

ALL PARTNERS FORUM 2026: DAILY BRIEF

 Windhoek, Namibia | 28 September – 02 October 2026

Day 1 (28 September 2026): From Shared Ambition to Practical Delivery

By Jackie Opara-Fatoye, Charlotte Nambadja & Charles Wendo



How do partnerships turn the third phase of the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI-3) into real results?

That question drove the first day of the SGCI All Partners Forum 2026. Councils, funders, and technical partners explored how to set shared priorities, mobilise research funding, use evidence in decision-making and coordinate support, with Science Granting Councils (SGCs) at the centre.

One key message was that the Councils must shape collaborative initiatives and retain ownership of national priorities, even as their mandates, resources and systems differ.

The message set the tone for the Funders Collaborative Workshop, which asked how to make SGCI sustainable.

Mapping revealed co-funded and parallel calls, but also limited visibility, fragmented tracking and heavy coordination burdens. Participants saw the Collaborative as a coordination platform rather than a pooled fund.

Marcus Wilms, director for international collaboration with Africa and the Middle East at the German Research Foundation (DFG), described the partners' role in those terms. "We do not consider ourselves as donors or funders but as collaborators in the long-standing partnership to support the councils' capacity and partnership building," he said.

As Sepo Hachigonta, Executive Head for Strategic Partnerships, Networking & Resourcing at the National Research Foundation of South Africa, put it, sustainability is "not just about the money."

If ensuring sustainability involves knowing where money goes, the Funding Flows Dashboard makes a strong case. Covering 2020 to 2025, it holds data on about 30,000 grants from 258 funders, representing an estimated US\$54 billion flowing to more than 11,000 recipient organisations across Africa.

Johann Mouton, professor at the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST), Stellenbosch University, said: "What we have been doing over the past two years as CREST and Stellenbosch is to build the first ever database and dashboard that tracks the flow of STI research funding to Africa."

Participants pointed to a missing piece: domestic funding. Mouton also asked whether the funding flowing into countries aligns with their research priorities and scientific capacity.



Sepo Hachigonta, Executive Head for Strategic Partnerships, Networking & Resourcing at the National Research Foundation of South Africa, shares his remarks at the #SGCIForum2026.

The dashboard shows that research and innovation in Africa is heavily reliant on donor funding. For Atridah Mulonga of Zambia's National Science and Technology Council, the data raised a difficult question. "What if one day they stop funding us?" she asked.

"The Dashboard helps us with planning because it indicates what has been funded and who the funders were," she added. Next steps include onboarding council users and expanding funder coverage.

The Curiosity-Driven Research Workshop then turned attention to researchers themselves. The proposed I2I matchmaking call would allow researchers to submit introductory posters, find collaborators, and form consortia before submitting pre-proposals for exploratory visits or workshops, with a larger call to follow.

Researchers from three participating SGCI countries could form a consortium, with the NRF-DFG partnership funding this first phase. Participants backed the two-stage approach and the Global Research Council's framing of open-ended, curiosity-driven research.

Then came the question of influence. In the SGCI Policy Hub-Councils Dialogue, the Hub was envisioned as a one-stop helpdesk coordinating support for councils. AUDA-NEPAD representatives urged stronger engagement with Regional Economic Communities, including ECOWAS, EAC and SADC, so that councils are recognised as implementation actors under STISA-2034.

Participants also asked how STI systems can remain viable as traditional donor funding declines. Councils were asked to validate the joint SGCI Alliance work plan and nominate policy and data focal points.

The Long-term Europe-Africa Water-Energy-Food Nexus (LEAWEF) Workshop, attended by Heads of Research Councils and SGCI Coordinators, showed partnership at the design table.

Planning for the second call centred on a Joint Call Secretariat coordinating work blocks, which councils could take on in whole or in part. Lessons from the first call's matchmaking highlighted barriers for French- and Portuguese-speaking researchers, prompting exploration of multilingual webinars and interpretation support.

