

# “Science Granting Councils in a Dynamic African Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Landscape.”

The Human Sciences Research Council’s (HSRC’s) contribution to the discussion in Gaborone.

In November, Dr. Lorenza Fluks and her team from the HSRC attended the 2024 Science Granting Council’s Initiative (SGCI) Annual Forum and GRC Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Meeting in Gaborone, Botswana.

For the HSRC, it was an opportunity to discuss their work on the Gender Equality and Inclusivity (GEI) Project. The GEI Project has been running since 2020 and is part of the SGCI. The HSRC has been working with country councils across Africa to increase diversity and the participation of women (and other marginalised groups) in science and technology, which has a vital impact on development in Africa. As of January 2023, they have been focusing on how the research grant-making cycle can be used to address research inequalities. Their goal is to work with councils to shift paradigms and promote a methodology that includes a GEI lens.

The African Science Granting Councils have been hosting an annual forum since 2015 to “strengthen partnerships, share experiences, and practices on a range of emerging topics, and network amongst themselves and with other science system actors within and outside the African continent” ([www.nrf.ac.za](http://www.nrf.ac.za)). The initiative also aims to support research that can inform policies to contribute to social and economic development.

The forum was hosted by The Ministry of Communication, Knowledge, and Technology from 11-15 November. It was a platform for a network of global delegates in academic, industry, civil society, government, and intergovernmental organisations to discuss the theme, “Science Granting Councils in a Dynamic African Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Landscape.”

Women have a huge role to play in the STI landscape and the GEI Project aims to show how equitable grant-making is a pivotal part of the puzzle and results in more robust research.

For the HSRC team, it was an inspiring opportunity to engage with global leaders in STI and contribute to shaping a more inclusive and collaborative future. The forum included the SGCI Masterclass, workshops, governance and consultative meetings, and an academic symposium to highlight SGCI-supported research projects. For Dr. Lorenza

Monday 17 February 2025

Fluks, the highlight was presenting different ways in which the GEI project seeks to enhance collaboration within the project. The collaboration with science granting councils and opportunities to facilitate council-to-council collaboration was explored in a panel titled "Enhancing Collaboration for Addressing Global Challenges" facilitated by the NRF. The HSRC also co-facilitated a session on advancing gender equality and intersectional leadership in research funding as part of the Global Research Council's Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group's sub-Saharan Africa meeting which took place at the same forum, alongside Ms. Bestina Daniel from the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology.