The NRF in Kenya encourages all research grant calls to incorporate gender inclusivity as a determinant for awards to ensure that Fund activities are aligned to the constitutional requirements of gender equity and parity. The NRF Kenya adopted a Gender Champions approach to ensure the mainstreaming of gender inclusive practices at the Fund. The broad mandate of a NRF Gender Champion is to promote an understanding of the social and cultural constructions of gender that shape the experiences of women and men in the workplace and society. Overall, the gender champions aim to make NRF staff more gender-sensitive, creating positive social norms that value and respect the female gender and their rights.

Training has been a critical component of the gender champions approach. After being nominated to the gender committee, prospective gender champions were invited to participate in training with National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) staff. The training addressed gender-related issues such as gender bias, unequal gender representation, gender stereotyping, female staff roles and gender inclusivity in decision-making, as well as topics related to workplace gender empowerment, such as maternity and childcare programmes.

Achievements
i. NRF has provided overall guidance in integrating/mainstreaming gender in all activities of the Fund.
ii. We have engaged a variety of stakeholders to promote the NRF’s gender mainstreaming activities.
iii. We reconstituted the gender mainstreaming committee and identified gaps in the NRF’s activities vis-à-vis gender issues, and made recommendations on addressing the gaps.

Many men who have grown up in patriarchal systems are now expressing a desire to promote women’s empowerment. This change in perception at the National Research Fund (NRF) is greatly attributed to the Gender Champion strategy.