in their research teams. Similarly, Ghana's women PIs have empowered more women (63%) than men (37%).

The case of Uganda is an interesting one; while there are no women PIs, the 3 projects together have empowered more women (58%) than men (42%) in their research teams.

	Table 1: Mentorship of women researchers in women-led projects		
	Council	No. of women-led projects funded (count)	Percentage of women mentored under PIs (headcount)
1	Botswana	1 out of 4	0
2	Burkina Faso	1 out of 3	(no research team data)
3	Cote d'Ivoire	7 out of 7	55
4	Ethiopia	1 out of 6	20
5	Ghana	4 out of 7	63
6	Kenya	1 out of 4	14
7	Malawi	3 out of 5	50
8	Mozambique	3 out of 7	82
9	Namibia	1 out of 3	63
10	Nigeria	0 out of 4	13
11	Rwanda	1 out 5	27

12	Senegal	2 out of 6	50
13	Sierra Leone	1 out of 5	0
14	Tanzania	4 out of 4	40
15	Uganda	0 out of 3	58
16	Zambia	2 out of 4	54
17	Zimbabwe	0 out of 5	35

Finding 4: Most of the Councils which scored low on women led projects (0-25%) have strived to ensure that they realize at least 30% women representation in the research teams.

The table below shows the comparison between the number of women led projects compared with the average representation of women in the research teams. Notable in this category is Uganda, which despite having no women led project, has the second highest representation of women in research teams supported by the council. Rwanda has attained women representation of 34, respectively. See Table 2 and Figure 2 for details.

Table 2: Representation of women in research teams			
	Council	% of women led projects funded (count)	% of women representation in the research team (headcount, PI inclusive)
1	Botswana	25	27
2	Burkina Faso	33	27
3	Cote d'Ivoire	100	61
4	Ethiopia	17	41
5	Ghana	57	57
6	Kenya	25	28
7	Malawi	60	48
8	Mozambique	43	52
9	Namibia	33	-
10	Nigeria	0	13
11	Rwanda	20	34
12	Senegal	33	41
13	Siera-Leone	20	38
14	Tanzania	100	53
15	Uganda	0	58
16	Zambia	50	48
17	Zimbabwe	0	29

Figure 2: Women representation in the research teams per councils

Representation of women in the research teams per council (%)

