Science Granting Councils Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI)

Commissioned Studies: Public – Private Partnerships in Research and Innovation.

Concept Note and Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI**)** is a 5-year Initiative which aims to strengthen the capacities of Science Granting Councils (SGCs) in sub-Saharan Africa in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development. The objectives of this Initiative are to strengthen the ability of Councils to (i) manage research; (ii) design and monitor research programmes based on the use of robust science, technology and innovation (STI) indicators; (iii) support knowledge exchange with the private sector; and (iv) establish partnerships between Councils and other science system actors. The Initiative is jointly funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF). The SGCI currently operates in 15 sub-Saharan Africa countries (Box 1).

Box 1: SGCI member countries
Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ghana, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe

Theme 3 of the SGCI focuses on strengthening partnerships between Africa's science granting councils and the private sector, with the ultimate objective to: (a) enhance knowledge exchange between academia and industry and (b) stimulate private sector investments into research and innovation. Theme 3 is being implemented by the ACTS Consortium comprising the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), The Scinnovent Centre, the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization (STIPRO) and the Association of African Universities (AAU). This document provides guidelines on the Concept and Terms of Reference (ToR) for three regional research studies to be commissioned by theme 3 of the Initiative.

2. Background and Context

In general, there exists a mutual reluctance from both academics and private sector actors towards closer partnerships and collaborations. This has led to weak ties and linkages that undermine knowledge exchange. Further (and deriving from the preceding point), the private sector has had minimal and dwindling investment in research and innovation in and with the academia. The reasons for this are myriad: the outward manifestations are couched in phrases that depict lack of responsiveness from the academia, too much attention to basic science that doesn't correspond to

private sectors' immediate business needs and a work ethic/ culture that is too lacklustre to fit in the private sector schedules. On the other hand, the academics accuse the private sector of being too profit-focused; unstructured, weak and too small to engage in any meaningful R&D or innovation collaborations. These outward manifestations camouflage much deeper ideological, cultural and structural concerns.

When the private sector accuses the academia of being irresponsive, they are mostly referring to the bureaucratic culture and operational procedures that characterize the way universities and public research institutes are structured and managed; when they allege that the academic research is too abstract and fails to address their immediate business needs, it points to the prioritization and preference for basic research versus applied research and the "public – private good" debate. Similarly, the academics have complained that the private sector only cares about making profits and want market-ready technologies and products for free but are unwilling to contribute to research and development.

The above situation notwithstanding, universities and public research institutes are not only beginning to collaborate with the private sector through technology transfer and licensing but are also engaging in entrepreneurial activities of their own. A number of universities and public research institutes have now established institutional infrastructure such as technology transfer officers, intellectual property management offices (IPMOs) and spin-off companies for this purpose. There are notable successes of products that have emerged out of university laboratories and are being piloted in the markets. In the same vein, there are also products that have failed to pick despite being promising at the experimental and prototype stages.

New institutional and organizational arrangements have emerged. There are instances where policies have induced changes in the socio-economic structures and introduced new incentives and rewards, but there are also cases where successful partnerships have emerged organically. There have been reported cases where partnerships and collaboration have led to learning and instances where partners have changed their processes and practices thereby benefitting from new methods, new knowledge and new technologies.

At the same time, there have been reported cases where the intellectual property rights regimes have either encouraged or scared away potential investors. There have been new governance patterns and in some cases new institutions have been created. Implementation maybe checkered but still there are exemplars to learn from.

3. Terms of Reference (ToR)

The ACTS consortium has been tasked by the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) to commission three (3) studies that analyse the current status of public-private sector relations in the area of research, science, technology and innovation. Specifically, the studies are expected to:

(i) identify, analyze and share the subtle lessons behind the success of some of partnerships and collaborations between academia and industry while at the same time exposing the challenges that face the partnerships

(ii) identify and highlight key areas of (a) mutual interests (b) disagreements/ "points of conflict" that either glued together the partnerships or made them break apart

(iii) interrogate the institutional and governance architecture of the partnerships and how internal disputes that may have arisen were resolved

(iv) Map out the unique policies, processes, practices that may have led to the success or failure of the partnerships

(v) Tease out lessons/action guides for the science granting councils on how to catalyze, manage and enhance knowledge exchange between the academia and the private sector.

Themes/Areas of Interest

Following an intensive needs assessment and research prioritization exercises conducted with the science granting councils, the following topics/themes have been selected for the regional studies:

i. **Industrial Manufacturing in East Africa:** with special attention/focus on the pharmaceutical sector
ii. **Health Systems in Southern Africa**: With a special focus on systems strengthening/financing
iii. **Natural Resource Management in West Africa**: With a special focus on biodiversity, traditional medicine and climate change

NB: Each regional study must comprise a minimum of three (3) countries in the selected region and demonstrate active private sector participation. Networks/teams may take any form so long as the Principal Investigator (and his/her host organization) demonstrate adequate capacity to conduct/coordinate the study.

4. Research Methodology and Expected Outputs

Interested authors are invited to propose a methodology/approach for delivering the commissioned paper in one of the above topic areas. In addition to (i) the technical report, the authors are expected to produce (ii) a high-quality article to be published in an international peer-reviewed journal and (iii) a policy brief.

5. Budget, Process and Timeline

Applicants are requested to submit:

(i) An Expression of Interest (EoI) with detailed CV(s) of potential author(s)
(ii) An annotated outline of the commissioned paper with a detailed work plan
(iii) Each commissioned paper shall be funded up to a maximum of **US$ 20,000.**
(iv) All funded projects will last up to six (6) months

6. Submission

All applications must be submitted to sgci_ppp@scinnovent.org with a copy to info@scinnovent.org to reach us no later than 16:00 hrs on **20th October 2018.** All enquiries should be addressed to Dr. Maurice Bolo [Email: Bolo@scinnovent.org] before 5th October 2018.