Participants agreed on consortia of at least four eligible applicants from four countries, with no more than two European countries, and chose the NRF application system for matchmaking. Operational costs and the link between national funding decisions and assessment rankings remain open questions.

Across the sessions, discussions pointed towards a shift from building structures to delivering results, with African councils in the lead and peer learning highly valued.

Rejoice Maseko, a delegate from Eswatini, which is establishing its National Research Council, said what she has learnt from the SGCI annual forum is already paying off. "We realise that we can co-fund a project between two or more councils," she said.

The day concluded with a kick-off dinner attended by Namibia's Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon. Dino Ballotti. In his remarks, Ballotti emphasised the need to support researchers to make discoveries that address societal challenges.

He stressed that the work of scientists should ultimately improve people's lives, adding that when researchers place people at the centre of their work, their research has the potential to transform society.

As the forum moves into Day 2, discussions will turn to how councils can build more inclusive STI systems, strengthen their capacities, deepen research collaboration across Africa, and scale investments and strategic partnerships.

Photo highlights from Day 1 (28th September 2026)





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ALL PARTNERS FORUM 2026: DAILY BRIEF

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Day 2 (29 September 2026): From Priorities to Practical Systems

By Jackie Opara-Fatoye, Charlotte Nambadja & Charles Wendo



What does it take to build the STI systems that will carry the third phase of the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI-3)?

This question ran through Day 2 of the SGCI All Partners Forum 2026, the Technical Day.

Councils, funders and technical partners worked through the direction of the new phase, inclusive STI systems, capacity strengthening, multinational research collaboration and strategic partnerships.

One key message held across the sessions was that councils must retain ownership of national priorities while using SGCI to collaborate across countries and institutions.

The opening session set the frame. Dr Cephas Adjei Mensah, outgoing President of the SGCI Alliance, said SGCI has grown over more than a decade and now brings together 20 participating Science Granting Councils. Another five countries are in the process of joining.

Dr Mensah outlined five priority areas for SGCI-3: the Policy Hub, the Funders Collaborative, thematic working groups, the Capacity Strengthening Hub and nationally led initiatives.

Ownership was a recurring theme. Prof Anicia Peters, incoming President of the SGCI Alliance, called on councils to take greater ownership of the Initiative, including its priority areas, the criteria for admitting new councils and the partnerships built under SGCI-3.

Dr Angus Paterson, Acting Chief Executive Officer at the National Research Infrastructure Platforms of South Africa, encouraged councils and development partners to reduce dependence on single sources of external funding. Dr Amos Nungu, Director General of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, said institutional capacity is what turns funding into results. "Let councils identify their priorities; let us strengthen institutions through real work; let us look for evidence of change in how our councils perform," he said.



Dr Angus Paterson, Acting Chief Executive Officer at the National Research Infrastructure Platforms of South Africa, shares his thoughts at the #SGCIForum2026.

The session on inclusive STI systems shifted the discussion from the principle of inclusion to how it can be put into practice. Dr Steven Ssebale, SGCI Coordinator for the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, said a review of projects in Uganda found that gender considerations were often recognised but not consistently built into project design and implementation. He proposed clearer gender expectations in research calls, budget templates that reinforce them, and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation.

Atridah Mulonga of Zambia's National Science and Technology Council extended the discussion to Indigenous knowledge, saying inclusion should run through the entire funding cycle, from eligibility and proposal design to assessment, ownership and benefit sharing. "Inclusion means moving it from just a principle to making it a core feature in the funding systems," she said.

She identified a shortage of reviewers with expertise in Indigenous knowledge as one of the challenges. She stressed that greater recognition of Indigenous knowledge should not come at the expense of scientific quality.

Giulia Signori, Programme Assistant with the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World, noted that women scientists are often treated as beneficiaries of research programmes rather than as experienced contributors, whereas science benefits greatly from women's participation. Relatedly, Lora Gailly, Associate Project Officer with UNESCO, cautioned that participation does not necessarily translate into influence.

Participants called for inclusion to be embedded in calls, budgets, assessment criteria, monitoring systems and institutional policies, supported by data, reviewer expertise and internal capacity.

The Capacity Strengthening Hub workshop asked what support councils actually need.

Dr Frejus Thoto, Executive Director of the Capacity Strengthening Hub, a Technical Supporting Agency, said the Hub seeks to assess needs, connect councils to qualified providers and existing initiatives, and revamp the SGCI digital learning platform. It will neither set priorities on behalf of councils nor operate simply as a training provider.

He identified three factors that should shape its approach: a council's maturity, its institutional form, and its language and operating context. "Context is key. Understanding how every SGC works in their context is useful," he said.

Digital grants management emerged as the councils' leading training need, followed by monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL); data infrastructure and evidence use; research ethics and integrity; and intellectual property and technology transfer. Other training needs included resource mobilisation; financial management and governance; gender equity and inclusion; science diplomacy and STISA 2034; peer learning among councils; and science communication.

Councils backed peer learning through staff exchanges, regional and language clusters, and trainer-of-trainers approaches, with materials translated into English, French and Portuguese. Because staff turnover and limited resources can undermine earlier investments, participants proposed embedding knowledge in institutional systems, procedures and documentation.

Attention then turned to the STISA-2034 Multinational Call, which will co-fund multi-country research consortia, each bringing together researchers from three to five countries, across agriculture, health, ICT, energy and the environment. The call has drawn 1,321 expressions of interest involving close to 4,900 institutions, with 19 participating councils, about US\$10 million in investment and a further US\$7 million in matchmaking funding.

Participants identified language barriers, limited translation, mobility constraints, differences in institutional governance and uneven council capacity as the main practical challenges.

They noted that, based on the available resources, only a small proportion of applicants would be funded and proposed exploring ways to connect strong unsuccessful applications with other opportunities.

Next steps include shortlisting, full-proposal development, evaluation, due diligence and implementation.

The session on scaling investments and strategic alliances asked how councils can engage international partners from a stronger position.

Dr Laurent Bochereau, Research and Innovation Counsellor at the EU Delegation to the African Union, identified low research investment and fragmentation as major constraints. He suggested that SGCI could help by giving partners a platform to engage councils collectively.

Dr Marcus Wilms, Programme Director for International Affairs covering Africa and the Middle East at the German Research Foundation, said the relationships built among councils have created a basis for joint action. "Trust among the councils is an infrastructure for cooperation," he said.

Inger Midtkandal, Special Advisor with the Research Council of Norway, noted that many Europe–Africa platforms remain European-led and urged co-creation so that African partners help shape priorities from the outset.

Participants also identified the private sector as a partner that remains insufficiently engaged and said researchers and councils often lack clear information on Europe–Africa funding mechanisms.

The Council Leadership Forum and TSA Meeting brought the day back to implementation.

Leadership continuity will be maintained through co-chairing, with further guidance and a volunteering process to be clarified before January.

The Programme Management Team and the University of Johannesburg will continue convening TSA coordination, with workplans analysed for overlap, redundancy and gaps. The five candidate councils will be included in the forthcoming Curiosity–Driven Research matchmaking call.

Across the sessions, discussions pointed towards a shift from setting direction to designing the mechanisms that make it work: tailored capacity support, inclusion built into funding systems, practical support for cross-border research and coordinated engagement with international partners.

As the Forum moves into Day 3, the Policy Day, attention will shift to the role of science, technology and innovation in Africa's development. Beginning with the official opening by the Prime Minister of Namibia, discussions will explore SGCI's role in implementing STISA-2034, the future of African research infrastructure, strengthening councils' leadership and policy influence, and positioning Africa more strongly in the global research ecosystem.

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“This is my first time attending an SGCI forum. It has been an absolutely transformative experience, meeting council heads, funders and other experts in one room. The discussions and networking have been excellent. SGCI gives us a great platform to learn from each other.”

Dr. James Kisale, Executive Secretary, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology Uganda

“We invest in bringing researchers together, creating meaningful scientific exchange, and giving them time to explore their ideas.”

Lara Jacob, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) – German Research Foundation

Photo highlights from Day 2 (29th September 2026)





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📍 Windhoek, Namibia | 28 September – 02 October 2026

Day 4 (1st October 2026): Taking Stock, Learning and Looking Ahead

By Jackie Opara-Fatoye, Charlotte Nambadja & Charles Wendo



How can SGCI turn more than a decade of experience into stronger institutions, deeper African leadership and lasting impact?

The final day of formal discussions at the SGCI All Partners Forum 2026 shifted the focus to reflection on what the Initiative has learned, what is changing, and what should come next. Day 4 focused on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), lessons from the Forum and priorities for the next phase of SGCI.

At the heart of the discussions was a simple proposition: learning should do more than document activities. It should help councils understand what is changing, make better decisions and apply lessons from across the Initiative.

Turning learning into action

Prof Ellie Osir, Senior Program Specialist at IDRC, described MEL as the thread connecting SGCI's activities and said it had played an important role in shaping SGCI-3.

"MEL is critical because it helps us to understand what is working well and what is not working well and why. MEL transforms activities into knowledge and knowledge into action."

Lessons from previous phases, Osir said, have informed SGCI-3's stronger emphasis on council ownership, impact, capacity strengthening, learning and adaptation, and more streamlined reporting and accountability.

The challenge now is to ensure that MEL connects with other areas of SGCI's work, including strategic communication and capacity strengthening, so that evidence generated across the Initiative informs decisions and action.

Prof Rebecca Hanlin of the University of Johannesburg, SGCI's technical partner for MEL, said the next phase benefits from a substantial foundation of experience.



Prof Ellie Osir, Senior Program Specialist at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) shares insights during the #SGCI All Partners Forum 2026.

“We have 11 years of knowledge and understanding about what works and what doesn’t work.”

Going forward, the University of Johannesburg will provide technical support to enable councils to take a greater lead in MEL.

Participants called for greater attention to what happens beyond the life of individual grants and projects. Among the priorities identified were following up previously funded research, conducting impact assessments and documenting stronger evidence and stories of research impact.

Councils move into the driving seat

But the reflections went beyond how SGCI measures change. Speakers pointed to a more fundamental shift in who is driving the Initiative.

Osir said the level of council leadership during the Forum itself was evidence of that change. Councils led sessions, facilitated discussions and played prominent roles in shaping the agenda.

As SGCI enters its third phase, he said, learning is also shifting from dependence on external technical support towards greater peer-to-peer exchange between councils, allowing them to share expertise and approaches developed in their own countries.

Examples are already emerging. Participants pointed to Botswana's experience with policy dialogue and Uganda's work on gender inclusion as practices from which other councils can learn.

For Prof Anicia Peters, Chief Executive Officer of Namibia's National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, greater African leadership also calls for a different relationship with SGCI's international partners.

"With our technical and funding partners, we want to see shared ownership. That creates a more equitable partnership. In SGCI 3, councils are not only saying that they want to take on a greater leadership role, but they are also saying that they want to contribute some of their own funding."

Her comments captured one of the recurring messages from the Forum: African leadership does not mean stepping away from international partnerships, but reshaping those partnerships around greater equity and shared responsibility.

Dr Jacqueline Owigo, Research and Innovation Adviser at FCDO Kenya, also pointed to a changing partnership landscape. Comparing the Forum with her first SGCI Forum in Ghana, she highlighted the growing number of participants, the emergence of the SGCI Alliance and the stronger leadership being exercised by councils.

Together, she said, these developments create new opportunities for research partners and funders to collaborate around an African-led research and innovation agenda.

A growing network

The expanding scale of SGCI was another striking feature of the week's discussions.

Dr. Jonathan Underwood, Equitable Research Ecosystems Lead at Wellcome in the United Kingdom, put that growth into numbers.

"Over 1,300 expressions of interest in the STISA research funding call. Twenty established councils. Five aspiring council members. Seven partners from Europe. Two councils from outside Africa and Europe. By the time we meet next year, we will get to about a quarter of the world's countries. It's just phenomenal."