Council	Percentage
Nigeria	13%
Botswana	27%
Kenya	28%
Zimbabwe	32%
Burkina Faso	33%
Rwanda	34%
Sierra Leone	38%
Senegal	41%
Ethiopia	41%
Average	41%
Malawi	48%
Zambia	48%
Mozambique	52%
Tanzania	53%
Ghana	57%
Uganda	58%
Cote d'Ivoire	61%
Namibia	63%
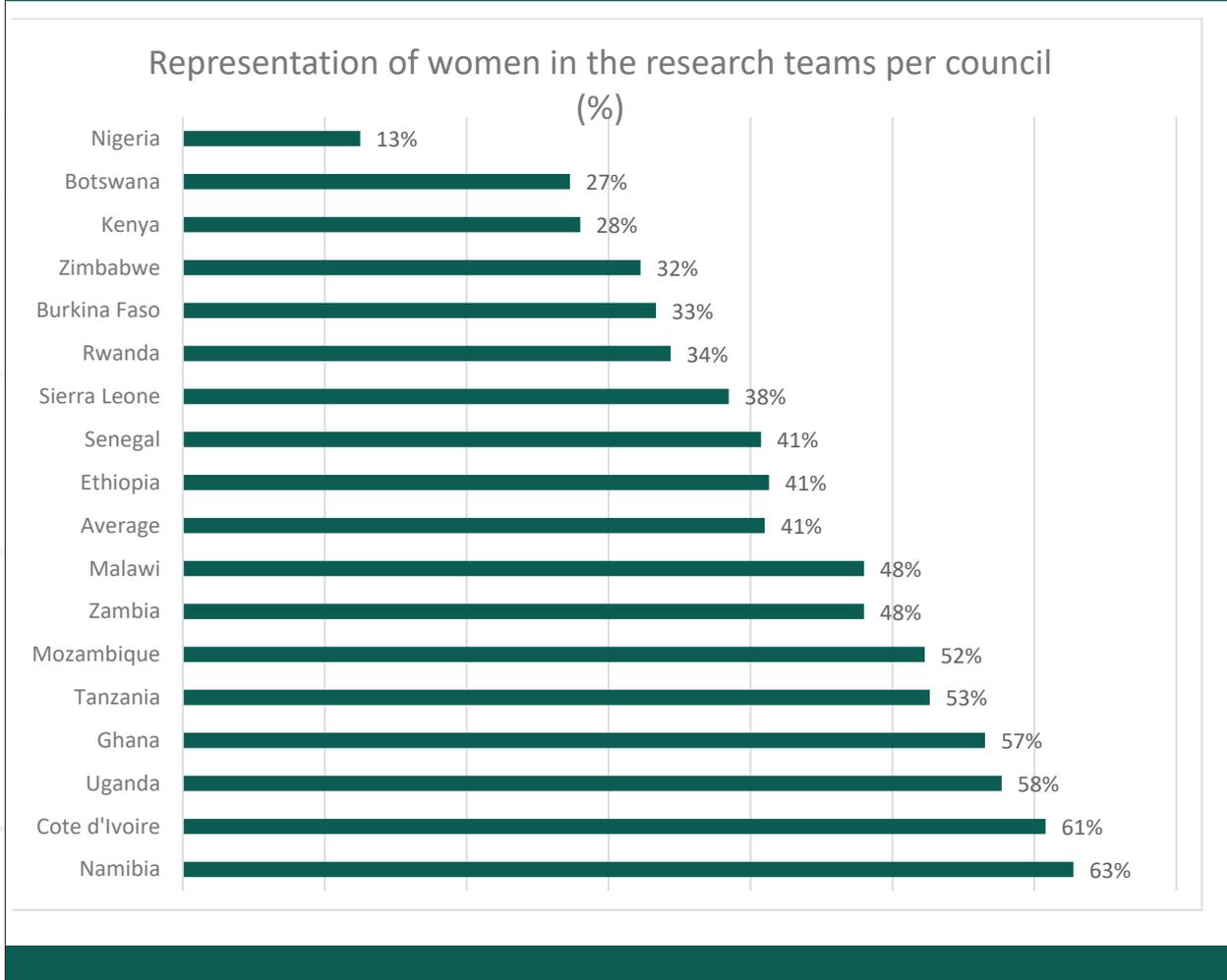
2.4 Inclusivity

2.4.1 Students and Early Career Academics

Finding 5: In terms of inclusivity, several Councils are funding projects that target Early Career Academics, private sector, informal sector and SMEs and social sciences.

Examples of Councils that have included students and Early Career Academics (ECRs) in their calls for proposals:

a. **Malawi:** The Council has ringfenced two projects (Renewable Energy Research and Impact Assessment) for Early Career Academics. In the latter case the Council is keen to enable ECAs to participate to build their capacity in undertaking research impact assessment of the completed projects.

b. **Namibia:** Has allocated US$ 16,000 to be reserved to not more than six MSc students for their field research activities within the capacity building component.

c. **Zimbabwe:** Has allocated at least 60% of the projects to younger universities, as part of affirmative action. In addition, Zimbabwe is supporting 5 PhD women students to undertake their field data collection.

d. **Zambia:** Had a requirement that all applying research teams must include early career academics.

e. **Uganda:** The 3 funded projects will train a total of 6 MSc students, 50% female.

