

AfricaLics

NEWSLETTER

July/ Issue No 12

ABOUT AFRICALICS

AfricaLics is a network of professionals and academic scholars advancing the field of Innovation and Development in Africa. The network was established in the 2012. AfricaLics is the Africa-Centred version of the Global Network on Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems (GlobeLics).



AFRICALICS

The African Network on Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems (AfricaLics) aims to strengthen African-led research on innovation and development and promote the use of high-quality evidence to inform policy and support sustainable economic and social development. Its mission focuses on strengthening research capacity, fostering collaboration, and advancing research on science, technology and innovation (STI) across Africa.

In January 2026, the AfricaLics Secretariat transitioned from the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya, to the National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM), Nigeria. The transition included the handover from the outgoing Secretary-General, Dr Ann Kingiri, to the newly elected Secretary-General, Dr Maruf Sanni.

During the first half of 2026, AfricaLics held its first two Scientific Board meetings in February and April, addressing mentorship, membership, elections and the Research Capacity Strengthening Project. The RCA Workshop was held in Nairobi from 9–11 March, bringing together over 30 researchers and experts.



Upcoming AfricaLics Conference Flyer

7th AfricaLics Research Conference

Date: 10-12 November 2026

- Location: University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Theme: Critical, Retrospective and Creative Perspectives on Innovation and Society in Africa.

12th AfricaLics PhD Academy on Innovation and Competence Building Systems

Dates: 2-12 November 2026

- The 12th AfricaLics Ph.D. Academy will be held in Johannesburg,
- Hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the AfricaLics Research Capacity Strengthening Project



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENCY

AfricaLics remains firmly committed to strengthening innovation and development research across Africa by supporting African researchers, building research capacity, and fostering meaningful collaboration among researchers, universities, policymakers, and development partners. Our shared responsibility is to ensure that high-quality, Africa-led research generates evidence that informs policy, strengthens innovation systems, and contributes to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development across the continent.

In 2026, AfricaLics continues to advance this mission through a range of strategic initiatives, including the Research Capacity Strengthening Project, Research Coordination Areas (RCAs), Visiting Fellowship Programme, PhD Academy, research conferences, mentorship programmes, and knowledge-sharing activities. These initiatives provide valuable platforms for researchers to strengthen their capabilities, develop collaborative research, expand professional networks, and generate evidence that responds to Africa's pressing development challenges.

As we move forward, AfricaLics will continue to build a vibrant and connected African research community, champion African-led innovation research, and strengthen the interface between research, policy, and practice. We remain committed to nurturing the next generation of African researchers and creating opportunities for them to contribute meaningfully to the continent's transformation.

Through sustained partnerships, knowledge exchange, and strategic capacity building, AfricaLics will continue to serve as a platform for advancing research excellence, strengthening innovation systems, and promoting sustainable and inclusive development across Africa.

I am pleased to welcome you to this edition of the AfricaLics Newsletter, which provides an opportunity to reflect on our recent activities, celebrate the achievements of our members and partners, and highlight the opportunities available within the AfricaLics community.

Dr. Justina Onumah

President of the ASB

SECRETARY GENERAL UPDATES

The AfricaLics Secretariat has continued to coordinate its activities through regular guidance from the AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB). The 1st ASB meeting was held virtually on 26 February 2026, while the 2nd ASB meeting was held on 13 April in 2026, focusing on the mentorship programme, membership database, ASB elections, and the AfricaLics Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) Project. The 3rd ASB meeting was subsequently held virtually on 5 August 2026, with discussions covering Secretariat activities, outstanding action items, ASB nominations and elections, and resource mobilisation.

The Secretariat is also preparing for the 4th ASB meeting, scheduled for 9 November 2026, which will be held in a hybrid format; with those physically presented for the AfricaLics conference and others will be joining online. In addition, present preparations are ongoing for the 12th AfricaLics PhD Academy on Innovation and Competence Building Systems, scheduled for 2–12 November 2026 at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. The Academy is aimed at supporting PhD students working in the area of innovation and development studies.

