# Strategy to Achieve Gender Responsiveness in the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif): 2020-2025





**July 20, 2020**
**Revised May 2022**

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## List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AHU | African Host Universities |
| ASET | Applied sciences, engineering, and technology |
| AU | African Union |
| AWARD | African Women in Agricultural Research and Development |
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| GoFoWiSeR | Global Forum for Women in Scientific Research |
| GREAT | Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| IPI | International Partner Institution |
| KII | Key informant interview |
| OWSD | Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World |
| PASET | Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology |
| RCU | Regional Coordination Unit |
| Rsif | Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| STEM | Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics |
| STISA | Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa |

**Strategy to Achieve Gender Responsiveness in the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif): 2020-2025**

**Revised Version April 2022**

## 1.    Introduction

Africa's development challenges include how to increase agricultural productivity, move beyond resource extraction and farm-based enterprises towards higher value enterprises, reduce environmental degradation, achieve food and nutrition security, and tackle the triple disease burden (non-communicable, communicable, and reproductive health related). Advances in applied science, engineering, and technology (ASET) fields are essential to finding effective solutions to these complex development problems and will require harnessing Africa's human resources, both women and men (Okeke *et al.*, 2017; Tiedeu, 2019).[1] Unfortunately, only a fraction of women's potential contributions is currently being harnessed. Women make up 30% of researchers in science fields in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), roughly the same as the global average of 28% (Huyer, 2015). Data (Bunting *et al.*, 2014) from nine flagship African universities for 2010/11 show female student enrolment in undergraduate and postgraduate science, engineering, and technology fields ranges from a low of 25% (Edward Mondlane University) to a high of 45% (Cape Town University and University of Mauritius) (see Figure 1 in

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[1] The Rsif program focuses on the applied sciences, engineering, and technology (ASET) fields, which is similar but not synonymous with the STEM acronym (science, technology, engineering, and math). For instance, ASET emphasizes applied sciences and does not include mathematics. In the gender strategy document, we use the term ASET rather than STEM given the emphasis of PASET/Rsif.

## 2. Annexes

Annex 1). Greater gender disparity in the sciences is revealed at the PhD level for nine of the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif) African Host Institution (AHU) PhD programs in seven countries (Figure 2).

Enhancing gender inclusiveness in the sciences will require significant investment and deliberate efforts at various levels by various actors, including by universities, governments, and other institutions. However, the important payoffs from this investment justify the costs: removing existing barriers to women's entry and advancement in ASET fields will increase substantially the number of intelligent, talented people making important scientific contributions towards solving Africa's complex development problems. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has made increasingly evident the enormous importance of science and the need to harness Africa's existing potential for innovative home-grown solutions in addressing the pandemic. When a greater diversity of perspectives is engaged in scientific and technical endeavours, conventional assumptions are challenged, scientific findings are more complete and robust, and ASET innovations address the demands and circumstances of a diversity of stakeholders, including men *and* women.

It is encouraging that African governments are increasingly undertaking actions to promote women scientists in research and development. For instance, the African Union (AU) declared 2015 as the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa Agenda 2063 in recognition of the role of women as key drivers of science and technology, and adopted the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (AU, 2020). Importantly, the AU's gender strategy for 2018-2028 lays out a plan for gender equality and achievement of its aspiration for "An Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children" (AU, 2018-2028, p. 8). Several other initiatives in SSA are supporting women's participation in research and development. For instance, the African Development Bank's gender equality index tracks women's representation as economic agents, in human development, and as public leaders. The Gender Summit Africa provides an opportunity for scientists, policy makers, gender scholars and stakeholders to meet and discuss issues of gender equality in research and innovation as a way towards normalizing women's importance in research and innovation (Tiedeu, 2019). Mentorship and training programs such as The African Women in Agriculture Research and Development (AWARD), Mawazo Institute, and Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT) are promoting gender equality in education and research. These initiatives are all anchored on the continent's commitment to the principles of gender equality as enshrined in the Solemn Declaration of 2004 by heads of state and governments of member states of the African Union (AU, 2004).

### 3. The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif) program

The Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET) is an Africa-led initiative with the objective of strengthening the applied science, engineering, and technology (ASET) capability in Africa to further its socio-economic transformation. PASET was launched in 2013 by the governments of Senegal, Ethiopia, and Rwanda with facilitation by the World Bank. The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif) one of PASET's flagship programs focuses on transformative technologies that have a far-reaching positive impact on society. It is funded by contributions from African governments - Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Mozambique; the World Bank, European Commission and the Government of Korea and facilitated by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) in Nairobi, Kenya.

As the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) of Rsif, *icipe* has a mandate that includes overall coordination planning, administering, and growing the fund, organizing the selection of host universities and international partner universities, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation of Rsif activities. Rsif aims to catalyze the training of 10,000 PhDs in ASET fields prioritizing the faculty of universities who lack PhD training and the new pipeline of young scientists and engineers who will enter academia or industry, or set up their own enterprises,

with a target of 40% of the trained PhDs being women. PASET therefore seeks to understand how to reduce barriers to women's progression in science careers.

Rsif has the following objectives: (1) Create a stock of highly skilled scientists, professionals and innovators in applied sciences, engineering and technology (ASET) areas; (2) Identify and nurture young talented Africans to further their studies in ASET fields where expertise is needed most; (3) Address imbalances in the number of women and disadvantaged groups in ASET fields in Africa; and (4) Build African university capacity to provide relevant ASET training and to ensure continued investment in scaling up ASET education and workforce.

### 4. Rationale and objectives of the Rsif gender strategy

The Rsif program has set a target for women's representation among its PhD scholars (40%) based on a commitment to gender and social inclusion and excellence in ASET fields to support Africa's socio-economic transformation. The goal of the gender strategy is not to advantage women relative to men, but rather to level the playing field and ensure equal opportunity for women and men. In SSA, as elsewhere, women face barriers to entry and advancement in ASET fields, which is problematic from a social justice perspective and impedes progress in solving Africa's complex development challenges (Bientema & Marcantonio, 2010; Drame *et al.*, 2015; Okeke *et al.*, 2017). By aiming for high proportions of women PhD scholars, social transformations can be triggered so that women's representation becomes self-sustaining (Aina *et al.*, 2015; Markus, 2017).

Achievement of gender balance of Rsif's funding of PhD scholars requires a well-thought-out gender strategy, along with deliberate, long-term and continuous engagement on the part of the Rsif team, Rsif African host universities (AHUs), and International Partner Institutions (IPIs). This strategy document provides practical guidance to the Rsif program team and collaborating partners to effectively mainstream gender dimensions (see the list of key gender concepts in **Annex** 4) throughout the program cycle, including gender research, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and wide dissemination of lessons learned from gender research and their implications for policy and programs. The gender strategy is a living document that will be updated and improved as new evidence emerges from the various activities undertaken during the program. A first revision of the strategy was undertaken in 2022 and resulted in the development of a new implementation plan (see **Annex** 2).

A complex interaction of many factors explains women's under-representation in ASET fields, with the pipeline "leaking" girls and women at various stages from secondary school through undergraduate and postgraduate studies and in their career transition (Blickenstaff 2005; Ceci *et al*. 2014; Manderson *et al.*, 2017; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013; Nkosie & Matlala; Oni et. al, 2019; Owusu et al, 2014; Wang & Degol, 2017; Williams, 2018).  The Rsif gender strategy focuses on the PhD portion of the ASET pipeline. Through implementation of evidence-based

recommendations (detailed in section 4), the four key objectives of the Rsif gender strategy will be pursued:
1. Increase enrolment of qualified women into Rsif AHU PhD programs.
2. Improve the postgraduate student experience (e.g., sense of belonging, work-life balance, lack of gender discrimination) of Rsif women PhD scholars.
3. Improve PhD performance among women and men Rsif PhD scholars.
4. Support Rsif women scholars' PhD degree completion and career transition.

## 5. Rsif gender strategy

The Rsif program's gender strategy includes two components:
1. Gender research to inform recommendations for enhancing women's participation and success in the Rsif AHU PhD programs.
2. Interventions and activities to advance women in ASET fields at the 15 Rsif AHUs.

### 4.1. Gender research to inform the Rsif gender strategy recommendations

Gender analysis is an essential component to achieving the Rsif gender targets. Gender analysis provides input into program activities and contributes to the modification of implementation strategies through feedback loops, where gender lessons are regularly communicated to the Rsif program team and representatives at Rsif AHUs.

A gender baseline study was conducted in 2019/2020 to generate an evidence base to inform recommendations for the Rsif gender strategy, and to contribute to literature on women in ASET fields in SSA. Research methods and results of the baseline study are detailed in an accompanying technical report. Research activities included:

- Participation at the Global Forum for Women in Scientific Research (GoFoWiSeR) in July 2019, which provided a captive audience to validate the Rsif gender research approach and solicit recommendations for Rsif's gender strategy.
- An extensive literature review of women's participation in science, engineering, and technology PhD programs was completed in October 2019, which elucidated the main economic, sociocultural, and institutional barriers to women's enrolment, performance, and completion of ASET PhDs. Nearly all the studies in this extensive literature concern North America and Europe, a knowledge gap that the Rsif research helps to address.
- Data on enrolment and completion of MSc and PhD degrees between 2015-2020 were obtained from nine of the 15 Rsif AHUs (Figure 2).[2]
- Site visits were made to four of the Rsif AHUs: Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Rwanda, and Gaston Berger University (Senegal). The site visits

  involved focus group discussions (FGDs) with current MSc and PhD students to assess barriers and opportunities, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with faculty members to identify best practices for alleviating those barriers.
- A survey using SurveyMonkey (hereafter referred to as the survey) was implemented with women and men who had pursued an ASET PhD at a university in SSA in the last 20 years (*n* = 252). Figure 3 shows the countries and institutions represented in the survey. Survey participants were solicited by sharing the survey link with African-university faculty met at GoFoWiSeR, representatives of organizations working to advance women in ASET, and former PhD students who had attended the Rsif AHUs or had *icipe* PhD attachments. The survey collected data to understand the key factors influencing the postgraduate student experience and PhD performance and completion.

Additional research and monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities will be conducted regularly to revise and improve the gender strategy interventions. Gender indicators have already been integrated into the regular satisfaction survey which is administered annually. Further questions added to the survey will allow for deeper gender-related analysis.

- Using a dynamic, iterative process: As part of the gender strategy, Rsif will offer gender training and sensitization courses to faculty and scholars and will mainstream gender into the Rsif orientation course and various cross-cutting trainings. Information from the

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[2] University of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Cote D' Ivoire; University of Ghana; Kenyatta University, Kenya; University of Nairobi, Kenya; African University of Science and Technology, Nigeria; University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria; Bayero University, Nigeria; University of Rwanda; Nelson Mandela University of Science and Technology, Tanzania; Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania; and University of Gaston Berger, Senegal.

post-course assessments will be used to continually improve courses offered at Rsif to better serve women and men participants.

- Generating a longitudinal dataset of PhD students: Datasets on PhD students in SSA are sparse and not publicly available. The Rsif program offers a tremendous opportunity to develop a large panel dataset of African PhD students and thereby improve global understanding of why women are under-represented in ASET PhD programs in SSA.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Routine collection of gender-disaggregated data on key indicators of Rsif program activities, outputs, and outcomes will continuously inform on progress towards the gender-strategy objectives and provide a data set for further research.

### 4.2. Interventions and activities to advance women in ASET fields

The package of interventions to enhance women's participation in Rsif PhD programs is informed by the results of the Rsif gender study and covers four objectives related to enrolment, the postgraduate student experience (wellbeing), PhD performance, and PhD completion and career transition. **Annex 2** summarizes the recommended interventions and their accompanying activities. Based on Rsif gender study results, interventions have been identified to achieve the **four objectives**:

(1) Increase enrolment of qualified women into Rsif AHU PhD programs
(2) Improve the PhD experience for Rsif women PhD scholars

(3) Increase both women and men's performance during PhD studies
(4) Support Rsif women scholars PhD degree completion and career transition

### Objective 1: Increase enrolment of qualified women into Rsif AHU PhD programs

Objective 1 is critical, given survey evidence of near gender parity for some indicators of PhD performance and completion (Figures 4-6). Interviews at four AHUs supported this finding, with faculty reporting that women make very good postgraduate students. Results may suggest that the greatest challenge to increasing the number of women PhDs in ASET is identifying and enrolling them. Once women enrol, they do very well with the requisite support. To enhance women's enrolment in Rsif AHUs, four interventions are important:

**Intervention 1.1.** *Advertise social inclusion in scholarship call & adopt proactive model.*
The Rsif scholarship call already includes reference to the program's commitment to gender equality. Furthermore, to attract more women, Rsif will mention in the call the women-friendly aspects of the program and family-friendly and gender-based resources of the various AHUs and IPIs. Rsif will encourage AHUs and IPIs to further develop such resources and services as women's mentoring, program flexibility for women with young children, and to provide reasonable accommodations. A proactive recruitment model will be used whereby recruitment involves a continuous, active search for talented and diverse applicants. Towards this end, we will develop and continuously update an extensive list of contacts from university departments with relevant MSc programs, organizations working to advance women in ASET, and government and industry employers in ASET fields. The

Rsif AHU Coordinators will be encouraged to advertise the scholarship call to women faculty at their universities. Increasing the size and diversity of the Rsif applicant pool should translate to higher-quality applicants.

***Intervention 1.2.*** *Use affirmative action and equal opportunity practices for scholar selection*
A starting point is the use of affirmative action, which is known to be effective in increasing the representation of under-represented groups in academia and the workplace. Rsif -RCU will monitor applications and nominations, awarding at least 30% of the scholarships to women but aiming for 40% or greater women students accepted at each call.
The selection panels at AHU's play a key role in the process. Rsif will support their commitment to encouraging women by providing gender-sensitive selection guidelines. A monitoring tool will identify the selection of men and women across AHUs and across thematic areas. Another key activity is to increase confidence and strengthen applications from potentially eligible women students by providing information sessions and offering "write shops".

**Intervention 1.3.** *Raise awareness in undergraduates and lecturers that ASET is for women too*
To increase the pipeline of African women in ASET fields, the various life stages where women lose interest should be addressed. The gender study revealed that it is not

uncommon for girls and young women to be discouraged from ASET fields by teachers, family members, societal messages, and lack of information. Some women FGD participants also shared their childhood observations of boys getting preferential treatment from science and math teachers.
This is a wide-spread and deeply rooted issue for which there is no immediate solution, However, every effort is important. We will experiment with using Rsif alumni as ambassadors for outreach. Rsif will also identify efforts already being made by AHUs and IPIs and will share this information as best practices with other institutions. The Mentoring Platform promises to be a helpful venue for these efforts and in contributing to sensitize faculty.

### *Objective 2: Improve the PhD experience for Rsif women PhD scholars*
Graduate school is a challenging time for women and men alike. However, the challenges faced by women students appear to be greater. In the FGDs, women participants reported several issues faced during their postgraduate studies, such as balancing family and study responsibilities, societal pressure, gender stereotyping, and sexual harassment. The survey data also revealed challenges faced by women PhD students (Figure 7). The gender study also indicated the importance of women role models to women doctoral students' motivation and success. It should be mentioned, however, that the challenges women doctoral students face do not appear to prevent them from performing well and completing the PhD (Figures 4-6).

But "success" may come with nontrivial emotional and mental costs. Three interventions for Objective 2 seek to improve the postgraduate student experience of Rsif women scholars.