2.4.2 Private & Informal Sectors, and SMEs

Finding 6: At least six (6) councils (Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique, and Botswana) have selected to fund research projects that enhance the inclusion of other marginalized groups e.g., informal sector, small-scale producers/SMEs, as well as the general population into research designs and/ or teams.

a. **Malawi** has committed resources to support, through one grant, a project focused on the informal sector innovations that have passed proof of concept stage in renewable energy.

b. **Kenya's** National Research Fund (NRF) has prioritized two projects: one on the leather value chain for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the informal sector and the other on mental health, which is an emerging issue.

c. **Rwanda** is supporting a project on the development of multi-grain seeding machine for small-holder farmers in Rwanda.

d. **Mozambique and Botswana** are supporting projects targeting community empowerment through value addition and agro-processing of indigenous fruits.

   i. Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) has demonstrated inclusivity by targeting the private sector in all the 3 projects selected for funding. The call, being a Public Private Partnership (PPP,) ensured that the private sector is effectively included in the research projects. Examples include:

   ii. Establishing a small-scale food waste up-cycling facility for cricket feed production and marketing in Kampala, Uganda.

   iii. Up scaling the uptake of cocoa innovative technologies for enhanced value addition during primary processing in Uganda.

e. Maize germ and Bran as raw materials for high fiber value added bakery and confectionery products/ Up-scaling and commercialization of maize bran and germ value added products in Uganda.

2.5 Research projects targeting gendered themes

Findings 7: At least eight (8) councils (Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) will be funding eleven (12) 'gendered' research projects.

At least eight (8) Councils are funding projects that are gender-oriented. Gendered' here refers to projects that address women-specific subjects/ research problems. For example:

a. The trilateral project funded by Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe is on– *Developing a Two-Sided Artificial Intelligence Risk Predictive Model for Early Identification of High-Risk Antenatal Mothers*. Enhancing Maternal and Neonatal Health Outcomes in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe is a gendered research project.

b. Three (3) out of the six projects being funded by Cote d'Ivoire (2) focus on gendered themes:

    i.   Development of a phytoestrogenic food supplement based on the leaves of Manihot esculenta Crantz (Euphorbiaceae) for the management of symptoms linked to menopause.
    ii. Support for the economic empowerment of women living near the Azagny National Park through the introduction of local production of Cardisoma armatum (hairy crab) into their agricultural habits.
    iii. Investigation of circulating tumour DNA in the detection of cancers in HPV-infected individuals in Côte d'Ivoire (ACiCHPV-CI)

c. One of the four projects being funded by Kenya is on - *A digital intervention for the prevention and early detection of depression and suicide among the youth in Kenya*.

d. Ghana is supporting two (2) projects under pathways to mainstreaming gender, equity diversity and inclusion in STI.

    iv. Women's participation in STI research, capacity building and mentorship programmes: The trends, barriers, and enablers.
    v.   Mainstreaming Gender in higher education: A prerequisite for advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation in Ghana.

e. Tanzania will be implementing two (2) projects that are gender focused –

    vi. Harvest loss reduction in Sardine (value chain analysis). Since processing of sardine is done mostly by women, the project is indeed gendered both in approach and target.
    vii. The second project is led by Dr. Zahra Saidi Majili and focuses on the agro-processing of pigeon pea beans (Mbaazi) into instant porridge and noodles to enhance the health of under 5 children in Tanzania (and critically address kwashiorkor and stunted growth). This value addition project targets women through timesaving as well as supporting women in general care work for which women disproportionately engage it, compared to their male counterparts.

f. Uganda is implementing one (1) project that aims to improve a toolbox predominantly used by women in the bakery industry. Prof. Charles Muyanja, through his project, "Maize germ and Bran as raw materials for high-fibre value-added bakery and confectionery products/ Up-scaling and commercialization of maize bran and germ value added products in Uganda" is fabricating a toolbox that enhances work done by women in the bakery industry value chain.

2.6 Gender dimensions in the Research and Innovation (R&I) Framework

> *Finding 8: Nine (9) councils (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi) have incorporated an objective on gender inclusion in their finalized R&I frameworks.*

This is critical because the research projects being funded will be subjected to GEI evaluation. Even more important is that the research and innovation framework will be useful to councils in monitoring and evaluation of the projects they are currently funding. The outcome is that strategies will be adopted (for those councils that did not have strategies in place), revised and refined, and results monitored to ensure that the GEI objectives are attained.