In preparation for the upcoming ASB elections, vacancies on the Board will be open to AfricaLics members who have updated their information in the AfricaLics membership database. Members are therefore being encouraged to update their records promptly to ensure their eligibility to participate in the election process.

Preparations are also underway for the 7th AfricaLics Research Conference, scheduled for 10–12 November 2026 at Wits University, Johannesburg. The conference will provide a platform for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and development partners to exchange ideas and present research on innovation and development in Africa. Papers for the conference have been submitted and are currently undergoing review.

The Secretariat also announced for the Call for Expression of Interest to Host AfricaLics Conferences and PhD Academies (2027–2030), which invited African institutions to express interest in hosting future AfricaLics events. The submission deadline for the call was 31 July 2026, and the AfricaLics Secretariat is currently reviewing the Eols with a view to presenting these to the AfricaLics Scientific Board to discuss and agree on who will host AfricaLics PhD academies and conferences in 2027, 2028, 2029 and 2030.

Dr Maruf Sanni

AfricaLics Secretary General

A Decade of Impact: New Bibliometric Reports Showcase AfricaLics' Research Legacy

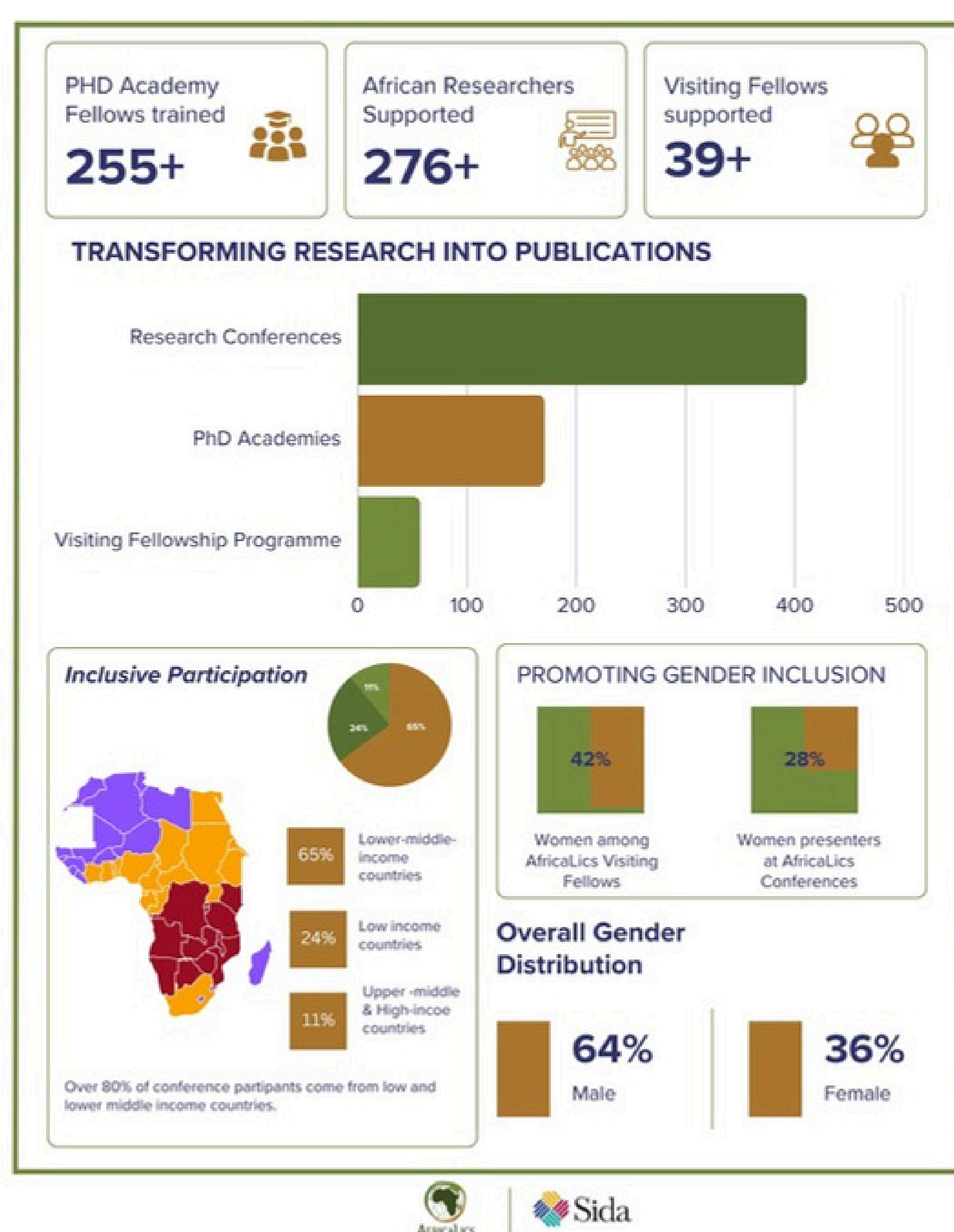
Three newly released bibliometric reports reveal how AfricaLics has strengthened innovation research across Africa over the past decade, documenting the scholarly impact of its PhD Academies, Research Conferences, and Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP).

