# SUMMARY OF THE RAPID REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS OF AND ACTIONS ON GENDER &INCLUSIVITY (G&I)  IN THE SCIENCE GRANTING COUNCIL INITIATIVE PHASE ONE PROJECT DOCUMENTS

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**Summary of the Rapid Review of Representations of and Actions on Gender &Inclusivity (G&I)**

**in the Science Granting Council Initiative Phase One Project Documents**

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## Purpose of this rapid review

The purpose of this rapid review is to identify gender and inclusivity strategies, frameworks and initiatives undertaken by the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) during the first phase of the SGCI, and their effects on advancing an intersectional approach to gender and inclusivity in SGCI-2 activities.

## Inquiry questions and methodology

Six inquiry questions, derived from critical analysis, frame this rapid review. [1] The inquiry question concepts formed the basis for the broad thematic codes and the ongoing iterative analysis. The list of inquiry questions together with the thematic codes is outlined in Appendix 1.

Following compilation and close reading of 71 SGCI-1 project documents generated between 2015 and 2020, data were extracted and thematically aligned with the inquiry questions.

### Data Collection

In addition to electronic academic databases, the initial document search strategy involved the SGCI website, collaborating technical partners websites, and the IDRC website. However, the researcher revised the strategy to select IDRC published documents purposively because

of differences in titles, versions, and final publication dates of similar documents across the SGCI and some Collaborating Technical Agencies (CTA) websites.

Appendix 2 lists the documents collected and reviewed by type and number, which in summary, involved reports (annual, training, meeting, technical), surveys, tools and technical guidance, strategies and frameworks, policy briefs, publications and discussion papers. All project outputs were produced or commissioned by the Initiative Management Team or the CTAs as implementing partners, which is in line with Phase 1 of the SGC Initiative's funding and governance structure.

### Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis first involved a simple word search of all 70 documents to illuminate the presence (or absence) of gender-related words in the texts and the contexts within which the terms occurred. For this analysis, context refers to the content of the topic wherein the words appear within the documents and the setting, circumstances, actors, and actions engaging with the content.[2] Words searches included 'gender', 'mainstreaming' ', women', 'men', 'disability', 'marginalised', 'race', 'equality', 'equity', 'inclusivity', 'intersectionality', 'social identities'. [3]

Subsequent steps involved a closer reading of documents, text extraction and thematic coding of units of gender-related text and their contexts. This iterative and on-going process forms the basis for identifying G&I constructions and illuminating contexts and the effects of such illumination on the uptake of G&I within project output documents.

## Summary of results

In the rich and complex tapestry of SGCI-1 accomplishments, gender & inclusivity is not one of the project's four anchoring threads, but it is always present in some form.

- Overall, gender is largely **characterized** as binary, comprising 'women' and 'men' with very few (two) references to 'age' , 'disability' and 'expertise' and 'seniority' as possible measures of inclusivity. [4]
- Overall, references to gender occur mainly in the **contexts** of increasing women's visibility in SGCI meetings and training programmes, on research boards, review panels, research teams, and research applications.
- Gender & inclusivity is **present, even in its absence** at the organisational level. For example, the 2016 research capacity building needs assessment shows that developing knowledge about 'gender mainstreaming in research and development' is a priority need for individual respondents (for 115 individuals out of 143) but not a priority need at all for SGCI-1 organizations (ranking of 0 on a 7-point priority scale). [5]
- Gender & inclusivity is frequently a **topic of a 'side-event'** at SGCI conferences and regional meetings. In the main gender is expressed in terms of number of women attending meetings and presenting on panels and delivering keynotes. [6, 7]

We have found it challenging to be 100% accurate about how and who foregrounds gender & inclusivity in SGCI-1, but the IMT and CTA seem to be the main drivers from project documentation. [1] The most obvious example:

- **How did the gender mainstreaming framework and action plan come about?** The document reviews point to the donors and IMT and, to some extent the CTAs, as the originators of this seminal framework. The 2016 annual report recommends that the IMT and CTAs develop a gender mainstreaming framework to guide implementation of evidence-based gender mainstreaming and measure outcomes. The 2017 and 2018 annual reports acknowledge the development of the robust gender mainstreaming framework and action plan and authorise the IMT, in consultation with CTAs and SGCs, to develop and implement a system to monitor progress in implementing this framework for SGCI-2. [7, 11–14]

When G&I becomes visible within project activities, it highlights the underrepresentation, and in some case the marginalisation, of diverse voices in STI, which is one of the core conditions for transformation and scientific excellence. Three examples:

- When the SGCI-1 research management performance benchmarking exercises specifically included gender & diversity biases in the 2017, 2018, and 2019 surveys, the disaggregation showed a **widening under-representation** of women scientists and scientists with disabilities as research awardees and the disproportionate decline of women scientists in senior positions of the SGCs. Women awardees also typically receive smaller research grants than male awardees. [8]
- When the authors of the 2020 report on the political economy of science generating councils interviewed SGC participants for their perspectives on issues facing SGC, **gender and inclusivity did not manifest as issues** in their responses unless explicitly prompted. They suggest three possibilities: the issue is not important, gender awareness is not recognised or articulated, gender and inclusivity, as challenges, are not considered priorities. [9]
- Gender & inclusivity is a **priority for some countries, but not all**, for SGCI-2. For example, in the 2019 report on the consultative meeting with SGCI councils to discuss SGCI-2 implementation plan, under half, or six of the 14 participant countries - Burkina Faso, Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia - identified gender & inclusivity as a priority capacity building need for SGCI-2. [10]
- Gender bias is **potentially a contested and uncomfortable topic** for the SGCS. At this same 2019 SGCI-2 planning meeting SGCI respondents questioned the meaning of the survey question "What is the status and training needs for research ethics as well as gender equality and inclusivity within the Council?" querying if gender equality refers to equality within the system or within the councils. Workshop facilitators defined gender inclusivity as a "broad aspect within a system or institutional programmes but not specifically about the staff of the Councils". These beliefs about what constitutes sites for

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[1] We note the potential bias of this observation to the extent that this observation is based on SGCI-1 documentation produced by the implementing partners in fulfillment of their reporting mandates.

transformation has the immediate effect of limiting and defining the scope of change through reference to the status quo.

When G&I becomes visible within project activities, it highlights the essential power of diversity in weeding out biases in knowledge production, which is one of the core conditions of scientific excellence and a priority for SGCI-2.

- Systematically emphasizing gender & inclusivity over the course of SGCI-1 **highlighted gaps in diversity knowledge and practices** in phase 1 thematic areas[2] providing motivation and an evidence-based for strengthening gender & inclusivity in Phase 2. [6]

- **The gender mainstreaming framework** foreground the underrepresentation of women in science, emphasising that STI, a key driver of growth and development, must systematically account for both **men and women's abilities and needs across the research life cycle.** The framework introduces intersectionality as a component of gender, but within a footnote, noting how various inequalities (such as age, ethnicity, class and ability) interact with and heighten gender differences.

- **Gender mainstreaming** and specifically 'Increased integration of gender dimensions in research and research funding policies' is formalized as an output with two output indicators[3] on the **monitoring & evaluation framework for SGCI-2**. [14]

- **Increasing the visibility of diversity within SGCI activities is essential for quality science.** Councils are vital sites of, and resources for, understanding and driving gender transformation at the institutional and system levels raising the question of what kind of policies and approaches will manifest productive perspectives of gender and inclusivity, for whom, and under what conditions of relationship?

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[2] Research management; use of evidence in policy and decision-making; knowledge transfer to the private sector and support partnerships between SGCs and with other science system actors; networking among SGCIs.

[3] The two output indicators speak to documented examples of gender mainstreaming and knowledge outputs addressing structural gender issues in research funding, and participation by women in research and innovation.

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11.   Not stated. (2017). *Annual Report. 2016. Science Granting Councils Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI)*.

12.   Not stated. (2018). *Annual Report 2017. Science Granting Councils Initiative -1 in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

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14.   Not stated. (2019). *Annual Technical Report. Making Science Matter. Deepening & Sustaining the SGCI in SSA*.

## Acknowledgement and Suggested Citation

## Appendix 1 Inquiry questions and thematic codes guiding the rapid review

| Analytic questions | Thematic Codes |
|---|---|
| 1. What G&I strategies, frameworks and initiatives documents were developed during phase 1? | **Content list** |
| 2. How is G&I represented in the documents?<br>3. What are the similarities and differences in G&I representations in the documentation? | • **Constructions of gender & inclusivity**<br>• **Similarities in construction**<br>• **Differences in construction** |
| 4. What gender constructions are more and less visible, and under what contexts, within programme output documents? | • **Visibility/invisibility of G&I constructions**<br>• **Contexts** |
| 5. What are the effects of G&I strategies, frameworks and initiatives on the participating SGC's documented programme outputs of phase 1? | • **Effects of G&I products the visibility/invisibility of G&I within project outputs** |
| 6. What factors drive the visibility of G&I, and support and block the advancement of G&I in SGCI phase 1 documentation? | • **Factors driving visibility/invisibility of G&I** |

## Appendix 2 Summary of type and number of SGCI-1 project documents reviewed

| Phase 1 | Number |
|---|---|
| Assessment | 21 |
| Reports, Technical | 7 |
| Reports, Training | 3 |
| Reports, Synthesis | 2 |
| Reports, Regional Meeting | 1 |
| Reports, Annual | 3 |
| Frameworks & Strategies | 4 |
| Policy Briefs & Policy Papers | 11 |
| Discussion papers | 4 |
| Published Papers | 3 |
| Unpublished Paper (proof) | 1 |
| Tools | 7 |
| **Phase 2** | |
| Meeting, Consultative with SGCS Phase 2 Planning | 1 |
| Report, Technical Phase 2 Year 1 | 1 |
| Proposal Call Strengthening Gender & Inclusivity | 1 |
| Report, Operationalising Phase 2 | 1 |
| | **71** |