

AfricaLics

NEWSLETTER

December / Issue No 11

ABOUT AFRICALICS

The African Network on Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems (AfricaLics) is an Africa-wide network focused on developing the field of African Innovation and Development Studies, since its launch in 2012. It is part of Globelics - a global research network established in 2002 ([Globelics Website](#)).



AFRICALICS

In line with the overarching vision, AfricaLics supports African countries in developing and utilizing high-quality research conducted by African researchers, to enable more informed policy decisions to be made relating to the use of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for Sustainable economic and social development, and efficient governance.

The AfricaLics Secretariat has – since 2012 - been based at the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), in Nairobi, Kenya, but in 2026 will move on and be hosted by NACETEM in Nigeria, where the new elected Secretary General, Dr. Maruf Sanni, is based. The outgoing AfricaLics Secretariat wishes Dr. Sanni and his team good luck!

In this edition of the newsletter, you can also find the Call for the 2026 AfricaLics Research Conference hosted by Wits University; information about the AfricaLics Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP), the 2025 AfricaLics PhD academy and other network activities.

You can read more about the continued support to AfricaLics by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), with a new grant approved in July 2025. The project will be led by Dr. Ann Kingiri and hosted by ACTS as one of the several AfricaLics Spokes.



Globelics 2025 International Conference Group Photo

Newsletter Highlight

AfricaLics Secures New Sida Grant to Strengthen Innovation Research in Africa!

Congratulations to Dr Maruf Sanni on his election as new AfricaLics Secretary General!

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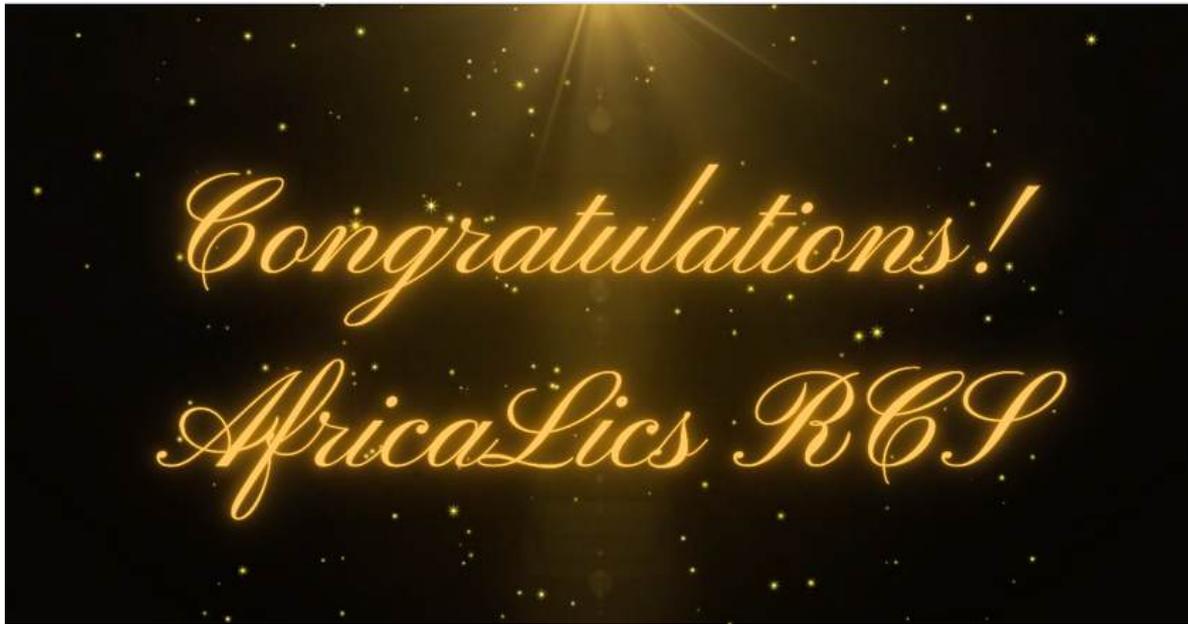
Season Greetings from the AfricaLics Secretariat!



AFRICALICS SECURES NEW SIDA GRANT

The AfricaLics Secretariat is pleased to announce that the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) has approved a new grant to scale up research capacity in African Innovation and Development studies.