Covering the period 2012–2024, the reports provide compelling evidence that sustained investment in African researchers is translating into high-quality publications, stronger research networks, and greater global visibility for African innovation scholarship.

The impact in numbers

- 171 journal articles emerged from the AfricaLics PhD Academy, with 91% directly linked to academy presentations, demonstrating the programme's role in transforming research into published knowledge.
- The four AfricaLics Research Conferences held between 2015 and 2024 brought together 176 researchers who produced 411 scholarly publications, strengthening both African and international research collaborations.
- Since 2015, the Visiting Fellowship Programme has supported 39+ doctoral researchers, whose work has attracted 751 citations, highlighting the growing influence of AfricaLics-supported research within global academic and policy communities.

AFRICALICS IMPACT AT A GLANCE (2012–2024)



The reports also demonstrate AfricaLics' commitment to inclusive research capacity development. Around 40% of Visiting Fellowship participants are women, while the majority come from lower-middle-income African countries, with strong representation from low-income countries as well. Their research spans critical areas including agricultural innovation, science, technology and innovation (STI) policy, and low-carbon development, all central to Africa's sustainable development agenda.

Looking ahead, more than a record of publications and citations, the reports offer valuable lessons for strengthening future AfricaLics programmes. Recommendations on post-fellowship support, increasing women's participation, and sustaining research collaboration will help shape the network's next phase of capacity strengthening and knowledge production across the continent.

ALUMNI NETWORK

Driving Africa's Innovation Agenda: Inside the 2026 AfricaLics RCA Workshop

Collaboration, fresh ideas, and a shared vision for Africa's future were core objectives of the AfricaLics Research Coordination Areas (RCAs) Workshop, held in Nairobi from 9–11 March 2026. The workshop brought together more than 30 alumni and experts from across the continent.

The [RCAs](#) are AfricaLics' thematic research groups with shared interests to develop collaborative research, build knowledge, and address some of Africa's most pressing development challenges.

One of the workshop's key achievements was the integration of seven new AfricaLics Academy and Visiting Fellowship Programme alumni from seven African countries into ongoing RCA activities. This brings a total number of 16 AfricaLics alumni actively contributing to the AfricaLics' commitment to nurturing a vibrant and connected community of early-career researchers.



