



**CONCEPT NOTE**

**STRENGTHENING STI FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA  
HIGH LEVEL MINISTERIAL FORUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
STI4SDGS ROAD MAP AND 2017 UNESCO RECOMMENDATIONS ON SCIENCE  
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHERS FOR THE ECOWAS SUB-REGION**

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (MESTI)**

OCTOBER, 2022

## **1.0 Background Information**

Strengthening Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa is an initiative within UNESCO's global framework for monitoring, policy support and advocacy for the "UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers" (2017 RS|SR). The 2017 RS|SR defines both the values on the basis of which science can contribute to sustainable development in all its dimensions, and the institutional organization that can enable science institutions in each UNESCO Member State to perform their required role. Responding to the requirements of the 2017 RS|SR is directly and operationally relevant to the achievement of the SDGs at national and regional levels in the developing countries. The initiative thus includes a vital component of Africa-wide advocacy conducted in direct synergy with the specific national and regional interventions.

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) has been recognized as a major driver of socio-economic advancement in all societies. The definitions of, "science," "technology," and "innovation" may show clear distinctions; yet, they are so connected that they are considered integrated and often referred in the singular form (STI). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have come to highlight development agenda confronting us and STI has been identified as the veritable tool for addressing the SDGs. This resonates with the First Ten-Year Plan of the African Union's Agenda 2063 adopted by the African Leaders as well as Ghana's own long-term development plan (The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies [2017-2024]) where STI has been identified as the driver of development. Moreover, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Member States have committed to adopt science, technology, and innovation strategies as integral components of national sustainable development strategies.

For STI to effectively drive the achievement of the SDGs and the Africa we want, there must be the requisite plan to direct its application. Ghana is one of the Pilot Countries and a beneficiary of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funded project dubbed "Strengthening STI for Sustainable Development in Africa" alongside Congo, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Under this SIDA funded project, UNESCO is assisting the Government of Ghana (GoG) through the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) to implement activities pertaining to awareness creation and commitment to the 2017 RS|SR and its 10 Key Areas among Africa Governments and Science Institutions.

Ghana is one of the foremost countries to prepare and publish its STI4SDGs Roadmap. Under the SIDA funded project, Ghana has also developed five policy briefs on capacity and needs assessment of its STI ecosystem. The High-Level Ministerial Forum is part of the target advocacy towards showcasing the STI4SDGs Roadmap and stimulating discussions on the need to work collaboratively and promote partnerships for strengthening STI systems among countries in the Sub-Region.

## **2.0 The High-Level Forum**

The High-Level Ministerial Forum is aimed at enhancing advocacy and communication and sharing experiences on the 2017 RS|SR and the STI4SDGs Roadmap, for the attainment of regional and national level-commitments on the SDGs. Governments and national science institutions are taking measures to strengthen their national and regional STI policies, governance of STI, and institutions in research and innovation in accordance with the 2017 RS|SR and the African Union Agenda 2063. Ghana having successfully published its STI4SDGs Roadmap is in a position to lead processes for enhanced advocacy and support at the Regional Level as part of implementation arrangements for the STI4SDG Roadmap.

Objectives: The Objectives of the Forum are as follows:

- I. Provide a platform for policy exchanges and knowledge sharing on experiences, approaches, best practices, and lessons learnt in utilizing STI to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 aspirations within the ECOWAS Sub – Regions;
- II. Encourage countries within the ECOWAS Sub-Region to take concrete steps to develop their STI4SDGs Roadmaps and implement the 2017 RS|SR;
- III. Identify realistic mechanisms for collaborations within the ECOWAS Sub-Region: e.g., STISA2024, the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI), African Observatory in Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI) and international partnerships and investments in STI to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- IV. Create a strong commitment at the Level of Ministers as part of efforts for the strengthening of the STI System in their respective countries in tandem with ECOWAS Regional Agenda; and
- V. Facilitate institutionalization of mechanisms for collaboration and matchmaking, to strengthen regional partnerships and investments in science, technology, and innovation.

## **3.0 Organization**

The High-Level Ministerial Forum will be organized over two (2) days.

### **Day 1: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

This is the kick-off day. The day will have the formal opening ceremony where statements from the ECOWAS Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation, UNESCO Accra Office and the Swedish International Development Agency.

Presentations, Plenary and Discussions

The second aspects of the day 1 programme involves presentations on the STI4SDG Roadmap, the 2017 UNESCO Recommendations on Science and Scientific Researchers and the linkage with overall SDGs and National System expectations. Time will be devoted for enhanced discussions on areas presented with the view of soliciting input, experiences sharing and best practices.

#### **Day 2: 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2022**

The Day will focus on STI Application and Related matters in the areas of Health, Agriculture, Education, Clean Water and Sanitation, Energy, Industry and Innovation, Decent jobs and leveraging on Frontier Technologies.

Presentations on the STI Application areas will be made and enhanced discussions will be ensured after the presentations.

Wrap Up and Closing

The second day will also be the official closing ceremony and a wrap on the issues over the past two (2) days will be presented.

#### **4. Expected outputs**

The High-Level Forum is expected to generate the following key outputs:

- i. Report of the High Level Forum which will inform the ECOWAS Regional Forum on science, technology and innovation;
- ii. Documented shared experiences and stories on RS|SR & STI4SDGs
- iii. Network of Documented Regional and International Participants.

#### **5. Expected outcomes**

The following will be the key outcomes of the Forum:

- i. Report of key outcomes that could guide member States in improving their science, technology and innovation policies and amplify the impact of science, technology and innovation on measures to accelerate fulfilment of the RSSR and STI4SDGs.
- ii. Strategies to strengthen science, technology and innovation institutional arrangements that can drive policy implementation mechanisms for research and development, innovation and to help ECOWAS Member States to build a sound scientific, technological and innovation foundation.

## **6.0 Participants**

The meeting will be attended by high level representatives and decision makers of all ECOWAS Member States, Representatives of UNESCO, Technical experts on Science, Technology and Industry, Academia, Government, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Development Partners, the Media Fraternity among others.

## **7.0 Working languages**

\*The meeting will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation in both languages.

## **8.0 Dates and venue**

The High-Level Meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2022 at the Africa Regent Hotel.

## **9.0 Contacts**

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