- **Intervention 2.1.** *Raise awareness among Rsif scholars and AHU faculty of the family-friendly and gender-related resources and services offered by their university*
  According to faculty interviewed during the site visits, gender units and sexual harassment policies exist at the four AHUs visited, but detailed information was not collected. The Rsif survey data indicate that only 25% of sampled women PhD alumni had awareness of family-friendly policies or gender units at their PhD institution. Less than half (45%) of surveyed women were aware of a sexual harassment policy at their PhD institution, and only 54% of these were familiar with the university's reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment cases. Rsif -RCU will conduct a review of the existing gender-related at the AHUs. This information will be used for the following purposes: First, we will develop an information package for Rsif scholars and AHU faculty on support services offered by their university (e.g., gender units, disability services offices, counseling, family-friendly policies), and where and how to report cases of sexual harassment. Second, we will develop and share with the Rsif AHUs a list of best practices currently in use at the AHUs. Third, Rsif will provide recommendations to the AHUs on possible modifications to existing policies and practices to promote favorable maternity leave and other family/women-friendly policies at the host universities where they do not already exist. A similar process will be followed to identify and raise

  awareness about family-friendly and gender-related resources and services offered by the IPIs.

- **Intervention 2.2.** *Develop a mentoring and supervision program within Rsif that promotes gender and social inclusion*
  Rsif -RCU will undertake efforts to make women's contributions in ASET fields more visible, and normalize diversity in science, for example, by sponsoring PhD scholars to attend and present at conferences where women in science are key speakers, e.g., the Gender Summit Africa or GoFoWiSeR. Rsif is in the process of creating a formal mentoring program for all Rsif PhD scholars, which will be tailored to address the needs of both women and men scholars. Rsif will identify and implement other effective actions that allow women scholars to build interpersonal problem-solving skills, discuss challenges and solutions, and share information on opportunities in their fields. Examples are establishing peer support groups for the Rsif women scholars and providing them with resources to participate in existing online mentoring programs (e.g., OWSD, CareerWise).

  **Intervention 2.3 Develop a program to promote greater family support for scholars**
  The gender survey identified that spousal support is an important factor in women feeling comfortable in their role as PhD scholars. Rsif will develop support that will include such

activities as a discussion group for married students and will experiment with inclusion of spouses into information programs.

Financing is a complex issue for scholars, especially for those who are single parents. A review and identification of specific non-monetary interventions and possible support from AHUs will be conducted to identify areas of challenge and ways to support single parents to access these resources.

***Objective 3:   Increase both women and men's performance during PhD studies***
The gender study found that women doctoral students obtained external grants, presented at conferences, and gained teaching experience at similar rates to men (Figures 4, 5). However, gender disparity was observed for publication productivity, with women (vs men) having about one less paper accepted for publication during the PhD training. Recommendations for this objective focus on interventions to support the publication productivity of Rsif scholars, preparing them for productive careers in ASET fields.

- ***Intervention 3.1.*** *Identify mechanism promoting greater financial and social security for scholars with children*
  Women in the focus groups shared that without a supportive spouse, a married woman, especially one with children, faces a very challenging time during their PhD training. Likewise, survey results indicate that women who got married during their PhD studies published significantly less, whereas this life event associated to higher publication output

  for men. There is a need to create greater family, especially spousal, support for Rsif-RCU women scholars. Rsif will undertake to identify challenges faced by single parents and to make recommendations which will help scholars who also have responsibilities around children to focus on their PhD work.

- ***Intervention 3.2.*** *Mainstream gender into relevant Rsif capacity building training courses*
  Women and men FGD participants mentioned that graduate students in their programs do not have adequate skills in grant writing and scientific publication, and that their learning institutions currently do not offer much assistance in these areas. Furthermore, regression analysis with the survey data revealed that participation in a scientific writing course was associated with an increase in publication output among the surveyed PhD alumni. Annual cross-cutting courses are part of Rsif's capacity building activities and cover a range of critical topics. Rsif will mainstream gender into these courses to ensure the needs of both women and men are served. This will be undertaken with post-course assessments to learn whether there are differences between women and men in learning styles; existing knowledge in the subject areas; and preferences for course content, format, and delivery. Information from the assessments will be used to modify these courses, as needed. Where relevant, the training programs will support women's increased confidence through such

activities as "meet and greets", women-only breakout groups, and finding opportunities to link scholars with women scientists in the field.

- **Intervention 3.3** *Provide opportunities to present and network broadly*
Rsif will undertake to support women to find opportunities to attend, present and network in a variety of arenas. The Mentoring Platform will offer opportunities for women to increase their confidence and experience by presenting their work to peers and interested parties in the field. Gathering and distributing information to scholars about upcoming scholarly conferences and professional events will be regularly done, making use of the "reach" of the Mentoring Platform and Rsif's weekly newsletter. Women scholars will be encouraged to attend such conferences and events to network as well as to present.

### Objective 4: Support Rsif women scholars' PhD degree completion and career transition

Results of our survey indicate high PhD completion rates for women and men students alike (Figure 6). However, analysis of the survey data indicate that women take about half a year longer to complete the PhD than men, controlling for key predictors. For purposes of the gender strategy, the most salient findings of our analysis of the predictors of PhD completion time are as follows: First, participation in an orientation program significantly reduced PhD completion time for women and men alike. Second, having a child during the PhD training increased time to completion by for women but reduced PhD duration for men. The study also showed the positive impact on women scholars of having role models and mentors. Two remedial interventions are recommended for this objective:

- **Intervention 4.1.** *Adopt family-friendly policies within Rsif*
PhD programs are extremely time-demanding, household responsibilities fall disproportionately on women, and the typical doctoral program does not have a family-friendly policy in place. Rsif will explore family-friendly policies to support doctoral students with young children and raise Rsif's profile as a gender-responsive program. While the portfolio is yet to be determined, requiring discussion, some recommendations are as follows. One low-cost option is to formalize a policy to allow Rsif women scholars to temporarily stop the funding clock during their maternity leave, if they request it, along with supportive measures to facilitate an easy and efficient return to doctoral studies. While many universities in SSA already allow such flexibility, a supervisor often has at her/his discretion whether to continue working with students who interrupt their studies. Rsif could also offer sandwich program flexibility, allowing parents with young children to have a shorter sandwich program, have their mentor from a Rsif -partner institution spend some time in the student's locality, or continue using e-commuting and leaning models which have been the standard during the high time of the COVID pandemic in 2020 to 2022. The experience with on-line learning over the Covid-10 pandemic has shown the potential for this option.

- ***Intervention 4.2*** *Develop a Career Counselling Program*

The transition into the realm of work is challenging for any recent graduate and has specific additional challenges for women in science. Rsif will develop opportunities to assist women to build their confidence and concrete job search skills through training courses and by assisting scholars to be aware of what career services are available through their AHU and IPI. The Mentorship Platform will develop networking and sharing options to link women scholars with professionals in the field. Rsif will also introduce women to the evolving incubator platforms.

## 1.3. Timeline of interventions and activities

**Annex 3** resents a timeline for the gender strategy interventions and activities. The proposed timing is based on the following: (1) starting with some of the activities that are "easy wins" (high impact with relatively minimal effort) as well as those that are feasible under current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic or are already under implementation, (2) implementing simultaneously some complementary activities, and (3) the need to continuously apply and revise some activities and link them with Rsif capacity building measurements. Furthermore, for some activities, timing cannot be determined until approval has been obtained from the PASET Executive Board.

In terms of easy wins, writing journal articles based on the Rsif gender study and the analysis of data collected during the implementation of Rsif, will promote the program among scholars, practitioners, and policy makers (July-Sept. 2020, July 2022). A policy-oriented piece targeted to policy makers and university administrators will further promote the program. A survey

component was integrated into the satisfaction survey for implementation with Rsif scholars upon entry into and exit from their PhD program. Another activity to be implemented in 2022 is to research and report on the existing policies related to women and family-friendly activities in the Rsif AHUs and IPIs. Several other activities – organizing peer support groups, modifying the orientation course to involve the spouses of incoming PhD scholars, and creating a policy for PhD interruption – will make the program more gender responsive with minimal cost and effort. Further development and updating of an extensive contact list is done continuously. Promotional presentations to assist Rsif in proactively recruiting women PhD scholars will be included in orientation and training courses.