The project, titled “Optimizing Research Capacity on Innovation and Development in Africa through The African Network On Learning, Innovation And Competence Building Systems (Africalics RCS)”, will run from July 2025 to December 2029. It will be led by Dr. Ann Kingiri and hosted by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya, with oversight from the AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB).



Key Activities Under the New RCS Project

The new grant from Sida will specifically support three sets of core AfricaLics activities:

- **The AfricaLics Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP):** 25 African PhD students will undertake a year-long fellowship featuring virtual learning, mentorship, and a three-month study visit at the University of Johannesburg.
- **AfricaLics PhD Academies:** Around 100 PhD students will participate in intensive two-week training events (face-to-face) hosted by African universities.
- **Alumni Engagement:** Support for AfricaLics VFP and Academy alumni to present at Globelics and AfricaLics conferences and to collaborate under the Research Coordination Areas (RCAs).

The grant does not provide for general support to conferences organized by AfricaLics or the national LICs, so fundraising will remain high on the agenda of the new AfricaLics Scientific Board in 2026 and in the coming years in general.

Nevertheless, the new support from Sida, strengthened through in-kind contributions from African universities and research institutions, represents a major step toward further developing Innovation and Development research capacity across the continent.

Stay tuned for Calls for Activities and upcoming updates on the impact of the project.

TRANSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

WELCOMING DR. MARUF SANNI AS THE NEW AFRICALICS SECRETARY GENERAL

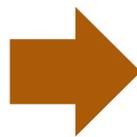
The Africalics network is entering an exciting new chapter as the Secretariat transitions from Africa Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) to a new host institution, following the election of a new Secretary General. Dr. Maruf Sanni, elected competitively by the Africalics Scientific Board, will assume office in January 2026, leading the network with the support of his home institution – NACETEM in Nigeria.

In this new structure, the Secretary General will oversee core network functions, including coordinating communications with members, maintaining the membership database, organizing ASB meetings and follow-ups, and guiding overall planning and events organization. ACTS will continue to play a supporting role as a “spoke” of the network, alongside members of the current Africalics Secretariat, ensuring a smooth handover of responsibilities.

The Secretariat expresses its sincere gratitude to Dr Maruf for his dedication during the election process and congratulates him on his election, marking the beginning of a new phase for Africalics and its vibrant, continent-wide community.



**Outgoing Secretary General
Dr Ann kingiri**



**Incoming Secretary General
Dr Maruf Sanni**

AFRICALICS AT THE GLOBELICS 2025 CONFERENCE



Faces from the AfricaLics community at the Globelics 2025 conference

The AfricaLics Secretariat is proud to share that the AfricaLics community was strongly represented at the Globelics 2025 Conference, a premier international forum dedicated to research on innovation, learning, and economic development – and the parent network of AfricaLics, the Global Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building Systems (GLOBELICS), which brings together scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to explore how innovation drives inclusive and sustainable development.

This year's conference focused on innovation for sustainable and inclusive development, addressing global challenges such as inequality, climate change, and economic resilience.

AfricaLics alumni actively contributed through engaging research presentations and by serving as session chairs and discussants, providing rich insights and fostering dynamic discussions. Participants engaged in sessions on climate resilience, innovation and capabilities in firms and economies, and other thematic areas central to innovation and development research.

We proudly celebrate two remarkable recognitions at GLOBELICS 2025. Dr. Pamela Mreji was honoured with the Best GLOBELICS Paper Award 2025, emerging as one of only three recipients, a testament to the depth and originality of her work. Dr. Justina Onumah received the Paper Reviewers' Award, reflecting her exceptional contribution to advancing research quality.



Pamela Mreji receiving her Paper Award at the Conference

These moments underscore the impact and visibility of the AfricaLics network on the global stage, highlighting its role in advancing research and dialogue in African Innovation and Development studies.

AfricaLics continues to inspire, connect, and lead in shaping innovation and development research worldwide.



More faces at the Globelics 2025 conference



ASB ELECTION

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our outgoing board members, Prof. Daniel Kitaw, Prof. Geci Karuri-Sebina, Prof. Diran Soumonni, Dr. Gregory Mvogo, Dr. Rajesh GK, and Prof. Nadine Machikou, for their dedicated service and invaluable contributions to AfricaLics. Their commitment has strengthened AfricaLics network and advanced its mission.



