



POLICY SUPPORT FACILITY

Reform Implementation Support

Development of an Innovation Fund in The Gambia



Mrs. Awamary Lowe-Khan
Chair of the Expert panel

Mrs. Lowe-Khan combines a deep understanding of the Gambian R&I and entrepreneurial ecosystems with a strong track record in stimulating grassroots innovations for social impact. In 2016, she founded the first Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre in Raleigh, NC, USA- a partnership between a university and a loan fund, to bring economic opportunities to distressed minority areas that underwent gentrification.

Since 2017, she has been actively working in The Gambia where she founded the Gambia's first tech hub (The Disruptive Lab) and The Woman Boss, a Women Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Leadership Centre, boosting the innovation and research development ecosystem to accelerate socio-economic development. She forged relationships with external stakeholders (national and international), including government and entrepreneurial agencies. Prior to this, she managed, as the Executive Vice-President and CFO for Carolina Small Business Development Fund (USA), their social impact investment portfolio.

With over 20 years of serving as an executive in the financial, non-profit, management, innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem, Mrs. Lowe-Khan is a pioneer in building systems and policies for the betterment of minorities. As such, she worked with various higher education organisations, companies, networks and associations. She provided leadership across the ecosystem of research and development of strategies, innovation for start-ups, use of STEAM in higher education for better students' empowerment. She also grew an innovation ecosystem to share best practices and create a peer support system, maximising co-learning, knowledge dissemination and capacity building.





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Ephraim Daka is a Science Technology and Innovation (STI) consultant and research scientist. He worked as a Research Scientist in innovation systems and knowledge economy at The Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT).

Mr. Daka has over 15 years of experience in cross-sector development, SME internationalization and project cycle management, and policy review on the national strategic plan.

During his tenure at VTT, his project portfolio included the Euro-African ICT research collaboration, analyses of National Innovation Systems (NIS) in emerging economies, and formulations of the private sector support project in Zambia. Providing research, analysis, and insight that governments and corporations rely upon for multi-country strategic investment decisions.

Mr. Daka possesses a Master of Economic Sciences and Postgraduate in R&D and innovation policy evaluation. He is a Certified Innovation Practitioner able to measure and assess business innovation capabilities, accredited to Innovation 360 Group AB.

Previously, he has worked as a business incubator expert under the EU framework contract (FWC), feasibility study on entrepreneurship opportunities and business incubation in selected countries of Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean regions, as part of EU investment strategies.

Currently, he is an independent consultant and part-time Ph.D. candidate in international business.

Mr. Ephraim Daka
Rapporteur of the Expert panel





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Dr. Almamy Konte
Member of the Expert panel

Dr. Konte has over 15 years of experience in science and innovation policy, in addition to his expertise in higher education and scientific research.

He worked eight years (2012-2020) as senior expert in innovation policy at the African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI) of the African Union Commission, where he led the AOSTI innovation programme of work.

During this period, he worked with 42 countries (out of the 55 in the African Union), including the Gambia where he conducted two capacity-building workshops on STI policy instruments and on national systems measurement frameworks for innovation, on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST).

He has offered his services to several international organisations, such as UNESCO, NEPAD, ECOWAS, and ISESCO. He provided his support to Mali and to the Democratic Republic of Congo in the design of their science and innovation policy documents.

He also provided his expertise to the UNESCO's Global Observatory for Science Policy Instruments (GOSPIN) project and to the African Science Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) initiative.

Dr Konte is the co-author of the West Africa chapters of the two last editions of the UNESCO Science Report (2021 & 2015).

Dr. Konte was the Director of Technological Research for the Ministry in charge of scientific research of Senegal from 2006 to 2012. He holds a PhD in physics.





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Professor Michael Kahn
Member of the Expert panel

Dr. Kahn is an independent policy adviser, with academic links as Honorary Research Fellow at Stellenbosch University, Professor of Practice in the University of Johannesburg, and Extraordinary Professor of the University of Western Cape.

With over 30 years of experience in STI policy, strategy, planning, measurement, and monitoring and evaluation, he works with governments (RSA, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Qatar, Namibia), the Development Banks, and international organisations such as the European Union, OECD, WIPO, UIS, and UNESCO.

Apart from his work on STEM education policy, he has contributed to innovation policy in South Africa through the White Papers on Science and Technology, the National Foresight Study, and directly through the creation of the Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators.

He had a strong hand in setting up the African Science and Technology Indicators Initiative, as well as the African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI). Prof Kahn was the lead author of the 2013 Annex to the OECD Frascati Manual on the measurement of R&D in Developing Countries. More recently, he conducted a study on the Status of STI in Africa for the African Development Bank (2018).

Currently, he works for UNESCO on the development of STI policy in Mozambique, as well as for South Africa's National Advisory Council on Innovation.