Group photo of participants during the RCA workshop held at Eka hotel, Nairobi

Since their launch in 2022, the RCAs have focused on four strategic research themes:

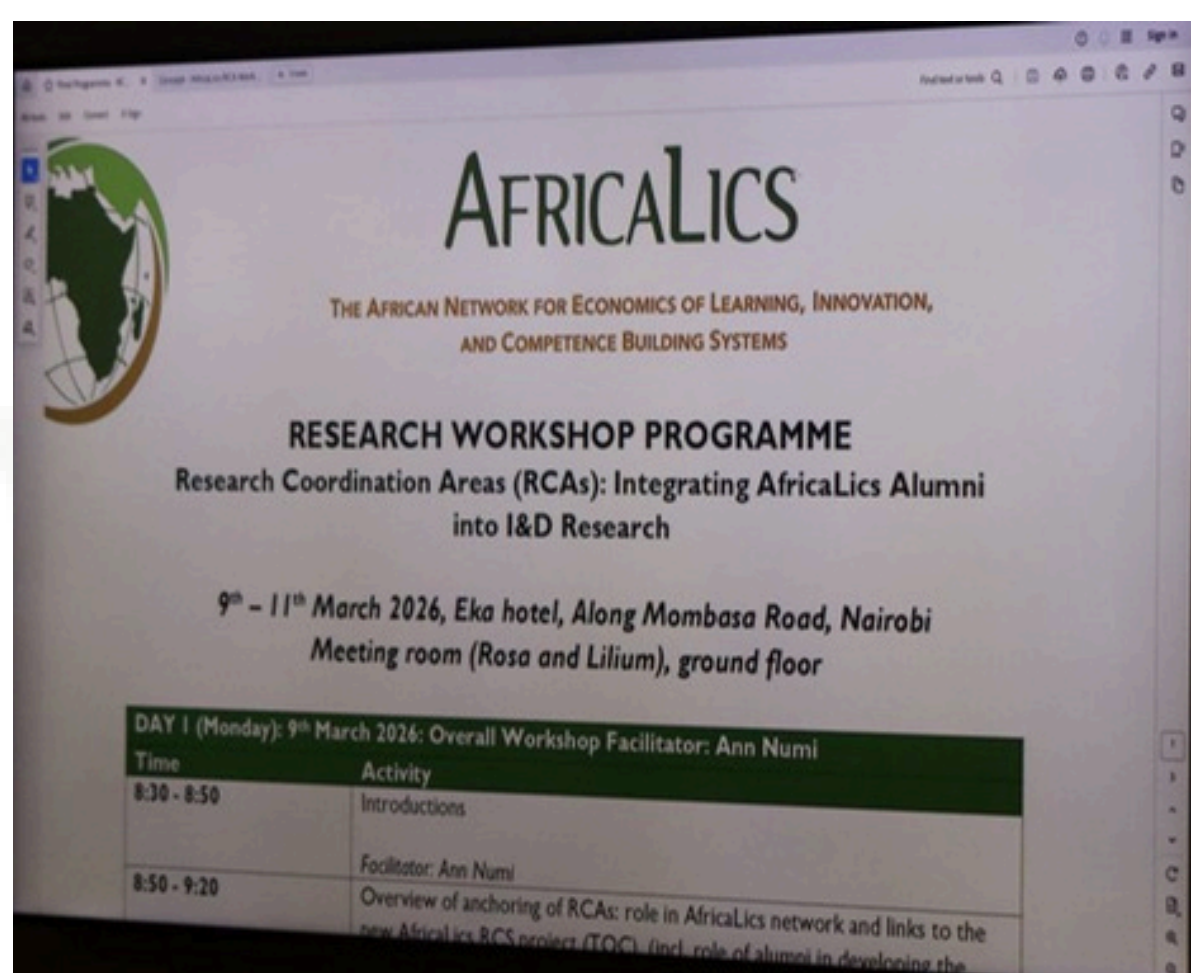
- Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Measurement – Developing the forthcoming Cape Town Manual, a context-sensitive handbook that reflects African innovation realities, including the informal sector and digital economy, beyond conventional Global North metrics.
- Global Value Chains – Examining opportunities for local industrialization across sectors such as cocoa, mining, and agriculture to enable African firms to move into higher-value manufacturing and regional trade.
- Innovation and Sustainable Energy Transition (i-SET) – Exploring solutions to Africa's energy challenges by strengthening local technological capabilities for off-grid renewable energy systems and supporting a just energy transition.
- Advancing Inclusive Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience (AACRA) – Promoting inclusive agricultural systems, agrobiodiversity, and climate resilience through research that supports women, youth, and farming communities across sub-Saharan Africa.