The election of new AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB) members to fill vacant positions concluded on 19th October 2025. Members of the AfricaLics network participated by voting for their preferred candidates through the membership portal and a total of 30 members took part.

Overall, the elections reflected active member engagement across regions, successfully filling the vacant ASB positions with candidates who achieved decisive majorities in their respective categories.



The AfricaLics Community warmly welcome the newly elected board members: Dr. Glenda Kruss, and Dr. Elvis Avenyo (both from Southern Africa), Dr. Abdi Yuya (East Africa), Dr. Patrick Marie Nga Ndjobo(Central Africa), and Mr. Golam Rabbani (Outside Africa).

Supplementary elections will be held in 2026, so members are encouraged to update their profiles in the AfricaLics database.

The AfricaLics Scientific Board continues to thrive with a diverse and committed team, including Dr. Justina Onumah, Prof. Juliana Ukonze, Dr. Faten Attig-Bahar, Dr. Jegede Oluseye, Dr. Oluyemi Adeosun, Dr. Pamela Meji, Prof. Susan Cozzens, Prof. Samir Maliki, Dr. Patrick Marie Nga Ndjobo, Dr. Abdi Yuya, Dr. Glenda Kruss, Dr. Elvis Avenyo, and Mr. Golam Rabbani. The transparent and inclusive ASB election process, covering regional vacancies and emphasizing gender and geographical diversity, ensures that the board represents both expertise and the rich diversity of the AfricaLics community.



AFRICALICS 2025 VISITING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

In early 2025, five African PhD students, two female and three male, were selected to take part in the AfricaLics 2025 Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP). The successful candidates were chosen from a competitive pool of 84 applicants by a distinguished committee comprising members of the AfricaLics Scientific Board and the Secretariat.

The 2025 cohort represented a diverse range of African countries, including Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Benin. They participated in a one-year fellowship programme, which combined online pre- and post-activities with a three-month study visit at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.



Four of the VFP Fellows at UJ during their study visit

Mentoring was provided by a range of African and international scholars in innovation and development studies, all active within AfricaLics and Globelics. The programme aims to strengthen the academic and research qualifications of African PhD students, improve the quality of their dissertations, and prepare them for careers in innovation and development, whether in academia, the private sector, or government and policy-making.

The VFP also increases the mobility and exposure of students to international knowledge in innovation and development, contributing to the growth of a vibrant research community in Africa in this multidisciplinary field. During earlier phases of the Sida supported AfricaLics Research Capacity Development Programme (2011–2016 and 2017–2022), visiting fellows had the opportunity to study at Aalborg University. In 2022, however, the VFP students were hosted by JOOUST in Kenya, and since 2023 the students have been hosted by University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

Funding for the 2025 scholarships was provided by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida, Stockholm) as part of the new AfricaLics RCS project.

THE AFRICALICS VFP 2025 COHORT



Aline Mutabazi

University of Rwanda

PhD Research Title

Essay on multifaceted challenges for sustainable development in sub-saharan Africa



Dismas Jerome

Kimaro

Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology, Tanzania

PhD Research Title

Market readiness for the adoption of improved solar-Biogas hybrid dryer for post-harvest management of fruits and vegetables



Mercy Jacobs

Sinmidele

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

PhD Research Title

Impact of Index-Insurance and Micro-Credit on Maize Productivity among Smallholder Farmers in North Central Nigeria



Esdras Obossou

Abrewa

National Agriculture University of Benin

PhD Research Title

Effectiveness of climate adaptation in west African Vegetables Farming Systems



Mohammed Hassen Toyib

Addis Ababa University/ College of Business and Economics, Ethiopia

PhD Research Title

Effect of robotization on Employment, Trade and Foreign Direct Investment in Africa

AFRICALICS VFP DEFENDS THEIR PHD IN 2025

In 2025, three VFPs crossed a major milestone successfully defending their PhDs. Congratulations to Molla Tadesse, Rofina Mrosso, and Bashir Kagere for their dedication, resilience, and scholarly excellence. Your journeys inspire the next generation of African researchers.



Molla Tadesse
(2024 Cohort)
Haramaya
University,
Ethiopia.



Rofina Mrosso
Martin
(2022 cohort)
Mzumbe
University,
Tanzania.



