

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

Research Management Project

Training of Trainers Workshop on
Research Excellence and Research Ethics

14 - 17 AUGUST 2023 | LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA

VENUE: RADISSON BLU MOSI-OA-TUNYA,
LIVINGSTONE RESORT

CONCEPT NOTE
&
PROGRAMME

CONCEPT NOTE

Background Information

The Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI-1) was launched in April 2015 with an initial 5-year funding (2015–2020) from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), IDRC and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF) to strengthen the capacities of Councils in African countries in order to support research and evidence-based policies that can contribute to economic and social development.

Specifically, SGCI-1 focused on strengthening the ability of the Councils to: (i) Manage research; (ii) Design and monitor research programs, and to formulate and implement policies based on the use of STI indicators; (iii) Support knowledge exchange with the private sector, and; (iv) Establish partnerships among Councils with other Science system actors.

A second 5-year phase of the SGCI (SGCI-2; 2018-2023) was launched in July 2018 with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and IDRC to deepen ongoing work with the Councils in areas related to those covered under SGCI-1.

Under this phase, the project titled Strengthening the Capacity of Africa's Granting Councils in Research Management was funded with the overall goal of fortifying the capability of Science Granting Councils in explicit areas of research management, namely research excellence (particularly the knowledge and use of tools such as Research Quality Plus framework), research ethics, emerging scientific practices (especially open data, open access and citizen science) and development of online grant management systems (including databases of peer reviewers).

The five specific objectives of this project are to:

- 1) Provide training and technical support to the SGCs on research excellence and emerging scientific practices – e.g. research quality benchmarking frameworks, benchmarking and strengthening of financial governance of grant funding and other emerging areas.
- 2) Provide support for the design, development and deployment of digitised grant management systems – including designing and implementing databases of national and regional peer reviewers.
- 3) Facilitate the design and writing of national/ regional studies intended at intensifying knowledge and implementation of research ethics in the African context – in partnership with the SGCs and relevant experts.
- 4) Facilitate and oversee development of various research frameworks, manuals and procedures.
- 5) Facilitate opportunities and platforms for peer-to-peer learning among SGCs through staff exchanges and learning visits. The focus of the staff exchange and learning visits would be knowledge exchange and practice of research excellence and emerging scientific practices e.g. open data, open access and citizen science

Participating Countries

The Research Management Project is being implemented in 17 sub-Saharan African countries – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Namibia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Malawi and Rwanda.

About the Research Excellence & Ethics Workshop

Building upon the project's significant impact and to further strengthen and consolidate its achievements, a Training of Trainers workshop is being organised under the no-cost extension of the SGCI Research Management Project. This 5-day capacity building workshop is being convened in Livingstone, Zambia, and will focus on various topics related to Research Excellence, Research Ethics, and Good Financial Grant Practices. The primary objective is to equip participants with essential skills and knowledge in these areas to improve their outcomes and more generally, to strengthen Africa's research ecosystem. An engagement session by the Africa Centre of Technology Studies (ACTS) is also featured on the workshop's programme, in line with the SGCI's overall effort of promoting cooperation, synergistic efforts and collocation among the collaborating technical agencies (CTAs) whenever feasible. Further information on each of the workshop themes are provided below:

•Research Ethics:

In 2022, the Association of African Universities (AAU) commissioned a study under Phase 2 of the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI), aimed at informing the development and implementation of three (3) frameworks and guidelines for its participating members. A research ethics manual was developed as part of this activity. The training of the trainers' workshop sessions to hold under research ethics, builds on these previous efforts, and will provide an opportunity for the Councils to build the capacity to assess and practically develop the necessary tools and frameworks needed for the effective implementation of research ethics within their respective SGCs. Among others, this component will focus on key research ethics frameworks, implementing and safeguarding research ethics, identification of barriers and enablers to implementing a research ethics framework and monitoring and evaluating research ethics frameworks.

•Research Excellence (RQ+ for Researchers)

Various impactful initiatives have been implemented under the Research Excellence component of the project. Key among them is the development of a Research Excellence Manual, the development and implementation of the Course in Assessing Research Excellence (CARE), and the rolling out of the course through capacity building workshops. Quite recently, in November 2022, Council teams were trained on CARE at an in-person workshop organised in Maputo, Mozambique. CARE was specifically designed for SGC members to introduce them to the RQ+ framework and prepare them to effectively implement its lessons and skills in their context to evaluate research linked to grants and funding.

However, the need to conduct similar workshops to empower researchers with the skills and knowledge to prepare research proposals and grant applications that adhere to the RQ+ guidelines for excellent research has become critical. Subsequently, an RQ+ for Researchers course was developed from the original CARE workshop, and the online web-based training reviewed and refined as necessary.