A protocol for identifying and securing gender representation on recruitment panels exists and a gender training program for faculty including panelists will be developed and implemented in 2022. Complementary to the latter activity is the development of a gender and diversity training course which will be done in partnership with an institution that currently offers such a course or any of the AHU gender units. This course will be among the offerings of the Rsif capacity building program and therefore has funding for course development.

Several complementary activities include supporting Rsif alumni in developing an Alumni Association and sponsoring students to participate in other mentoring programs (e.g., OWSD

and AWARD) and conferences/events where women scientists are key speakers (e.g., the Gender Summit and GoFoWiSeR). Provision of funding to participate in other mentoring programs and attend conferences is a main approach we could use to incentivize participation.

Review and continuous update of the AHUs gender resources commenced in 2022. A similar approach to identify gender resources at IPIs will be undertaken in late 2022. The online survey implemented in 2022 should be complemented with field visits and interviews with relevant staff and AHU initiatives. Modification of the Rsif scholarship call to bring attention to women-friendly program elements took place in 2021, concurrent reviews and modifications ensure the call reflects current Rsif and AHU initiatives. The timing of post-course assessments and modification of course content and delivery for the existing Rsif orientation and cross-cutting courses will depend on the timing of those courses. The timing of the development of a family grant package is yet to be determined; approval by the PASET Executive Board must first be obtained.

## 6. Expected outputs and outcomes of Rsif gender responsiveness

Gender responsiveness of the Rsif program will help realize a pathway from (1) Africa's development challenges to (2) gender research to (3) recommended interventions and activities to (4) research and strategy outputs to (5) anticipated outcomes. Details about the anticipated outputs and outcomes are provided below.

Examples of concrete outputs expected from Rsif gender strategy include:

- Gender-related training materials, short courses (such as presentation skills, "write shops" on application development), and resource repositories developed for university students, faculty, and administrators.
- Gender mainstreamed into Rsif orientation and cross-cutting trainings.
- Practical recommendations for AHU gender units.
- An inventory of best practices currently in use at the AHUs for enhancing women's representation in ASET.
- Improved gender-sensitivity in the AHU's codes of practice for PhD supervisors.
- Formal mentoring programs established for women in ASET.
- New, public access datasets on women in ASET in SSA.
- Peer-reviewed publications.
- Conference presentations.
- An increased number of women beneficiaries of the Rsif program.

The above outputs will lead to program outcomes, some anticipated in the short-term and others in the mid- or long-term:

*Short-term outcomes:*

- Increased understanding among scholars, practitioners, and policy makers of why women are under-represented in ASET PhD programs in SSA.
- Increased body of evidence on approaches and interventions that address barriers to women's participation in ASET in Africa, made available to AHUs; Ministries of Education, Science and Technology; and national level higher education actors.

*Medium-term outcomes:*
- Improved pedagogical capacities of the AHUs to implement approaches for breaking down systemic barriers to women's participation.
- Improved experiences (e.g., sense of belonging, lack of gender discrimination) and performance (e.g., publications, research grants), and increased probability of completion among Rsif PhD scholars.

*Long-term outcomes:*
- Systemic barriers to women in science are reduced or mitigated, and the number of female PhDs in ASET fields in Africa is increased, thus contributing directly to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and SDG10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries).
- Advances in ASET are supported by increasing the numbers and improving the experiences of women in ASET in SSA, leading to an increased ability of African countries to address their development challenges, and thereby contributing towards achievement of SDG1 (No poverty) and SDG9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure).

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## 8. Annexes

### Annex 1 Figures

**Figure 1.** Percent women students enroled in science, engineering, and technology fields in 2010/11: undergraduate and postgraduate levels at nine African flagship universities
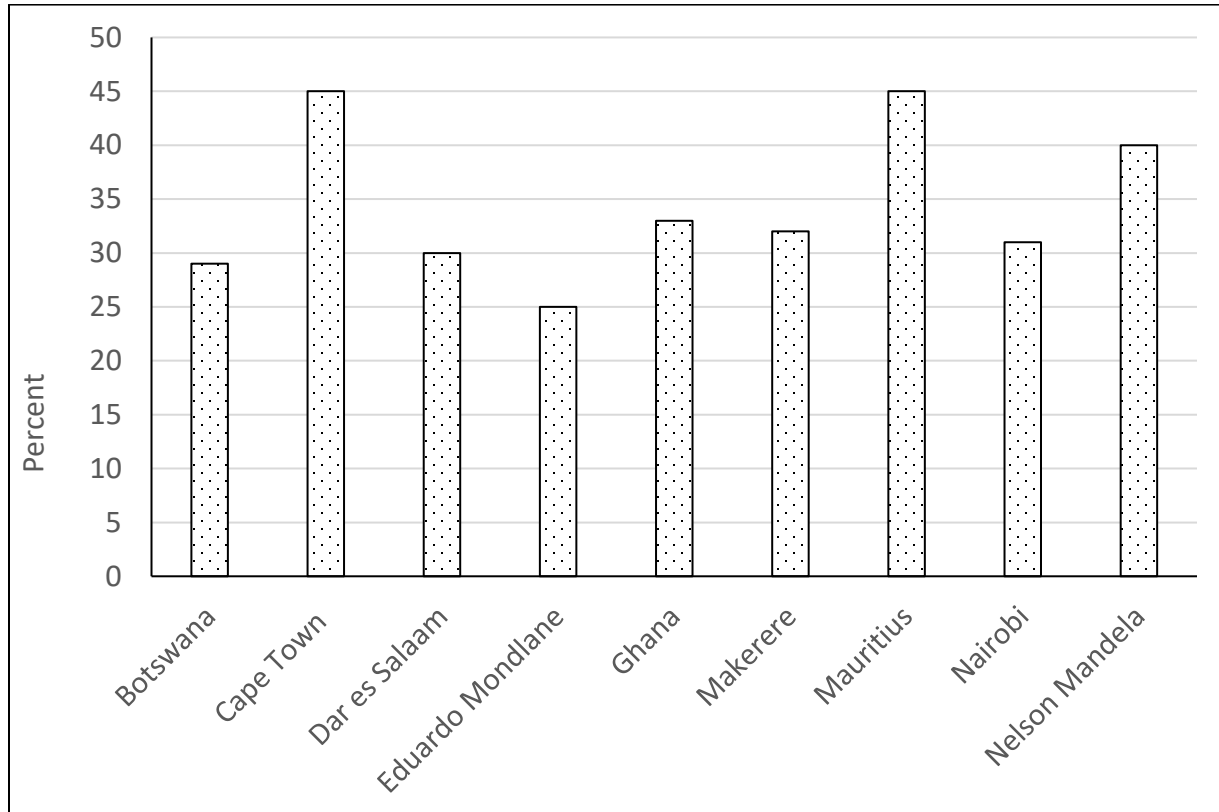


*Source:* Bunting *et al.* (2014)