Bashir Kagere
(2024 cohort)
Makerere
University,
Uganda

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PHD ACADEMY 2025

The 11th AfricaLics Ph.D. Academy was hosted virtually by the Adama Science and Technology University, Ethiopia, and The EthiopiaLics, with support from the AfricaLics Secretariat. The event was supported financially by UJ and members of the AfricaLics network.

The Academy provided PhD students enrolled in African universities, who are working in the field of innovation and development studies, an opportunity to expand their knowledge in this emerging field, connect with leading academics, and receive feedback on their PhD research.

The Academy's program featured various interactive sessions aimed at fostering both academic and professional growth. The participating students were in their second year of study. They submitted and presented original papers reflecting their PhD research aligned with the thematic areas of the AfricaLics network.

The Academy Structure

The AfricaLics PhD 2025 was a fully on-line event which included paper presentations by students, keynote speeches from experts in Innovation and Development (I&D) and policy in Africa, and lectures by senior researchers covering a range of topics from research methodologies to the latest theories and empirical research in innovation, innovation management, and science policy. A dedicated day was set aside for training on Systematic Literature Review, encompassing both theoretical basics and practical applications. Additionally, a session featured real innovators sharing their journey from inception to breaking even, along with the challenges and opportunities they faced.

The poster for the 11th AfricaLics PhD Academy features the title '11TH AFRICALICS PHD ACADEMY' in large green letters, followed by 'APPLY NOW!' in a green button. It lists the hosts as the University of Johannesburg and EthiopiaLics. A 'Scholarship Benefits' section includes: learning from top researchers, gaining insights into research methods, connecting with academics and policymakers, and receiving feedback from peers. An 'Application Process' flowchart shows: Open Application → Document Collection → Submit Application → Review Process → Confirmation & Final Paper Submission. The dates '02 - 07 JUNE, 2025' are displayed. A 'Register Now' button with a QR code is present, along with contact information: africalics.org and phd-academy@africalics.org. A 'DEADLINE 20 APRIL 2025' badge is also visible. The bottom of the poster shows two smiling women in white AfricaLics t-shirts.

2025 PHD Academy Call



Screenshot from the 2025 PHD Academy

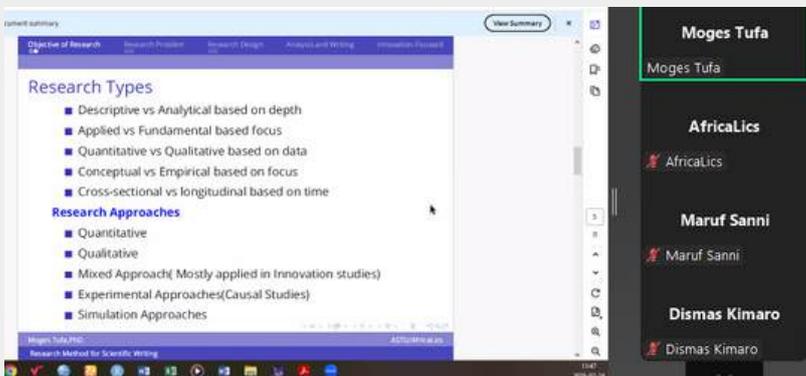
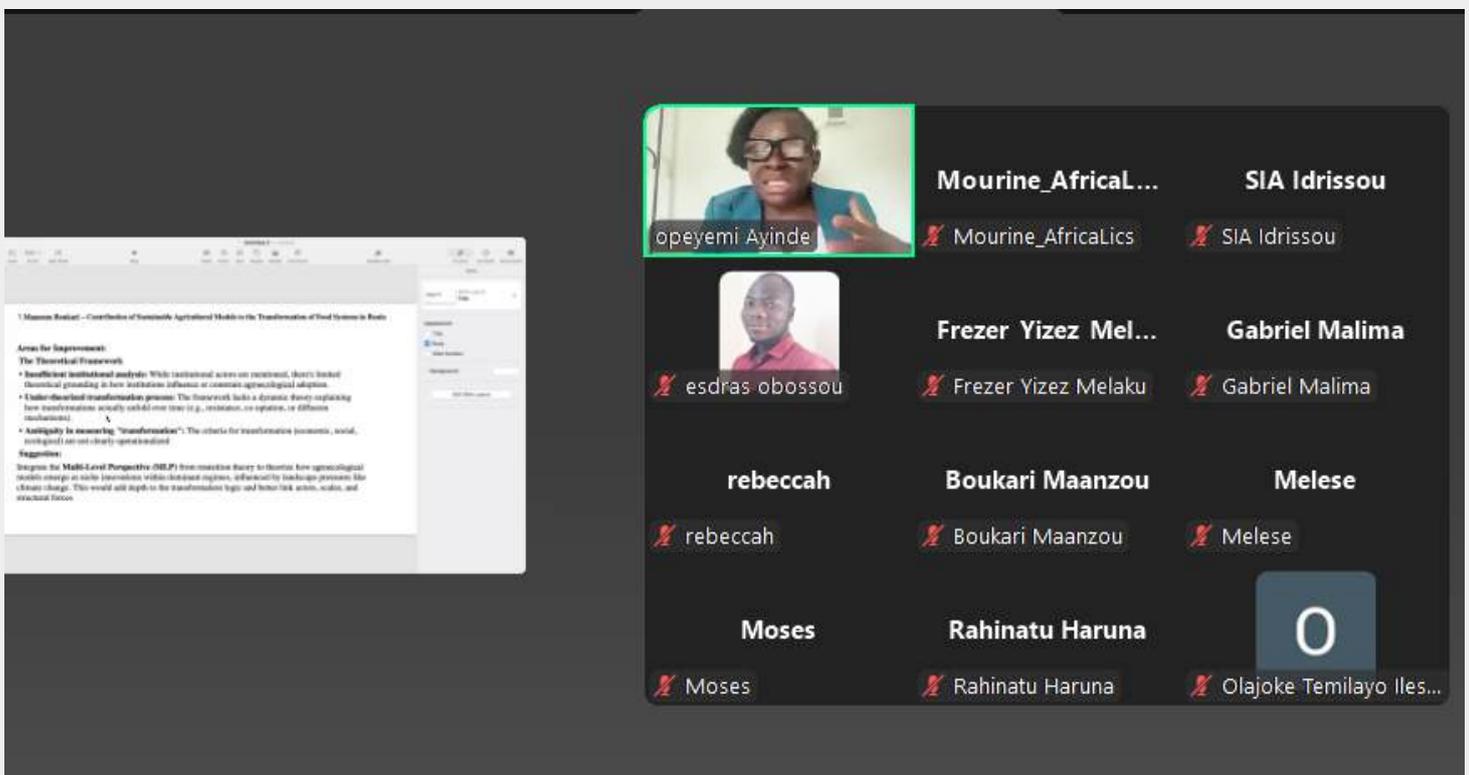
These sessions facilitated interaction between students, practitioners, and policymakers on innovation and development issues. The virtual format provided participants the opportunity to connect with experts and peers in the field of innovation and development studies without having to travel long distances.

In essence, the Academy though held virtually, successfully contributed to training and onboarding a new group of African PhD students into the field of African Innovation and Development Studies, further enriching and expanding the AfricaLics network.

Important PHD Academy Update

We are pleased to share that the Call for Applications for the 2026 PhD Academy, which will be held physically in Johannesburg, will be released in early 2026.

Further details will be communicated through our official platforms.



Photos from the 2025 PHD Academy

Save the Date: 7th AfricaLics International Research Conference 2026

7TH AFRICALICS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2026

Venue: Wits School of Governance, South Africa

Conference Dates: 10th – 12th November 2026

Other Important dates:

- **Abstract collection:** 24th November 2025
- **Conference Registration:** 2nd February 2026
- **Paper submission deadline:** 31st May 2026
- **Poster submission deadline:** 30 August 2026
- **Conference registration deadline:** 15th October 2026

AfricaLics is excited to announce that the 7th AfricaLics International Research Conference will take place from 10th – 12th November 2026. This flagship event brings together researchers, policymakers, and scholars from across Africa and beyond to explore key themes in innovation, development, and technology that shape the continent's future.

The conference provides an ideal platform for sharing research, presenting academic papers, and fostering collaborations across institutions and countries. Participants can expect dynamic sessions, engaging discussions, and opportunities to connect with leading experts in the field.

The 2026 conference will also coincide with activities from the AfricaLics PhD Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP) 2026 and the AfricaLics PhD Academy, ensuring vibrant participation from emerging African researchers.

Mark your calendars and prepare to join this pan-African gathering of innovation and development scholars. Stay tuned for updates and the full conference program via the AfricaLics website and social media channels.

For more information, visit: [AfricaLics Conference 2026 Flyer](#)



AFRICALICS ENGAGEMENT AND WEBINARS ON INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The following are a few selected webinars that AfricaLics organized/co-organized in the last half of 2025



Advancing a research agenda for STI measurement in Africa: emerging new research and insights

Increasingly, African states recognize the significance of science, technology and innovation (STI) measurement for assessing progress towards the SDGs and STI Strategy for Africa (STISA) targets, as well as monitoring STI policy achievements at a national level. A concern is that STI measurement is heavily reliant on concepts and theories transposed from the experience of high-income countries, begging the question of relevance.

The emphasis in the field of innovation studies is shifting, from a conceptual focus on the contribution of innovation to economic growth, to interrogating how innovation drives inclusive and sustainable development.

Despite this shift, research on low-income countries in particular, is fragmented and remains marginal.

This webinar attempted to encourage and prioritize attempts to fill the gap in the literature and hence, policy spaces.

Building on a recent bibliometric research study on the current state of STI measurement in Africa, the webinar informed the conversation around future research on STI measurement in Africa, towards the goal of creating contextually-relevant STI indicators (Kruss et al 2023).

The session contributors shared the premise that we require a stronger empirical and conceptual research base to inform shifting policy and measurement objectives.

The session started with the Chair providing an overview of the research agenda proposed in the AfricaLics Thematic Report <https://africalics.org/thematic-chair-report/>

The panel presented recent research addressing four research agenda topics:

- Measuring progress and the impact of digital technologies and the fourth industrial revolution
- STI measurement towards advancing the SDGs and understanding impact
- Empirically grounded research on innovation measurement in the informal sector
- Creating quality data sets



Bridging innovation, green transition, and digital transformation in Africa: Emerging issues for structural change

Innovation is recognized as key for driving new development pathways that address socio-economic challenges, including the intersection of today’s megatrends: the climate transition, digital revolution, and demographics shifts.

In Africa, a key question remains: How can innovation become transformative in the face of these overlapping challenges and opportunities?

This seminar discussed how African countries can leverage innovation not only as a technological change and upgrade, but as a vehicle for sustainable industrial development and structural change.

Bridging insights from innovation studies and industrial development and policy, the seminar aimed to offer new perspectives on how to harness Africa’s ‘innovation’ for sustained structural transformation and inclusive prosperity of the continent.



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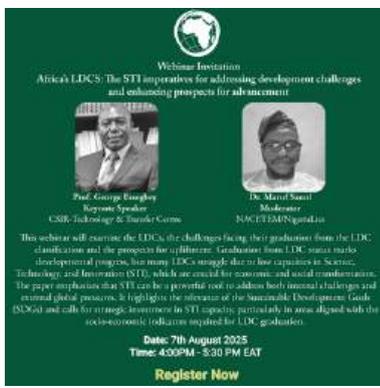


AfricaLics webinar & official launch of the innovating resilience: Advancing inclusive agricultural innovation for climate resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa’ Research Coordination Area (RCA)

This webinar explored how inclusive agricultural innovation can enhance climate resilience, reduce rural poverty, and promote sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Discussions highlighted actionable strategies for ensuring that technological advancements in agriculture are accessible, equitable, and scalable in the face of growing climate challenges.

The webinar also served as the official launch for the ‘Innovating Resilience: Advancing Inclusive Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa’, RCA which seeks to advance conversations around inclusive agricultural innovations for climate resilience with particular emphasis on gender, inequalities and promoting the production of underutilized and indigenous crops through agrobiodiversity, using agricultural innovation systems approach.

This RCA aligns with the AfricaLics agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the African Union Agenda 2063 by contributing to knowledge production and dissemination in the field of Innovation and Development (I&D), build (strengthen) research capacity and collaboration among scholars, and providing data and evidence to inform policy decisions on the continent.



Africa's LDCs: The STI imperatives for addressing development challenges and enhancing prospects for advancement

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are so classified on the basis of their scores determined by the criteria of socio-economic development. Africa has 32 of the world's 44 LDCs. Graduation from that category of countries signifies the progress that the countries have achieved in their development efforts. This paper discusses the LDCs, the challenges facing their graduation from the LDC classification and the prospects for upliftment.

The classification is based primarily on three core sets of criteria namely, GNI per capita, the human asset index (HAI) and the economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI). The paper argues that these indices present opportunities for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) application to address challenges and enhance prospects for advancement.

It highlights the challenges intrinsic to the LDCs' contexts, and the challenges prevailing in the current global economy and political systems. The paper discusses options for navigating these challenges through STI. LDCs have low STI capacities with relatively lower-than-expected impacts of their STI systems on their economies and societies.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect global aspirations, which are relevant to the development contexts of the LDCs. The current political and economic policy shifts and uncertainties are posing new challenges for the LDCs and constraining their graduation from this category of developing countries.

The frontier technologies and the increasing technological innovations are bringing to the fore the importance of prioritizing STI, which holds the key for addressing conventional and emerging challenges. This paper concludes that, there is need for strategic STI capacity development for LDCs, with emphasis on the areas of the socio-economic indicators for graduation from the LDC category.



AfricaLics webinar & official launch of the Innovation and Sustainable Energy Transition in Africa (i-SET Africa) Research Coordination Area (RCA)

Africa is home to significant reserves of critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, rare earth elements, and copper—minerals that are central to the global energy transition. As the world shifts toward cleaner energy technologies, demand for these resources is rising rapidly.

However, the continent's role in global energy value chains remains primarily extractive, with limited local beneficiation and value addition. This model risks perpetuating a cycle of external dependency, environmental degradation, and missed industrial development opportunities.

Amidst growing global interest in green technologies, Africa's critical minerals present a strategic opportunity to catalyze inclusive, sustainable development and structural transformation. However, seizing this opportunity requires a fundamental rethinking of current policy-

frameworks, innovation ecosystems, investment strategies, and governance models to drive local value addition and foster homegrown technological capabilities.

This webinar marks the official launch of the Innovation and Sustainable Energy Transition in Africa (i-SET Africa) Research Coordination Area (RCA) under AfricaLics. As the inaugural event of the RCA, it set the stage for collaborative research and dialogue on sustainable energy futures in Africa.

The session explored how African countries can strategically harness their critical mineral resources to enable a just and inclusive energy transition, promote green industrialization, and strengthen their position within global clean technology value chains.



An Agenda for Research on Innovation and Development: A conversation with Susan Cozzens

Based on the workshops and summary paper prepared for the 20th anniversary of Globelics, Susan lead a discussion of key research challenges for the field to address in the coming decades. She presented the main findings from a paper: “Innovation Moving South: Globelics at Twenty,” co-authored by Erika Kramer-Mbula, Susan Cozzens, Michiko Iizuka, Rasmus Lema, Marina Shapiro, and Andrew Cummings.



Since 2020, the AfricaLics Secretariat has hosted an annual online event to celebrate the achievements of PhD students, alumni, and VFP fellows within the network.

This year, 70 participants joined to recognize both individual and collective successes. Dr. Ann Kingiri highlighted the network’s overall accomplishments and welcomed new members from the PhD Academy and VFP cohort into the alumni network.

While celebrating the milestones of 2025, participants also reflected on upcoming activities for 2026, setting the stage for another year of collaboration, learning, and innovation within the AfricaLics community.



AFRICALICS

SEASON GREETINGS: MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL!

Dear AfricaLics Community,

As 2025 comes to a close, I extend my warmest season's greetings to all members, alumni, and partners across Africa and beyond. It has been a privilege to serve as your Secretary General, witnessing the remarkable achievements of our PhD Academy, Visiting Fellowship Programme, and the wider AfricaLics network.

Together, we have celebrated milestones, fostered collaboration, and strengthened our community of researchers and innovators dedicated to advancing African innovation and development studies.

As we look forward to 2026 and a new leadership taking the helm, I am confident that the network will continue to thrive, providing new opportunities for learning, networking, and growth. May this festive season bring you joy and rest, and the new year inspire continued success, innovation, and collaboration across our AfricaLics community.

Warm regards,
Dr. Ann Kingiri
Outgoing Secretary General, AfricaLics



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