2.7 Other innovative GEI strategies and Best Practices

> *Finding 9: Some Councils have incorporated innovative GEI strategies and approaches. These include ensuring that at least 30% of the reviewers of the proposals are women, training of the beneficiaries on GEI, having in place gender related performance indicators, gender strategies and assigning weight on gender in proposal writing.*

The following are some of the best practices some councils have deployed with respect to gender equality. All the councils have put in place measures, and so this is just a select list.

a. **Composition of reviewers:** Sierra Leone – At least 30% of the reviewers of the proposals funded under this project are women.

b. **Orientation and training of beneficiaries:** Tanzania – Grant recipients are oriented/trained on gender policy and gender dimensions.

c. **Performance indicators:** Uganda – performance indicators in place to assess the progress, results, and outcomes of the project regarding gender issues, the effects of a project on gender relations, and the impact of existing gender relations on outcomes of the project.

d. **Gender strategy:** Ghana is keen on advancing gender equality in STI in three (3) interconnected domains known as the 3Fs – *Fixing the numbers*, i.e., increasing women participation, *Fixing the institution*, i.e., promoting gender equality through structural changes in organizations and *Fixing the Knowledge*, stimulating research excellence through integrating GEI in methods and content.

e. **Assigning gender weight in evaluation**. Namibia – Gender consideration and inclusivity within the project team is given a 15% weight in the proposal evaluation.

f. **Younger universities:** Zimbabwe – At least 60% of 5 PhD students who will support on data collection will be women, and at least 60% should be from generally younger universities.

3. Discussions and Recommendations

Through the face-to-face regional workshops held, councils registered their concerns and made inquiries over how to approach and pursue Gender, Equality, and Inclusion. Some of the concerns registered included the potential trade-off between project technical quality and a gender balanced team/ project – there were worries over the potential for compromising the technical quality of proposals selected on account of fulfilling gender equality and inclusivity requirements. As such, councils were worried about going about attaining GEI the wrong way and setting a wrong precedence. This is a reality that reverberated with many councils. Interestingly, during these discussions within the workshops, there were deeper discussions on best practices and innovative strategies, most of which are only commonly known theoretically.

One way is to train and build the capacity for women researchers to develop technically qualified research project proposals. This may be attributed to the long history of women being systematically marginalized from formal education in general, and from access to technical and professional skills of certain sectors like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Bridging this skills gap may therefore be the first and fundamental step towards attaining gender equality and inclusivity.

However, this does not mean that there are no women who can develop such proposals of a high technical quality. They are there, and this is where the second level of GEI challenge manifests. Such women may not submit research proposals in response to calls sent out by councils due to various reasons including but not limited to past experience in which their proposals were not selected on the account of being women (could be a fact or a perception). Overcoming this challenge needs, among others, advocacy work to address the persistent culture of selecting men over women researchers without justly and fairly evaluating their proposals. A fair and merit-based system that judges men and women equally is essential in empowering women researchers to progress both horizontally and vertically.

This will also go a long way in empowering upcoming women researchers – the more they see women researchers leading research projects at the national level, the more they are encouraged to submit their applications and attempt their hand at such calls issued by councils. Such women become champions for gender equality, and through mentorship may help younger or less experienced women researchers grow the ranks. There are two unique cases here of all-female research teams.

1. **Dr. Mercy Badu** of Ghana is leading an all-women research team in the project, "Mainstreaming Gender in higher education: A prerequisite for advancing Science, Technology and Innovation in Ghana".

2. **Prof. Maida Khan** of Mozambique is leading an all-women research team in the project, "Community empowerment through value addition and agro-processing of indigenous fruits in Mozambique and Botswana".

The above strategies are not sufficient to bring about complete gender equality and inclusivity; they may only help in ensuring women researchers and their proposals get through the door and have a seat at the table.

However, systemic challenges still persist, in this case power imbalances. Most proposal reviews are done by professionals with a long-standing career – who are mostly men. The review of research project proposals is also not equal/ balanced. There is need to address this too because

research into gendered themes may not find favor among men evaluators. As such, a review team needs to be gender balanced/ neutral. Sierra Leone took lead in this aspect and ensured that at least 30% of the project reviewers were women.

Beyond the numbers, at the proposal review/ evaluation stage, the evaluation formula is a critical factor that may persist gender imbalance. This can be addressed by including clauses within the formula that ensure gender equality and inclusivity is prominent and sufficiently weighted. This also demonstrates that gender inequality is recognized as a problem in and of itself, and must be evaluated even within the project proposal. In designing their call, Namibia gave GEI the highest weight, tying with technical quality at 15% in the proposal evaluation criteria.

The above strategies may help in getting research projects by women selected for funding, yet the efforts may not be sufficient to bring an overall systemic shift.

3.1 Recommendations

Even beyond this project selection stage, gender equality and inclusivity efforts do not and should not end here. There is still need for special support for these women researchers, many of whom may have little to no prior experience. Such support comes in many ways that include securing active and capacity building roles of women within the research team. During the implementation stage, it is important to support women to build their skills in managing research project, over and beyond the research skills they have or will acquire. This may also include support in the monitoring and evaluation function at project implementation stage. Uganda has adapted a GEI toolkit into their operational frameworks (complete with performance indicators) that will support research teams to assess the progress, results, and outcomes of the project regarding gender issues. This has been extended into assessing the effects of research projects on gender relations, and the impact of existing gender relations on outcomes of the project.

Achieving gender equality and inclusivity also requires the partnership of men, an indispensable ingredient for sustainable impacts. Men researchers should also be trained in gender equality and inclusivity so that men too are able to mentor and build the capacity of women researchers. Tanzania made this intentional effort to train/ orient grant recipients on gender policy and gender dimensions.

When these things are achieved, even more women will be attracted into the research and innovation profession, and the STI sector, to really and truly level the playing field. The development of clear indicators and SMART objectives/ targets is a necessary step in ensuring that gender equality and inclusivity is not just a gimmick but an actual commitment, and it is encouraging that councils set some specific indicators including Namibia (15% weight for GEI in project evaluation), and Sierra Leone (at least 30% of the project reviewers being women).

4. Conclusion

Councils have stayed true to their commitments and made some efforts to ensure the advancement of gender and inclusivity in both processes as well as outcomes on the whole grants management cycle. There is already indication/ potential of attaining the GEI objectives of the RIM project, as indicated by the progress councils have made. There still remains room for improvement and the RIM project promises to produce lessons that councils may adopt going forward.

Different Councils have pursued gender and inclusion aspects differently and through several strategies, and as such their progress towards the gender inclusion target is varied. In highlighting a few councils: In terms of gender equality, Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania stand out in their intentional efforts to attain 100% women-led research projects and also true equality (at least going by numbers) in the research team composition.

Kenya and Uganda pursued inclusivity even further, by intentionally inviting the private sector to partner with researchers in the projects selected for funding.

Through their 3Fs – *Fixing the numbers*, *Fixing the institution*, and *Fixing the Knowledge*, Ghana has demonstrated and acknowledged the structural issues around gender inequality and exclusion. Adopting such a holistic framework and structural approach may ensure that Gender, Equality, and Inclusion efforts and benefits are sustained.

This report has out of necessity only largely focused on numbers (quantitative analysis) given the nature of information at this stage. Going forward, further analysis will increasingly analyze the quality side of things. More interrogation will focus on the strategies implemented and their effectiveness in attaining GEI objectives and more.

4.1 Next Steps

This present report is an interim report, and the next report will be more detailed, interrogating the strategies that councils employed in the pursuit of GEI. This report will attempt to extend the discussion beyond inclusion by number balancing as GEI strategies, to understand true, active, and effective engagement of women, youth, and ECAs

Find out more about the Research and Innovation Management project here.

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6. Annex 1: Measuring gender equality

Indicator:

Percentage of women among researchers (based on headcount)

a. **Measurement concept and definition**
"Researchers are professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge; conduct research and improve or develop concepts, theories, models, techniques, instrumentation, software, or operational methods and are typically directly involved in the management of R&D and innovation projects."

b. **Unit**
Percentage (based on headcount)