The component of Research Excellence holding under the ToT workshop in Zambia will focus on building the capacity of the council members to be skilled to facilitate the RQ+ for Researchers course. The workshop will equip participants to be able to: 1) Introduce researchers to the AAU LMS and sign in to the platform; 2) introduce the online course in a two-day in-person workshop format; 3) support the trainees to complete the course content; 4) convene trainees after about 6 weeks for a one-day feedback session and present their research proposals / grant applications created as part of the course. The Zambia workshop will also present participants with training materials to use in conjunction with the online course material. These will include the RQ+ for Researchers workshop presentation slides, observational assessment forms, and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting of Learning (MERL) forms. **The CARE Risk and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**, for instance, is one of the key training materials.

Admission Requirements: The RQ+ for Researchers course ToT requires participants to have first completed the whole RQ+ for Researchers course and received the course certificate as proof. The ToT workshop is designed based on the assumption that all participants are familiar with the course content, hence, the focus of the ToT workshop will not be on the content, but on the facilitation of the workshop.

Good Financial Grant Practices:

The Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) Standard is a public international quality standard in the financial governance and management of grant funding, made up of four practice areas: Financial Management, Human Resources, Procurement, and Governance. This component of the project targeted facilitating access of the councils to the GFGP certification to improve grants management. So far, the councils have been supported in various ways, including – conducting precertification assessment of councils for compliance with the GFGP and building their capacity to prepare to undertake the pre-Certification exercise. The exercise of conducting the Desk Based Review for compliance with gold tier standard, as set out in the GFGP requirements has also been completed, indicating gaps noted and making recommendations that need to be implemented to improve the SGCs operations as necessary. The Zambia ToT workshop will provide an overview of the Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) Standard, present highlights from the GFGP assessments and provide an important platform for a feedback session with the participating councils.

Specifically, the workshop seeks to



Workshop Delivery Format

The Research Excellence and Ethics Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop will incorporate a diverse range of interactive and impactful formats, designed to optimize participants' learning experience. These formats include:

- **Presentations by Workshop Facilitators:** Esteemed facilitators will deliver informative and engaging presentations, sharing their expertise and insights on the topics of Research Excellence and Ethics.
- **Brainstorming and In-depth Discussion Sessions:** Participants will actively engage in brainstorming sessions and in-depth discussions, fostering a collaborative environment to explore complex ideas and address pertinent issues.
- **Role-Play Scenarios:** The workshop will feature role-play scenarios, allowing participants to practically apply various facilitation techniques and strategies. Through hands-on practice, participants can enhance their training skills.
- **Reflective Sessions:** Dedicated sessions will encourage participants to reflect on their current practices and compare them with the recommended approaches shared during the ToT workshop. This introspective exercise will enable participants to identify areas for improvement and implement best practices.

Expected Outcomes and Impact

1 Enhanced understanding of the research quality plus (RQ+) framework by SGCs and how to use the RQ+ tools in their SGC contexts.

2 Enhanced understanding and adoption of findings on research ethics among participating SGCs.



Post Workshop Initiatives - Sustaining Research Excellence and Ethical Practices

Policy and Frameworks Improvement Support: In line with continuing efforts to sustain research excellence and ethical practices after the workshop, support will be provided to the participating SGCs in their efforts to improve and update their policies and framework documents related to research excellence, research ethics, and aspects/practices related to the GFGP. This support will include reviewing existing policies, supporting councils without policies to draft one and offering recommendations for alignment with best practices and international standards.

Training the Research Community: As a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop, all participating councils are expected to schedule and implement capacity building training for the research community in the participating countries. Participating councils in the Zambia workshop are expected to report tangible results from this activity, after a three-months duration.

Follow-up Assessments: Post the workshop, the organisers will conduct follow-up assessments to gauge the effectiveness of the workshop's training. This will include gathering feedback from the workshop participants and assessing their adoption of the RQ+ framework, research ethics guidelines, and GFGP standards in their respective SGCs.

Collaborative Peer Learning Platforms: The workshop organisers will continue to create the necessary platforms via various means, including online sessions and during SGCI project level meetings, to foster collaborative peer learning to facilitate knowledge exchange, best practice sharing, and ongoing discussions related to research management, ethics, and grant practices.

Dissemination of Best Practices: Lastly, the organising team will continue to engage the participating councils, tracking and showcasing the positive outcomes of the capacity-building efforts. Best practices recorded will be disseminated in various ways, including sharing success stories across the wider SGCI initiative.

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Through the implementation these post-workshop activities, the Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI) can ensure that the impact of the Research Excellence & Ethics Workshop extends beyond the workshop itself, creating lasting positive changes in the research landscape of the participating countries.



Workshop Organisers



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES
اتحاد الجامعات الأفريقية

The AAU is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization created in 1967 by African Universities to promote cooperation among them on the one hand, and between them and the international academic community on the other hand. The AAU endeavours to raise the quality of higher education in Africa and to strengthen its contribution to Africa's development by fostering collaboration among its member institutions, providing support to their core functions of teaching, learning, research, and community engagement, and facilitating critical reflection on, and consensus-building around issues affecting higher education and the development of Africa.



