

**Background Note 12 for
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Innovation Ecosystem Strengthening in Ghana

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Introduction

Mapping STI potentials and multi-stakeholder engagement is fundamental to the effective formulation and implementation of our STI4SDGs Roadmaps, designed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by harnessing Science, Technology, and Innovation. It is fundamental to strengthening the innovation ecosystem. I want to highlight five key dimensions of innovation ecosystem strengthening using the case of Ghana.

1. Champions – MESTI and the Presidency

A key step in our multi-stakeholder engagement in Ghana is our decision on the principal champions of our STI4SDG Roadmap. We engaged as champions our sector ministry – the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) – and the Office of the Presidential Advisor on SDGs. This is strategic. With the CSIR operating under MESTI, we must engage with the MESTI. However, the nature of our engagement went beyond the obligatory sectoral engagement. The Chief Director, the technical head of the ministry, co-chaired the roadmap technical team with the Presidential Advisor on SDGs, who reports directly to the President of the country. It underscored the importance of having champions at the highest level of governance, enabling us to navigate through the corridors of power to ensure effective implementation of the STI4SDGs Roadmap.

2. Cultivating Allies, Alliances and Partnerships

We realized the importance of allies and alliances when, at the preparatory stage of the roadmap, we had to conduct the situational analysis of our National Innovation System. We needed current and reliable data. Reaching out to the relevant institutions, such as other key ministries of STI, universities, research institutions, regulatory institutions, private sector organizations, and civil society organizations, we were able to piece together a broad picture of the state of the NIS. In the process, we cultivated relationships that became invaluable in the iterative consultation and drafting of the roadmap.

More important are the allies and alliances for implementation. Throughout the multi-stakeholder engagement, we kept pointing to the stakeholder workshops and meeting participants that the Ghana STI4SDGs Roadmap is a collectively owned document. Thus, the implementation is a collective obligation on the part of all the identifiable actors in the document – the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Export Promotion Authority, Food and Drugs Authority, the Association of Ghana Industries, etc. What is expected is that the specified activities are mainstreamed into the programmes of the respective actors.

3. Strategic Stakeholder Engagement – the Youth

Cultivating alliances and partnerships goes beyond fostering linkages with establishments. Strategic engagement with key segments of the population is critical to ensuring the relevance of the STI4SDG Roadmap. For example, engagement with the youth was considered strategic. In an exclusive stakeholder consultation workshop for the youth, we deeply appreciated the needs and their vision for the nation. Yes, the youth yearn for jobs to be created for them as some 180,000 graduates come from various tertiary educational institutions annually – from public universities, private universities, colleges of education, nursing training colleges, and specialized institutions. But the youth of today aspire to self-employment, and some have already conceived of entrepreneurship in the digital space. Thus, to enhance the relevance of the roadmap to the youth, there must be pointers to opportunities for entrepreneurship, especially in the digital space. As noted in our COALITION concept note, 42 percent of all youth worldwide will be in Africa by 2030. We must ensure we capture their hopes and aspirations in our STI4SDGs Roadmap.

Cultivating alliances and partnerships also go beyond national borders. We are having engagements with foreign institutional actors to partner in the implementation of the roadmap.

4. Addressing the funding gap

Ghana has prioritized six SDGs: end hunger, good health and well-being, and good water and sanitation. There was a deliberate effort to be selective of targets and elaborate activities contributing to achieving these targets.

An important assignment we carried out in preparing the roadmap was to put down estimates for the implementation of the prioritized SDGs for Ghana. A total of \$19.62 million. Ordinarily, this amount of money should not be too difficult for a country like Ghana to raise through multiple sources. However, the economic conditions prevailing now demand concentrated efforts to achieve this. Yet, the minimum funding requirement is what has been estimated in the roadmap. So, a strategy for raising funds is to formulate projects around the targets and form partnerships for implementation.

We are encouraged to share lessons in failures in relation to the STI4SDGs Roadmap preparation and implementation. An area of disappointment so far is that we have not been able to mobilize

the funding resources necessary to achieve the targets. We are still working on it with UNDESA and other friendly agencies, assisting us in this and pointing us in some directions. We are sure we will make progress in this regard.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

It is crucial for successful implementation to have a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework. The coordinating institutions of MESTI and STEPRI will use this framework to track progress and provide impetus to the implementation. The monitoring and evaluation have yet to start in earnest. But when we begin, we are bound to ensure learning. Let me emphasize that learning is only learning when the lessons gleaned from the monitoring and evaluation inform further implementation for better outcomes and the expected impact.

Conclusion

Strengthening the innovation ecosystem is the primary means of creating the conditions for effective implementation of the STI4SDGs Roadmap. We have taken a major step in formulating the roadmap. However, the formulation is only the beginning of the hard work needed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through strategic application of STI. We need champions and we need to ensure creative multi-stakeholder engagements for workable partnerships for successful implementation of the roadmaps. We look forward to achieving the funding level that will sustain implementation of the roadmap.