Throughout the three-day workshop, participants exchanged the latest research, identified emerging priorities, and worked collaboratively to develop new research proposals. Discussions ranged from addressing gaps in innovation measurement to advancing sustainable energy transitions and strengthening African participation in global value chains. By the end of the workshop, each RCA had refined collaborative research concepts that will form the basis for future projects, publications, and policy engagement.

Supported through the Sida-funded Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) project, the workshop reflects AfricaLics' long-term commitment to ensuring that alumni remain actively engaged beyond their fellowship experience. Rather than concluding their journey with AfricaLics programmes, researchers continue to contribute to a growing network that produces African-led evidence, informs policy, and strengthens research capacity across the continent. The workshop demonstrated the value of sustained collaboration in advancing innovative, Africa-led solutions to the continent's development challenges.

As one participant reflected, "The workshop didn't just build proposals, it rebuilt a community."

Read more about the RCA workshop [here](#).





A few photos from the workshop

AfricaLics RCA to Host Special Session at the 8th African Conference of Agricultural Economists

The AfricaLics Research Coordination Area (RCA) on Inclusive Agricultural Innovation for Climate-Resilient Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa (ACRAA) will host a special session at the 8th African Conference of Agricultural Economists (8th ACAE 2026), taking place from 22–25 September 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya. The session, titled “Advancing Inclusive Agricultural Innovation for Climate-Resilient Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa,” has been formally accepted for inclusion in the conference programme.

The 90-minute session will explore how Agricultural Innovation Systems can evolve to address emerging climate challenges, while examining how resilience frameworks can strengthen the adaptive and transformative capacities of agricultural systems.

It will also consider pathways for ensuring that agricultural innovation benefits smallholder farmers, women and other vulnerable groups.

The session will feature presentations from Dr. Mercy Salami, Dr. Ann Kingiri, Dr. Catherine Kilelu, and Professor Michael R. Carter, followed by a moderated discussion and audience engagement.

The session contributes to the 8th ACAE 2026 theme, “Smart Agriculture: Innovation, Digital Transformation, and Trade for a Climate-Challenged Africa,” and provides a platform for researchers and practitioners to discuss evidence and policy priorities for more inclusive and climate-resilient agricultural transformation in Africa.



8TH AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS (ACAE 2026)

September 22-25, 2026 | Mövenpick Hotel, Westlands | Nairobi, Kenya

Smart Agriculture: Innovation, Digital Transformation, and Trade for a Climate-Challenged Africa

The African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) and IFPRI-Africa invite leading experts to explore critical issues surrounding agricultural innovation, digital transformation, and trade development.

About the Conference Theme

Africa stands at a critical juncture where the convergence of technological innovation, digital transformation, and strategic trade partnerships offers unprecedented opportunities to revolutionise agricultural systems while addressing the mounting challenges of climate change.

Smart agriculture, powered by new farming technologies, IOT sensors, satellite monitoring, and data analytics, presents African farmers with tools to optimise resource utilisation, enhance productivity, and reduce environmental impact while adapting to climate variability.