**The African
Academy of Sciences**

AAS is a non-aligned, non-political, not-for-profit pan African organisation whose vision is to see transformed lives on the African continent through science. Its tripartite mandate is recognising excellence through the AAS' highly prestigious fellowship and award schemes, providing advisory and think tank functions for shaping Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) strategies and policies and implementing key STI programmes addressing Africa's developmental challenges.

Workshop Host



The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), Zambia, is a statutory body established by the Science and Technology Act No. 26 of 1997. The main function or mandate of the Council as prescribed in the Act is to 'promote science and technology so as to improve the quality of life in Zambia'.



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ETHIOPIA



GHANA



KENYA



SENEGAL



UGANDA



ZAMBIA



NIGERIA



BOTSWANA



ZIMBABWE



NAMIBIA



COTE D'IVOIRE



SIERRA LEONE



MOZAMBIQUE



TANZANIA



MALAWI



RWANDA



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ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES
اتحاد الجامعات الأفريقية



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Training of Trainers Workshop on Research Excellence and Ethics

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

DAY 1

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023

08:00 – 09:00	Arrival & Registration of Participants
	Opening Remarks
09:00 – 9:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host (Government of Zambia) • Association of African Universities (AAU) • Introduction of participants

9:30 – 10:30	Redefining research excellence Introduction to the course: RQ+ for Researchers Understand the foundations of the RQ+ for Researchers course and the learning outcomes	Dr. Isabel Tarling
10:30 – 11:00	Group Photograph, Tea/Coffee Break	
11:00 – 13:00	Learning in an online format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is blended learning? • Online vs in-person learning: opportunities and pitfalls 	Dr. Isabel Tarling
13:00 – 13:45	Lunch Break	
13:45 - 15:30	Facilitating an online workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Unit 3) Research Excellence & Unit 4) Introduction to the RQ+ Framework. • Engage with different techniques / strategies to facilitate the content. 	Dr. Isabel Tarling
15:30 -16:15	Role-play different training ideas for Unit 1-4 with colleagues in the room	Dr. Isabel Tarling
16:15	Reflections on day 1 Tea / Coffee Break	

DAY 2**TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023**

08:30 – 09:00	Arrival & Registration of Participants	
09:00 – 11:00	Operationalizing the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment for the course • Planning and managing the course • Managing the online component with researchers for Unit 5 - 10 • Reporting after the course 	Dr. Isabel Tarling
11:00 - 11:30	Reflect on the workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did we achieve? • What do we still want to learn / develop / achieve? • Identify next steps & commitments 	
11:30 – 12:00	Tea / Coffee Break	
12:00 - 13:00	Overview of the Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP)	Alex Misoi, AAS
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	

14:00 – 16:00	The GFGP Standard	Alex Misoi, AAS
	Good practices and value proposition	Alex Misoi, AAS
	Highlights from the SGC GFGP assessments	Alex Misoi, AAS
16:00 -17:00	GFGP feedback session with participating SGCs	Alex Misoi, AAS

17:00

Tea / Coffee Break

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023

08:30 – 9:00	Arrival & Registration of Participants	
9:00 – 10:00	Research Ethics in the African Context: Good practices and recommendations	Dr. Obed Ogega, AAS
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation on the Research Ethics Framework for SGCs	Dr. Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl
11:00 – 11:30	Tea / Coffee Break	
11:30 – 12:00	Discussion and Feedback	Dr. Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl
12:00 -13:30	<p>Capacity of SGCs to Implement and Safeguard Research Ethics:</p> <p>Are ethics offices established at all SGCs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining ethical standards for the research enterprise: "Statement of ethical research & scholarly publishing practices". • Protecting research integrity through international collaborations. • Protecting ethics in the merit review process. • Incentives to strengthen research ethics & integrity. 	Dr. Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch Break	
14:30 – 15:00	Discussion and Feedback	All
15:00 -17:00	Teamwork: Identification of Barriers and Enablers to Implementing a Research Ethics Framework	All
17:00	Tea / Coffee Break	

DAY 4 THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023

8:30 – 9:00	Arrival & Registration of Participants	
9:00 – 9:30	Recap of previous day's lessons	Dr. Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl
9:30 – 11:00	Teamwork: Prioritisation of Key Research Ethics Concepts for Implementation in the Short Term (Project Plan)	All
11:00 -11:40	Discussions and Feedback	All
11:40 – 12:00	Tea / Coffee Break	
12:00 – 12:30	Monitoring & Evaluating Research Ethics Framework at SGCs: A Dashboard of Performance Measures & Milestones	Dr. Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl
12:30 -13:00	Reflections and Concluding Remarks	Dr. Ogega and Dr. Rakeshni
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 17:00	RESEARCH & INNOVATION FRAMEWORK SESSION I	

DAY 5 FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2023

RESEARCH & INNOVATION FRAMEWORK SESSION II



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