

Country strategies / priorities for RISA focus countries

RISA SHOWCASE AND LAUNCH OF PHASE II

BRITISH COUNCIL - ACCRA, GHANA

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- **Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya:** Based on the research & innovation needs assessment, GESI assessment, and the applied political economy analysis (APEA) assessment
- **South Africa:** As for the three countries above, but with overarching strategies for strengthening the innovation ecosystem (only)
- **Rwanda and Ethiopia:** Priority research and innovation gaps identified; informed by high-level needs assessment and subject to funding availability, RISA strategy in Rwanda and Ethiopia will address only a limited number of very critical areas
- **Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya:** Overall, in this session, we present country strategic recommendations based on the research and innovation ecosystem priorities in each of the 6 countries

Country strategies / priorities - Kenya

Kenya

RISA vision in Kenya is aligned to Kenya's STI strategy: Kenya's STI Strategy prioritises 4 key thematic areas: Strengthening the legal and institutional framework; Human resource development; Coordination and collaboration within the STI space; Gender mainstreaming in STI. Hence, building on these themes, the overarching strategies for strengthening the R&I ecosystem for Kenya involves:

Collaboration and Coordination within the Research and Innovation Ecosystems: Strengthening collaborations and partnerships between government, academia, research centres to support technology development, transfer, and diffusion through research centres to innovation hubs

The creation of a dedicated national research policy to provide a cohesive framework for research ecosystem functionality

Private sector support R&I ecosystem: The private sector is a potential source of funding for R&I, with researchers and innovators producing evidence and innovations for a thriving private sector

Role of R&I to bring local solutions to local communities: The RISA fund will also seek to stimulate local researchers and innovators to provide cost effective, well adapted solutions to local development priorities associated with geographical location, such as poverty .

Building incentives to encourage strengthening of R&I ecosystems: Programs that encourage the youth , women and other marginalized groups inclusion within the space.

Human capital and skills building to align with real-time needs, and with funding available: Recommended to align industry needs with training programs in academia and innovation hubs and ESOs, including gender mainstreaming.

Country strategies / priorities - Ghana

Ghana

- **Enhance coordination to strengthen local research and innovation systems and actors (government, academia, innovators, hubs etc).** This could be done through hosting regular convenings to discuss policy issues, GESI, share lessons and opportunities by leveraging key actors like Heritors Labs, iSpace Foundation & Impact Investing Ghana (RISA inception projects), Ghana Hubs Network etc.;
- **R&I programs to be inclusive and equitable and extend the practice of innovation beyond the major cities of Accra and Kumasi.** Opportunity to examine or develop focused programs involving the informal sector / frugal innovations, actors in rural/regional regions beyond Accra, to reach women/other marginalized groups, and apply innovation in resource constrained areas to build on opportunities.
- **Align policy and advocacy to support innovation and research** – including provision for government funding that is more sustainable. The government should continue to organize forums—such as Ghana Digital Innovation Week
- **Bring innovation and research together by assisting in the translation of research findings and innovations into industrial products and services.** This might be accomplished through fostering deeper collaboration between industry and academia, as well as hub networks, via platforms and other forums. Leverage Heritors Labs and IIGh's RISA inception projects
- **Government, international development agencies and investors to provide financial incentives to support SDGs, innovation and research uptake.** This could be done through creating a more efficient grant and financing structure for research and offering monetary incentives to businesses, organizations to encourage uptake of research and innovation and building technical capacity.

Country strategies / priorities - Nigeria

Nigeria

- **Facilitate collaboration and coordination between R&I ecosystem actors (researchers, innovators, policy makers and MSMEs):** Leverage established networks to facilitate collaboration; e.g. during RISA Inception phase, Adams Smith International collaborated with agricultural sector actors to share lessons, opportunities and challenges
- **Support human capacity building within the research and innovation ecosystem:** building human capacity is a cross-cutting priority in both the R&I ecosystems; e.g. by collaborating with academia (i.e. Lagos Business School, Yaba College of Technology, etc..) through funding and technical expertise to develop curricula to address human capital gaps
- **Promote and encourage GESI:** through the provision of incentives for R&I programs that prioritize GESI within their goals and objectives; e.g. RISA projects to collaborate with government institutions such as the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the National Commission of Persons with Disabilities and the National Human Rights Commission to address GESI challenges and foster an inclusive environment within the R&I ecosystem. For the third time in 5 years the Nigerian Senate has rejected the [Gender and Equal Opportunities \(GEO\) Bill](#) - a bill that could secure the rights of women and girls to obtain equal job opportunities as compared to male counterparts.
- **Policy advocacy and alignment:** Collaborate with government such as the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and its subsidiary the Digital Economy Department through a memorandum of understanding to support the implementation of the [Nigerian ICT Innovation Entrepreneurship Vision](#) which comprises of policies and incentives to strengthen the Nigerian R&I and entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- **Support R&I growth through adequate funding:** Some initiatives and policies do not proceed to the implementation stage due to lack of funding. RISA proposed funding calls could address this gap, directing funds to the key R&I ecosystem needs identified during the stakeholder needs assessments (i.e. agriculture, healthcare and education); e.g. by partnering with the [Lagos State Employment Trust Fund \(LSETF\)](#) to work with banks and other stakeholders in Nigeria's R&I ecosystem.
- **Introduce a dedicated national research policy in Nigeria:** To complement the national STI policy, to support both R&I

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South Africa

- **Deepening the ecosystems catalysed by the cross geography legacy projects** Aligned with RISA's approach to 'learning by doing', the legacy projects maximised learnings across the regions by extracting innovation ecosystem strengths in one system to deploy to another system; e.g. (1) the drones project by Burooj and RIIS was able to amplify capacities and opportunities in Kenya and South Africa and in the process attracted a third country (Rwanda); (2) for Intini's project, the SA Government has been keen mobilising five food value chains. RISA wishes to build on both projects, while also opening up new opportunities; e.g. for RISA be a connector for countries looking to leverage the innovation bridge portal in South Africa, with KENIA in East Africa and equivalent organisations in West Africa.
- **Promoting a culture of innovation regardless of the sector, location, social status etc.** Creativity at the grassroots is central to shaping sustainable socio-economic development. Grassroots innovations are also more demand driven. Some catalytic sectors include agriculture and healthcare. Supporting the diffusion process of grassroots innovations and their integration into the national innovation ecosystem to shape the growth and development trajectory of South Africa.
- **Financing structures need to be more equitable and appropriate.** South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya attract much of the innovation funding in Africa, yet the investment does not go beyond major cities to reach rural innovators in informal sectors and townships. Long term funding for grassroots innovations could be a step change to catalyse commercialisation through new pathways (e.g. social entrepreneurship, technology transfer and open source technology).
- **Ecosystem interventions should aim to reflect positive localization practices to address power imbalances and biases in the ecosystem.** Sustainability of outcomes will be better supported if ecosystem interventions are designed to boost local ownership, respond to locally-articulated demand, and adopt a systems-level focus.
- **Promote and encourage GESI in the ecosystem to ensure the opportunities and impact of innovation are widely distributed.** Recommendations include capacity building, coaching and GESI mainstreaming of key stakeholders in the ecosystem, ensuring forums include diverse R&I actors as well as other key stakeholders in GESI to provide incentives to enhance the participation of women, youth, or marginalized groups (e.g. mentorship opportunities, childcare etc).

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Rwanda

- **Research to commercialization:** Research to commercialization has been identified as a weak link for both Rwanda and Kenya. At the same time RISA is already funding a project to improve research to commercialization in Kenya. There may be value to expand the project to include Rwanda with a view to build regional synergies and learnings
- **Support South-South collaborations for research and innovation:** Increasing the connection with other African research organizations would be important to support African-led research that responds to African priorities, share lessons between countries with similar socio-economic challenges and lessen dependency on development support
- **Building research and innovation ecosystem connectivity:** RISA will encourage research that addresses national research priorities while building collaborations between different players in the research and innovation ecosystem (researchers, advocacy groups, policy makers, private sector stakeholders, etc)
- **Ensuring that GESI principles are upheld** in the work that we support in Rwanda

Country strategies / priorities for RISA focus countries

Ethiopia

- **Addressing GESI Barriers in Research and Innovation:** Women and other marginalized groups face numerous barriers both within the broader social, economic and political landscape of the country, as well as within key areas most relevant to the R&I ecosystem, including education, innovation and entrepreneurship
- **Support intra-African collaborations for research and innovation:** Increasing the connection between Ethiopia and other African research organizations would be important to support African-led research that responds to African priorities, share lessons between countries with similar socio-economic challenges and lessen dependency on development support
- **Building research and innovation ecosystem connectivity:** RISA will encourage research that addresses national research priorities while building collaborations between different players in the research and innovation ecosystem (researchers, advocacy groups, policy makers, private sector stakeholders, etc)
- **Convening events/spaces where different R&I actors can come together to normalize and mainstream GESI within the R&I ecosystems:** Convening a diverse array of R&I actors as well as other key stakeholders in GESI offers a targeted and efficient way to foster collective knowledge and understanding around GESI issues and best practice approaches for GESI mainstreaming