**Figure 2.** Percent of women enrolled in doctoral programs and awarded PhDs by Rsif theme, averages 2015/16 – 2018/19
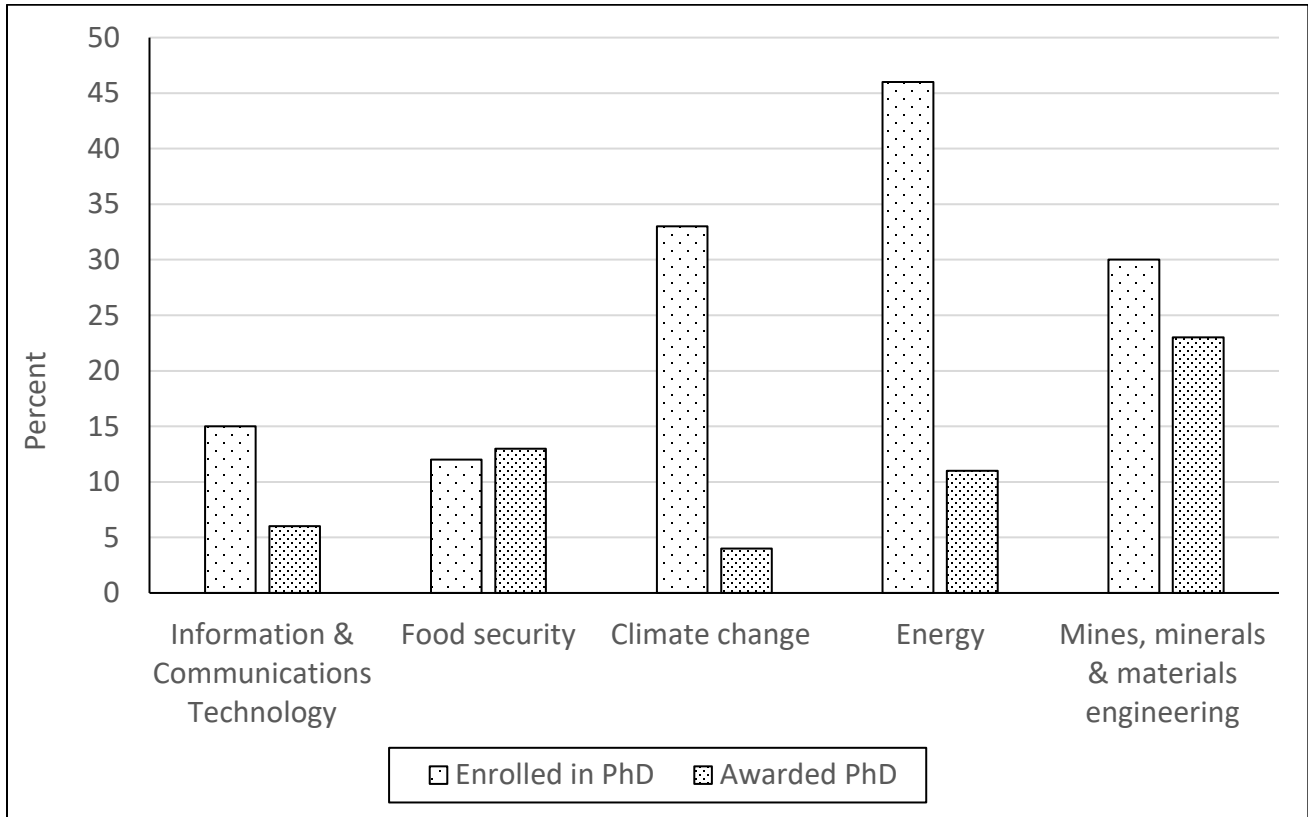


*Source:* Enrolment and Completion data provided by the Rsif AHUs, 2019/2020

**Figure 3.** Map of the countries and institutions included in the survey



Source: *icipe* Rsif gender survey, 2020

**Figure 4.** Percent having a funded research proposal and teaching experience during the PhD training: sampled women and men at African universities (*n* = 227), 2005-2020
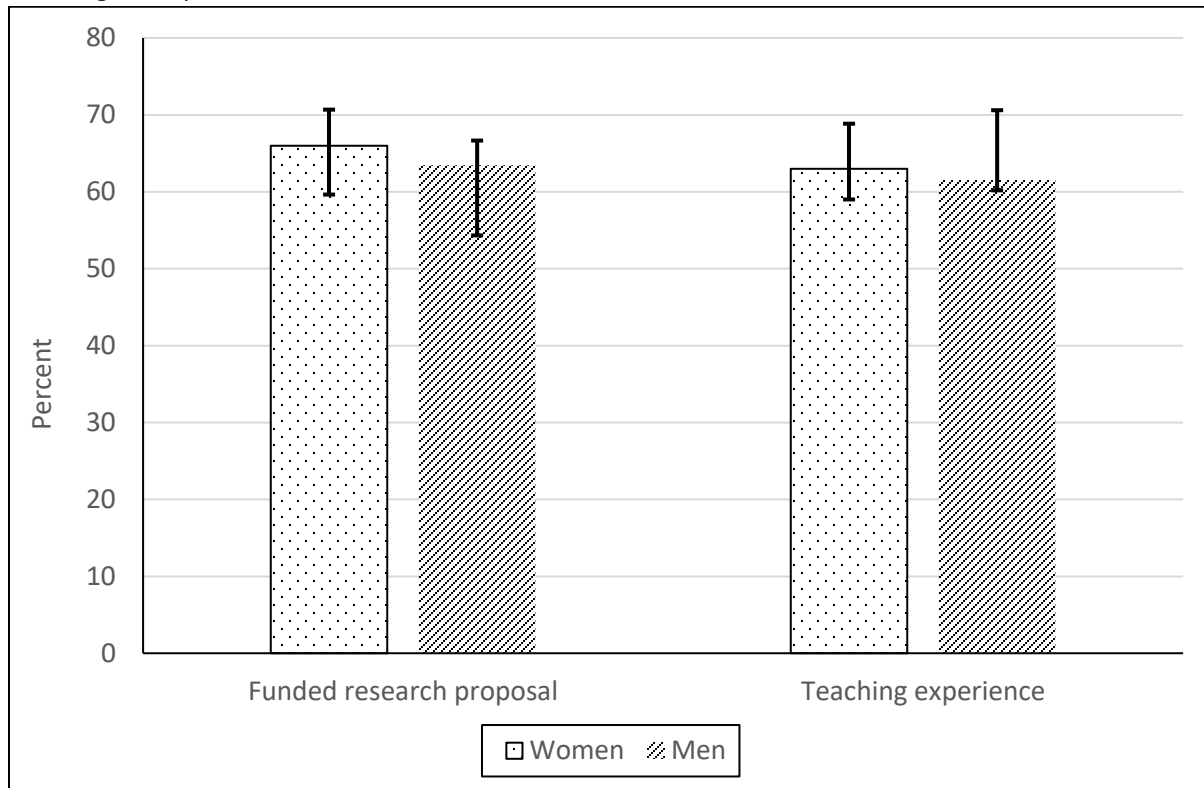