That growth brings opportunities for wider collaboration and learning, but also raises questions about how an expanding network maintains coherence, sustains momentum and ensures that its partnerships deliver meaningful results.

What comes next?

Looking to the year ahead, participants identified several issues to watch: lessons from multinational research calls, alignment with STISA-2034, the new Alliance governance arrangements and whether the emerging structures deepen collaboration across the network.

Peters highlighted research infrastructure as an area requiring greater urgency. Despite years of discussion, she said, inadequate infrastructure continues to contribute to Africa's loss of scientific talent.

She called for SGCI programmes to give greater attention to strengthening existing research infrastructure and establishing more facilities across the continent.

The point connected Day 4's reflections to wider discussions during the Forum: African-led research needs not only stronger institutions and funding, but also the infrastructure, skills and partnerships required to turn ambition into impact.

From reflection to the next phase

As the four-day Forum drew to a close, the reflections suggested an Initiative in transition: larger, more visible and increasingly shaped by the councils themselves.

The adoption of the Windhoek Declaration provided a formal marker of that transition and the commitments delegates will carry forward.

While Day 4 brought the Forum's formal discussions to a close, delegates had one more day together. The following day would take them beyond the conference venue to visit sites where science and tourism intersect.

But perhaps the bigger test begins after the Forum.

Greater council ownership now needs to be reflected not only in governance, but also in how research priorities are set, partnerships are built, evidence is generated and used, capacity is strengthened and resources are mobilised.

After 11 years of SGCI, the question is therefore shifting from what activities are being delivered to what lasting change they produce.

And that brings the Forum back to the central message of its final day: learning matters most when it leads to action.



"I think this week's Forum was a major milestone towards African integration when it comes to science, technology and innovation, and towards developing a real continental fund, which has been missing. Once Africa has its own funding framework, it will be much easier to leverage funding from other partners in a more sustainable and ambitious way."

Dr Laurent Bochereau

Minister Counsellor for Science, Technology and Innovation
European Union Delegation to the African Union

“There is less international research funding available than before. Where there is an opportunity, national governments have an opportunity to take the lead in research funding, but they have competing priorities. Telling stories of the impact of your research can demonstrate the returns on investment in research.”

Dr Jonathan Underwood

Equitable Research Ecosystems Lead, Wellcome
United Kingdom

“There are so many countries represented here and so much knowledge being shared. I have been learning a lot over the past three days from these very rich exchanges... I will be taking a lot of information back to Norway about what is being done and what is improving.”

Dr Antonie Lysholm Kraemer

Senior Adviser, Norad

“As councils, we think we have funding to give to universities and that’s our job. That’s not our job. Our job is to fund science to improve the lives of people. So, we should encourage our scientists to work with communities because the science they do is for communities.”

Nokuthula Mchunu

Manager, International Collaborative Research Grants
National Research Foundation, South Africa

“Engagement is key. To be relevant locally, we need to engage with our communities but also with the government. We are looking for funding, but if the government does not understand what we are doing, they won’t listen to us.”

Dr Amos Nungu

Director General, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology
Tanzania

“We are clear that the Policy Hub has been established. My appeal to colleagues is that take time to go through the relevant documentation. Once you read the relevant documentation, implementation can be smooth.”

Dr Cephas Mensah

Outgoing President of the SGCI Alliance

“We heard from the Prime Minister that science has to translate into opportunities for people, and this week we talked about how to move research to innovation and how research will impact society and inform policy. So, we really have an opportunity to create inclusive science and innovation systems.”

Dr Jacqueline Owigo

Research and Innovation Adviser, FCDO Kenya
Kenya

Photo highlights from Day 4 (1st October 2026)





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ALL PARTNERS FORUM 2026: DAILY BRIEF

 Windhoek, Namibia | 28 September – 02 October 2026

Day 3 (30 September 2026): Policy Commitments for Lasting Investment

By Jackie Opara-Fatoye, Charlotte Nambadja & Charles Wendo



How can science granting councils turn policy commitments into sustained investment in research and innovation?

This question ran through Day 3 of the SGCI All Partners Forum 2026, the Policy Day.

Councils, funders and partners examined how councils can use their funding, evidence and partnerships to address national development priorities while contributing to STISA-2034.

The day also marked a significant moment for SGCI. For the first time in the Initiative's history, a sitting Prime Minister attended the Forum. Namibia's Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Dr Tjitunga Elijah Ngurare, officially opened the Forum, accompanied by three ministers, an unprecedented level of high-level political representation at an SGCI meeting.

His message set the tone for the discussions that followed. While calling for greater recognition, support and facilitation of scientists, he stressed that research must respond to society's needs, improve people's lives and connect with government policy priorities.

"Evidence must find its way into government decisions, business practices and community solutions," he said.

"Research, science, technology and innovation are not abstract concepts. They are instruments through which we can improve lives, create opportunities for young people, and strengthen our economies."

His remarks resonated throughout the day, as speakers repeatedly returned to the gap between policy commitments and the resources and institutional arrangements needed to translate them into results.

Dr Nhlanhla Lupahla, General Manager for RSTI Coordination and Support at Namibia's National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, said SGCI-3 would extend the Initiative's work from institutional capacity building towards systems change and partnership-driven interventions. Hosting the Forum 11 years after joining SGCI, he said, allowed Namibia to help shape priorities and partnerships for the next phase.



Namibia's Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Dr Tjitunga Elijah Ngurare, officially opens the #SGCI All Partners Forum 2026.

Dr Cephas Adjei Mensah, outgoing President of the SGCI Alliance, encouraged councils, funders and partners to develop solutions together, guided by the contexts in which those solutions will be used. He stressed that a shared vision must be backed by arrangements that allow councils to work collectively and own implementation.

The Forum is attended by delegates from 39 countries, 27 of which are African. These include 20 SGCI member countries and five other countries that are in the process of becoming SGCI members.

In his address, Prime Minister Ngurare also called for recognition of the scientific capability that Africa already has. He urged development partners to recognise that investing in science in Africa also serves their own needs. He described Africa's people as its greatest asset, noting that young people make up more than 70 per cent of the population.

Dr Chioma Okeke, a special assistant to Nigeria's Federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, said councils must show how STI investment can address challenges such as food security, health and unemployment. Nigeria, she said, was in the final stages of establishing a national science council.

She cited the country's ECON (Energize Commercialisation Now) and YSI initiatives as examples of how science and technology can transform communities when backed by political support.

Dr Mahaman Bachir Saley, Head of Science Technology and Space Division at the African Union Commission, described SGCI as a very useful platform for implementing STISA-2034. He stressed the need for member-state financing commitments, linked to the African Union target of allocating 1 per cent of GDP to R&D.

Daan du Toit, Deputy Director-General (International Cooperation and Resources) at South Africa's Department of Science and Innovation, urged councils to take the investment case to finance ministers and other decision-makers, linking it to Agenda 2063. He also called for greater private-sector participation and cautioned that reliance on external support creates vulnerabilities in the current geopolitical environment.

Discussions on research infrastructure focused on how countries and institutions could make better use of existing facilities before investing in new ones. Participants called for partnerships that would enable institutions to share equipment, expertise and other resources.

They also highlighted the need to address practical issues such as researcher mobility, intellectual property, data sovereignty and the cost of operating shared facilities. Building trust between collaborating institutions was seen as essential.

Practical proposals included registries showing where equipment and expertise are available, drawing on information held by the Association of African Universities. Participants also discussed fee-for-service arrangements to cover costs and clarify data ownership.

A live poll showed the strongest support for regional research hubs, although no decision was taken. Vaccine platforms were among the areas identified for possible shared investment.

Following the discussion on research infrastructure, attention turned to strengthening councils' leadership and policy influence. The session explored how the SGCI Policy Hub can better support councils to generate and use data and evidence for policymaking and decision-making, and to mobilise public investment in STI in line with STISA-2034.