*Source: icipe* Rsif gender survey, 2020

**Figure 5.** Number of accepted publications and conference presentations and years to PhD completion for sampled women and men at African universities (*n* = 227), 2005-2020
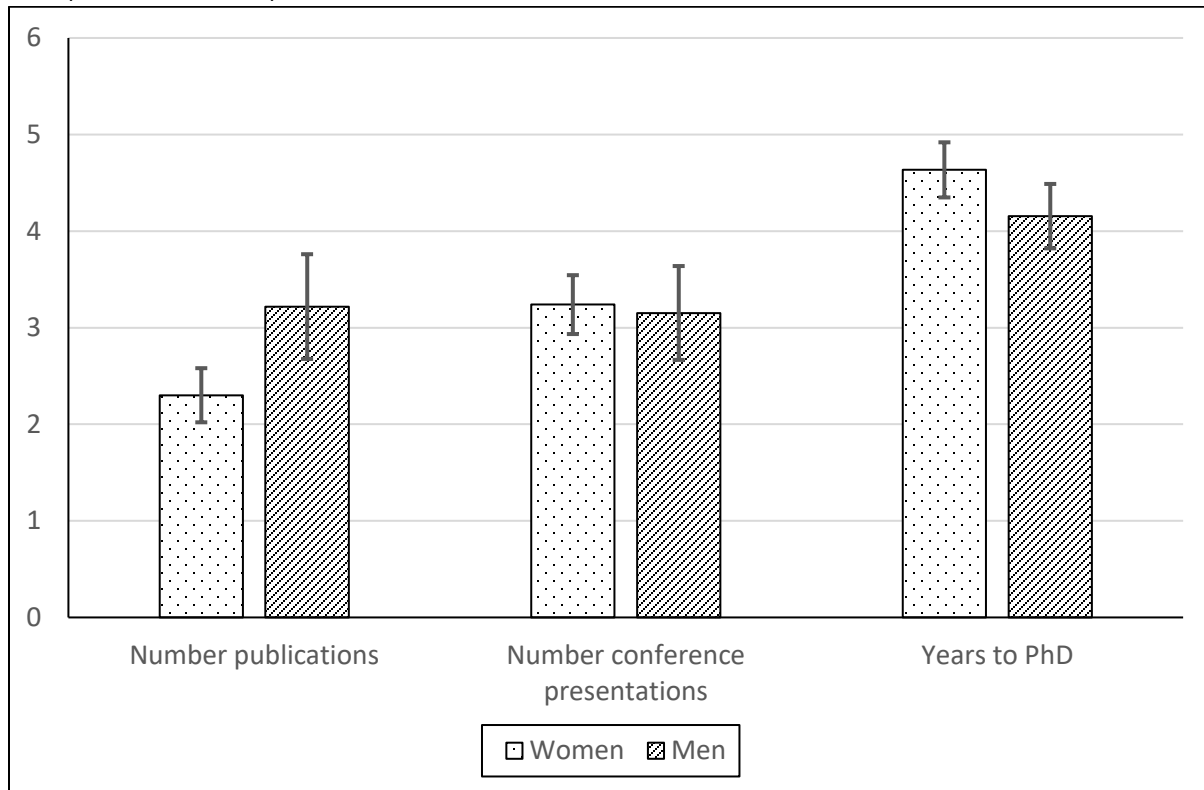


*Source: icipe* Rsif gender survey, 2020

**Figure 6.** PhD completion rates at African universities for women and men (*n* = 227), 2005-2020
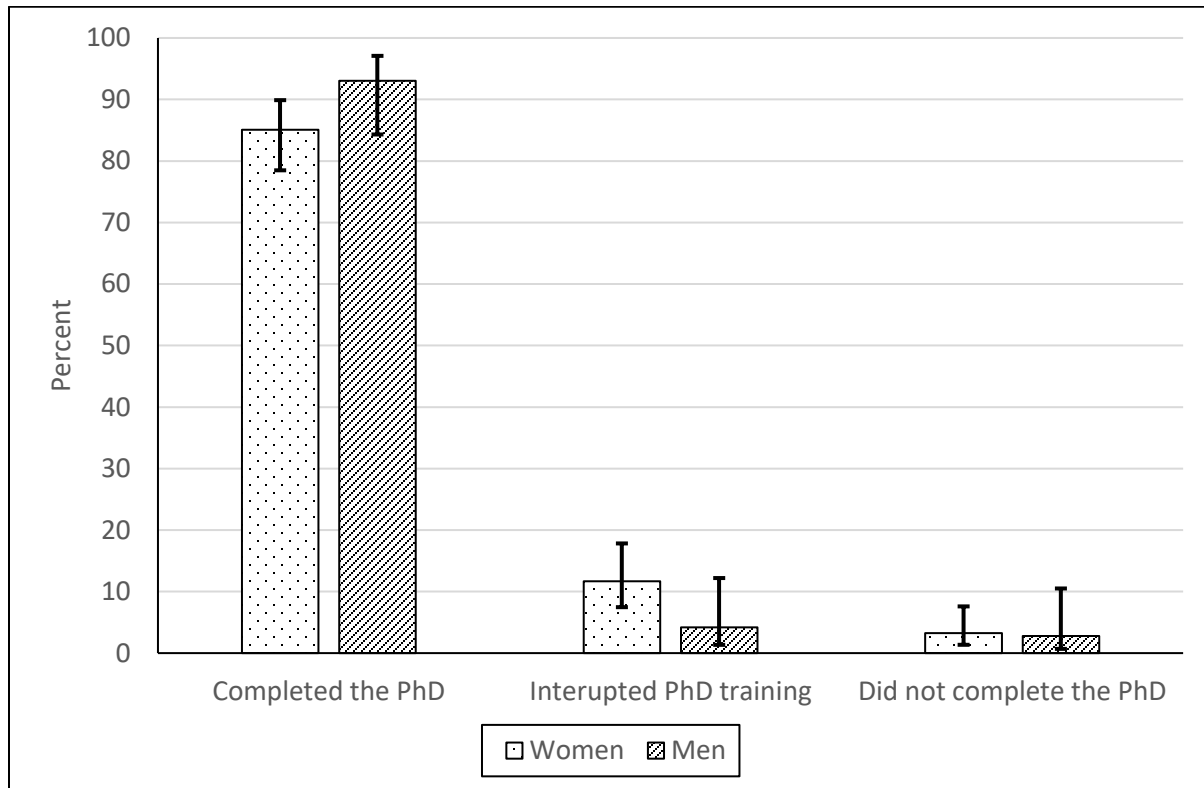


*Source: icipe* Rsif survey, 2020

**Figure 7.** Percent of surveyed women PhD alumni who agreed or strongly agreed that they faced a given issue during their PhD training

*Source: icipe* Rsif survey, 2020

## Annex 2  Gender strategy: Interventions, activities, implementation level, and responsible parties
### Objective 1: Increase number women enrolled into Rsif PhD program

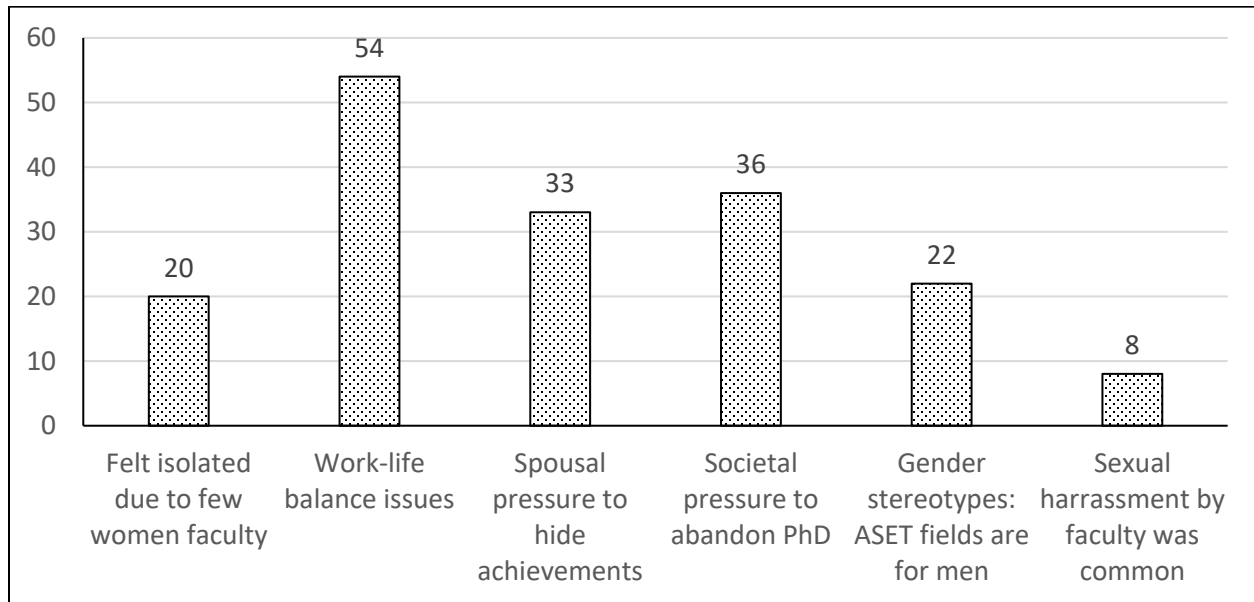| Intervention | Recommendations | Activities | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Advertise social inclusion in scholarship call & adopt proactive model | a. Build on the regular "call" for applications | i. Review the current "call" for accessibility, attractiveness to women candidates, clarity, gender-sensitive language and images.  Regularly review images and text to ensure both women and men are represented.<br>ii. Facilitate discussion with the Communications Unit and the PMS group (consultant), brainstorming ideas to augment gender-sensitivity<br>iii. Negotiate required modifications | Gender Specialist (GS) Communications Unit (CU) and Consultant |
| | | i. Produce annual scholarship call that appeals to women applicants, highlights women-sensitive actions<br>ii. GS reviews the call draft annually | CU, with GS |
| | b. Increase the "reach" of the annual "call" | i. Research where the "call" is currently posted (outreach efforts), making use of the services of Communications Unit. | GS with CU |
| | | ii. Augment outreach distribution list by developing and maintaining active network of individuals, organizations, departments with interests in women & science, with organizations such as STEMi Women's Community, Org. for Women in Science for the Developing World<br>iii. Consult with the marketing company on the call's wording and marketing to strengthen the call's message and its reach **AND/ OR** supply copy to the company to use in their draft<br>iv. Produce communication messages that target the specific audience, with an emphasis on increasing number of women in research and science. | GS with Communications Unit |