Dr Cephas Mensah, outgoing President of SGCI, said that under SGCI-3, the emphasis would be on institutionalising the use of evidence, supporting policy implementation and coordinating assistance to councils, with the Hub serving as a one-stop help desk.

Prof Tom Ogada, Executive Director of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), said ACTS had supported 12 councils to develop STI policies, four to develop implementation plans and six to conduct pilot impact assessments of completed projects. It had also helped 15 councils convene 40 multi-stakeholder events. Under SGCI-3, ACTS plans to support at least six councils with policy review and alignment, six with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning frameworks, and 15 with impact assessments.

Maria Stella Namyalo, a Programme Officer with AUDA-NEPAD, said STI is unevenly prioritised across countries and often insufficiently integrated into national budgets and financial plans. Most countries, she noted, still invest less than 1 per cent of their GDP in research and development.

Dr Heide Hackmann of CREST said the organisation planned to expand its database on research funding flows to capture both domestic and international funding.

Participants identified several challenges, including fragmented data, incompatible data formats, weak situation analysis, insufficient funding for data collection and limited capacity to communicate findings.

They proposed regional data-sharing mechanisms and costed policy implementation plans as possible solutions. Councils were also encouraged to submit specific requests for support on policy, evidence and financing through the Policy Hub.

The final session considered Africa's place in the global research ecosystem.

Dr Charah Watson, Executive Director of Jamaica's Scientific Research Council, argued that councils need recognition at home to build credibility abroad, and that communicating their relevance and impact is part of that. Dr Amos Nungu, head of Tanzania's Commission for Science and Technology, called for collective positions and active roles in agenda-setting, backed by strong grants management, transparency and peer review. Prof Agus Haryono, Deputy Chairman for Research and Innovation Facilitation at Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency, drew on Southeast Asia's experience to discuss common rules for collaboration, data ownership and shared infrastructure.

Participants explored an African–Caribbean research and innovation link for peer learning, communities of practice and access to specialised facilities. They cautioned that approaches must be adapted to local social and cultural conditions.

Several speakers stressed the importance of timing: African councils, institutions and communities should be involved in shaping partnerships before priorities, calls and budgets are finalised.

Across the day, discussions pointed to a shift from commitment to delivery: financing that outlasts individual projects, evidence that reaches policymakers, shared facilities governed by clear rules, and partnerships that African institutions help design from the start.

These discussions echoed the challenge Prime Minister Ngurare had set at the start of the day: to ensure that investment in research ultimately translates into benefits for society.

"Let us invest in our researchers. Let us build institutions that endure. And, above all, let us ensure that the knowledge we generate makes a difference in the lives of our people," he said.

Proposals such as the consultative platform, common indicators, a business roundtable and the African–Caribbean bridge will now need further development, clear ownership and timelines.

The day ended on a celebratory note with the grand launch of SGCI’s new logo, marking a new identity for the Initiative as it enters its next phase.

Policy Day highlighted the growing role of science granting councils in connecting research with national priorities and ensuring that science delivers tangible benefits for society. Tomorrow, the Forum enters its final and shorter day, focused on learning and reflection, wrapping up the week’s discussions and bringing the 2026 SGCI All Partners Forum to a close.



“The future of Africa can be shaped not only by resources, but also by new knowledge and our ability to turn research into opportunities for our people... Science only has meaning when it improves lives. We should never lose sight of the people our research is meant to help. African research must speak to African realities.”

Hon. Dr Sanet Steenkamp,
Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Arts and Culture, Namibia

“Globally, there are about 1,400 researchers on average per one million people. The United States and Europe are far above this global average, with over 4,000 researchers per one million people, and many of these are African. What is driving them from Africa to the USA and Europe? It’s not cash. It’s research infrastructure. The shortage of research infrastructure is driving scientific talent out of Africa. This has to change.”

Prof. Brando Okolo,
Head/Senior Advisor on Science, Technology and Innovation
AUDA–NEPAD

Photo highlights from Day 3 (30th September 2026)





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