| | | v. | Consult with the marketing company to review gender sensitivity of Rsif's social media. Review their draft social media plan **AND/OR** ensure expectations of gender sensitivity. Regularly solicit feedback from users | |
| | c. Ensure gender-sensitivity is required in the TOR's of consultants | i. | Negotiate through discussions with Management | GS, Moses |
| | | | | |
| 1.2 Use affirmative action /equal opportunity practices for selection | a. Secure acceptance of 40% women at each Rsif call by 2024 | i. | Incorporate into Rsif policies | Capacity building unit with Moses |
| | b. Build on and deepen current Rsif selection protocols which practice affirmative action | i. | Research Rsif selection steps and acceptance rates at each stage | GS |
| | | ii. | Research guidelines given to AHU selection panels | GS |
| | | iii. | Research composition and process of AHU selection panels | GS |
| | | iv. | Continue sensitizing AHU selection panels to ensure that they are gender sensitive | GS with Capacity Building Unit (CB) |
| | | v. | Continue to encourage AHU usage of selection guidelines that encourage gender mainstreaming | |
| | c. Ensure women acceptance targets are met across all five ASET thematic areas and cross universities by 2025 | i. | Use the acceptance data from the selection tables to develop a tool to monitor men and women's acceptance across thematic areas, AHUs and selection stages. Make use of consultant or intern to consolidate this effort. | GS with CB, CU |
| | | ii. | Enlarge outreach efforts in under-represented thematic areas by such means as encouraging the AHUs, by including industry experts and by spotlighting scientists working in underrepresented thematic areas . | |

| | | iii. | Use targeted publicity and outreach for under-represented thematic areas (targeting institutions engaged in these areas) | |
| | d. Strengthen confidence and applications from potentially eligible women students | i. | Offer a series of information sessions for interested potential women applicants | GS |
| | | ii. | Organise and deliver write shops for women in STEM while ensuring that women applicants from host countries who are underrepresented and whose application was rejected are invited to a write shop . | CB and GS |
| | | | | |
| 1.3 Raise awareness in undergrads and lecturers that ASET is for women too | a. Leverage the work of the Mentoring Platform | i. | Through collaboration between Rsif Units, support long-term plans in the Mentoring Platform to outreach to undergrads and faculty through Rsif Alumni | CB with GS and CU |
| | b. Develop a plan to eventually utilize Rsif graduates as ambassadors for outreach (method/design, alumni lists, budget) | i. | Follow up with, and provide support to Rsif alumni plan to develop an alumni association | GS and CB |

**Objective 2:  Improve the PhD experience for Rsif women scholars …  (Wellbeing)**

| Intervention | Recommendations | Activities | | Who |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 Raise scholar and AHU faculty awareness of resources/services at | a. Inform scholars about gender - sensitive and family-friendly policies, | i.<br>ii.<br>iii. | Survey each AHU and IPI on resources and services.<br>Follow-up and regular update of received information.<br>Aim for 14 AHUs | GS with Lynne's support |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| their universities & best practices. Recommend best practices to AHUs | services and resources at their AHU and IPI | iv. Finalize a brochure for distribution to students at upcoming orientation | CU in consultation with GS |
| | | v. Introduce the brochure at orientation.<br>vi. Survey focal points using interviews in addition to review of satisfaction surveys to assess adequacy of policies. | GS with CB |
| | | vii. Develop brochure further with information about related AHU policies. | GS with support of CU |
| | | viii. Update brochure annually | GS |
| | b. Integrate this information into faculty training program | i. Review the existing training for faculty. | CB with GS |
| | | | |
| 2.2 Develop a mentoring/supervision program to promote social inclusion | a. Ensure that if there is not yet a supervisors' training course, one is developed as a priority and include gender components | i. Contract a consultant to deliver a supervisors' training course | CB with input from GS. |
| | b. Support and leverage work of Mentoring Platform development | i. Continue to discuss with managers of Mentoring Platform and provide support as needed.<br>ii. Research plans for how the platform will increase problem solving skills<br>iii. Continue ongoing discussions between CB and GS | GS |
| | | | |

| 2.3 Develop a program to promote greater family support for scholars | a. Ensure that spouses are involved in the orientation or/and other training opportunities | i. Develop a facilitation outline for a hour-long discussion group, possibly concurrent with a women scholar's break out group<br>ii. Pilot in 2022 and solicit feedback<br>iii. Revise for 2023<br>iv. Develop a support system and a strategy to facilitate the inclusion of spouses into online information programs | CB and GS |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | b. Support women scholars with work-family-studies balance | i. Review adequacy of stipend using information available through financial reports and Satisfaction Survey.<br>ii. Develop recommendations for appropriate actions | CB with M&E and GS |

**Objective 3: Increase both women and men's performance during PhD studies (publications, papers delivered)**

| Intervention | Recommendations | Activities | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Mechanism promoting greater financial and social security for scholars with children | a. Monitor (with sex-disaggregated data) adequacy of stipend in ensuring financial stability (support for childcare, housing etc.) | i. Study monitoring system. If needed develop indicators | GS with M&E and CB |
|  |  | ii. Review Satisfaction Survey.<br>iii. Organize focus groups to illuminate financial barriers to productivity | GS and consultant |
|  |  |  |  |
| 3.2 Mainstream gender into Rsif capacity building training courses e.g. grant and scientific- writing | a. Review each course for possible increase of gender-sensitive content and methodology | i. observation and assessment of existing courses<br>ii. Review post-course surveys for gender-based differences in responses about gender needs<br>iii. Review of the curriculum and teaching methodology<br>iv. Coach trainers based on review process | GS and CU in collaboration. As this will be time-consuming, may engage a consultant |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | b. Ensure post-course surveys solicit feedback on relevance of course in supporting productivity | i. Ensure that a gender lens is incorporated in ongoing surveys in collaboration with M&E<br>ii. Develop supplemental questions as needed | GS, CB and M&E |
| | c. Maximize women's level of confidence and security during courses. | i. Use the Mentorship Platform to offer a pre-course "meet and greet" for women (and men) only and offer women and men only breakout rooms<br>ii. Develop and pilot in at least 2 courses<br>iii. Assess women's perception of pre-workshop activities through post-course survey | CB |
| | e. Use the orientation program to support women's understanding of expectations/opportunities for them | i. Research orientation program curriculum<br>ii. Continue requesting AHUs to include in their presentation family friendly facilities<br>iii. Work with communications unit to link female scholars to women in STEM communities | GS, CB and CU |
| | | | |
| 3.3 Provide opportunities to present and network broadly | a. Leverage Mentoring Platform in increasing confidence for presenting | i. Use Mentoring Platform to offer opportunities to share work, coach women scholars in presentation skills | CB |
| | b. Support women scholars to attend and present at professional conferences | i. Continually update a list of upcoming events and calls for papers.<br>ii. Use social media, twitter, the Rsif weekly newsletter as well as Mentoring Platform to publicise | CU |
| | | iii. Create or identify funds to assist with travel and child-care expenses<br>iv. Continue to offer courses on presentation skills for women<br>v. Offer coaching facilitated by female scientists and Rsif alumni within the mentoring platform | CB |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | c. Introduce women scholars to professional women scientists' networks and conferences | i. Identify networks and nurture relationships<br>ii. publicise to students using Mentoring Platform<br>iii. Through collaboration between CB and CU, link women scholars to women in STEM and ASET networks. | CB and CU |

**Objective 4: Support Rsif women scholars PhD degree completion and career transition**

| Intervention | Actions | Activities | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 Adopt Family friendly policies within Rsif | a. Follow through on formalizing an "interruption to studies" policy within Rsif | i. Investigate what work has been taken on formalizing "interruption to studies" to date<br>ii. Identify AHU specific family-friendly policies ("stop-the-clock", e-commuting, maternity/ eldercare leaves)<br>iii. Identify best practises and negotiate options for unifying policies across Rsif /AHU/IPI spectrum | GS in consultation with AHU Focal Points |
| | | | |
| 4.2. Develop a Career Counselling Program | a. Build job search skills | i. Develop and offer courses on résumé/cv writing, job application development, interviewing<br>ii. Provide coaching on pitching and interviewing | CB |
| | b. Leverage the Mentoring Platform and weekly newsletter to post job opportunities | i. Elevate Rsif's weekly newsletter and the mentoring platform's reputation as a "go-to" places to post jobs, especially those that encourage women to apply | CU |
| | c. Leverage existing career services at AHUs | i. Conduct an Environmental Scan of existing career services offered by AHUs<br>ii. Document and share information about career services | Consultant |

| | d. Provide networking and sharing of professional openings among alumni | i. Develop a proposal for an alumni program which focuses on career opportunities<br>ii. secure funding | CB and Consultant |
|---|---|---|---|
| | e. Provide networking opportunities with professional women in the field | i. Invite women scientists as guest speakers, panellists and aim for 50 % at capacity building events | CB |
| | f. Explore ways of connecting women to incubator platforms | i. Collaborate with new incubator project to explore possibilities<br>ii. Support AHUs and IPIs in matching the female students to incubator platforms best suited for them | Consultant, CU and Grants Unit |
| | g. Support women in proposal writing | i. Encourage mentors and supervisors to coach women in writing proposals | CB |

**Annex 3 Timeline of gender strategy interventions and activities, June 2022 to June 2024**

| Interventions and Activities | 2022 | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| 1.1 Advertise social inclusion in scholarship call & adopt proactive model | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Build on the regular "call" for applications | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | |
| b. Increase the "reach" of the annual "call" | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | |
| c. Ensure gender-sensitivity is required in the TOR's of consultants | | | | | ▓ | | | | | | |
| 1.2 Use affirmative action /equal opportunity practices for selection | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Increase acceptance of women to 40% at each Rsif call by 2024 | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | |
| b. Build on and deepen current Rsif selection protocols which practice affirmative action | ▓ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | | | ▓ | ░ | ░ | |
| c. Ensure women acceptance targets are met across all five ASET thematic areas and cross universities by 2025 | ▓ | | | | | | | | | | ▓ |
| d. Strengthen confidence and applications from potentially eligible women students | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ |
| 1.3 Raise awareness in undergrads and lecturers that ASET is for women too | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Leverage the work of the Mentoring Platform | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ | ░ |
| b. Develop a plan to eventually utilize Rsif graduates as ambassadors for outreach (method/design, alumni lists, budget) | | | | ▓ | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Raise scholar and AHU faculty awareness of resources/services at their universities & best practices. Recommend AHUs on modifications of policies | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Inform scholars about gender -sensitive and family-friendly policies, services and resources at their AHU and IPI | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ |
| b. Integrate this information into faculties training program | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | |

| Interventions and Activities | 2022 | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| **2.2 Develop a mentoring/supervision program to promote social inclusion** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Ensure that if there is not yet a supervisors' training course, one is developed as a priority | | | ▪ | | | | | | | | |
| b. Support and leverage work of Mentoring Platform development | | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |
| **2.3 Develop a program to promote greater family support for scholars** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Ensure that spouses are involved in the orientation or/and other training opportunities | | | | ▪ | | | | | | | |
| b. Support women scholars with work-family-studies balance | ▪ | | | ▪ | | | | | | | |
| **3.1 Program promoting greater family support for scholars.** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Monitor (with sex-disaggregated data) adequacy of stipend in ensuring financial stability (support for childcare, housing etc.) | | | | ▪ | | | | ▪ | | | |
| **3.2 Mainstream gender into Rsif capacity building training courses e.g. grant and scientific- writing** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Review each course for possible increase of gender-sensitive content and methodology | | ▪ | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Ensure post-course surveys solicit feedback on relevance of course in supporting productivity | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |
| c. Maximize women's level of confidence and security during courses | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | | | | | | | | |
| e. Use the orientation program to support women's understanding of expectations/opportunities for them | ▪ | | | ▪ | ▪ | | | ▪ | ▪ | | |
| **3.3 Provide opportunities to present and network broadly** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Leverage Mentoring Platform in increasing confidence for presenting | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |

| Interventions and Activities | 2022 | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| b. Support women scholars to attend and present at professional conferences | | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| c. Introduce women scholars to professional women scientists' networks and conferences | | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 4.1 Adopt Family friendly policies within Rsif | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Follow through on formalizing an "interruption to studies" policy within Rsif | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2. Develop a Career Counselling Program | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Build job search skills | | | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ |
| b. Leverage the Mentoring Platform and weekly newsletter to post job opportunities | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| c. Leverage existing career services at AHUs | | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| d. Provide networking and sharing of professional openings among alumni | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| e. Provide networking opportunities with professional women in the field | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| f. Explore ways of connecting women to incubator platforms | | | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| g. Support women in proposal writing | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Legend:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Quarter of specific activity | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Continuous activity | □ | | | | | | | | | | |

## Annex 4 Some key gender concepts and definitions

| |
|---|
| Gender: Refers to the socially and culturally determined ideas and practices of what it is to be male or female. One's gender is, therefore, comprised of those cultural norms, roles, and attributes dictated by traditions. |
| Gender Equity: Denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. To ensure fairness, measures are often needed to compensate for historical and social disadvantages. Equity leads to equality. |
| Gender Equality: Denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere and that social values, rights and responsibilities are equally shared, including equal access to resources and opportunities. |
| Gender Balance: Gender balance refers to the ration of women to men in any given situation. Gender balance is achieved when there are approximately equal numbers of men and women present or participating. This is sometimes also referred to as gender parity. |
| Gender Analysis: The systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand, and redress inequities based on gender. |
| Gender Perspective or Gender Lens: Using a "gender perspective" means approaching or examining an issue, paying particular attention to the potentially different ways that men and women are or might be impacted. This is also called using or looking through a "gender lens". |
| Gender Responsive: A commitment to go beyond merely identifying gender issues and instead engage in processes to substantially help overcome historical gender biases. Gender-responsive approaches are essential to ensure that women are not only reached but truly benefit from actions. |
| Gender Roles: These are the roles assigned to men and women, respectively, according to cultural norms and traditions. Most often, gender roles are not based on biological or physical imperatives, but rather result from stereotypes and presumptions about what men and women can and should do. Gender roles become problematic when a society assigns greater value to the roles of one gender – usually men's. |
| Disaggregation by Sex: This refers to data collected form men and women respondents and statistics that are analysed in a way to show results for women and men separately. |
| Gender Mainstreaming: is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, policy or program, in all areas and at all levels before any decisions are made and throughout the whole process. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs so that both women and men benefit and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself, but an approach for promoting gender equality. |