Key Focus Areas

- Innovation Focus**: Cutting-edge agricultural technologies and digital solutions for Africa
- Global Network**: Connecting researchers, practitioners, and policymakers across Africa
- Trade Development**: Regional integration and global market access for agricultural products
- Climate Solutions**: Building resilience against climate challenges through smart agriculture

Conference Sub-themes

- ✓ Agricultural Finance and Investment
- ✓ Agricultural innovation and digital technologies
- ✓ Agricultural trade, value chains, and regional integration
- ✓ Climate-smart agricultural practices
- ✓ Data-driven decision-making and policy analysis
- ✓ Digital agriculture and platforms
- ✓ Food security, nutrition, and livelihoods
- ✓ Gender, youth, and inclusion in agri-food systems
- ✓ Land use, sustainability, and environmental economics
- ✓ Policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable agriculture
- ✓ Rural transformation and inclusive growth

Additional Opportunities

Sponsorship, Exhibition and Co-hosting of Organised Symposia are welcome. Contact the secretariat / LOC for more information

Key Dates

Submission Deadline (Papers, Organised Symposia & Panels): 31 March 2026
Early Bird Registration Deadline: 15 July 2026

REGISTER NOW ON :
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<https://aaaae-africa.events/register/>

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General Inquiries: info@aaaae-africa.org

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WhatsApp: +254-777-858-950

Scan for Conference info:

AFRICALICS VFP ACTIVITIES

Welcoming the 2026 AfricaLics Visiting Fellowship Cohort

AfricaLics is pleased to welcome six outstanding doctoral researchers as the 2026 [Visiting Fellowship Programme](#) (VFP) cohort. Representing five African countries, the fellows are the first to join the programme under the Sida-funded Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) project (2025–2029), marking the beginning of a new phase in AfricaLics' commitment to strengthening research capacity in Innovation and Development across the continent.

Over the coming year, the fellows will work closely with AfricaLics mentors and supervisors to advance research that addresses some of Africa's most pressing development challenges. Their work reflects the diversity and relevance of innovation research today, spanning climate adaptation, green finance, artificial intelligence in healthcare, sustainable energy, social innovation, and digital transformation.

Together, these emerging scholars represent the next generation of African researchers committed to generating evidence that informs policy, supports innovation, and contributes to sustainable and inclusive development across the continent.

The fellows and their home supervisors were introduced to their AfricaLics mentors and most of them met both online and in person for the first time in March 2026 in Nairobi. Reflecting on joining the programme online in February 2026, Woinshet Dilebo shared: "Being selected to join the VFP Programme is both an honour and a responsibility. I'm excited to connect with like-minded innovators, sharpen my leadership skills, and translate ideas into real impact within my community." Elia Somani Mbwire added: "The VFP Programme represents growth, collaboration, and opportunity. I look forward to learning from fellow changemakers, expanding my network, and contributing meaningfully to solutions that matter."

Meet the 2026 Visiting Fellows



Name: Alemnesh Tadesse

Country: Ethiopia

Research Focus: The nexus of climate change adaptation technologies, food security, and women's empowerment.



Name: Woinshet Dilebo

Country: Ethiopia

Research Focus: Assessment, characterization, and framework development for digital transformation in Ethiopia's industrial parks (Industry 4.0).



Name: Marie Christine Mbida Obe

Country: Cameroon

Research Focus: Essays on the effects of green finance on economic and social transformations in developing countries.



Name: Elvis Ingadi Ludenyo

Country: Kenya

Research Focus: Artificial Intelligence in enhancing healthcare service delivery: A development-oriented study of Level 6 hospitals in Nairobi.



Name: Byonanebye Komugisha

Country: Uganda

Research Focus: Energy Sustainability in Uganda: A case study of agro-based manufacturing firms.



Name: Elia Somani Mbwile

Country: Tanzania

Research Focus: Impact of social innovation practices on youth social empowerment: Insights from artisan entrepreneurs.

Fellow	Country	Research Focus	Contribution to the I&D Agenda
Alemnesh Tadesse	Ethiopia	Climate change adaptation technologies, food security, and women's empowerment.	Advances inclusive innovation by exploring climate-resilient technologies that strengthen food systems and empower women.
Marie Christine Mbida Obe	Cameroon	The role of green finance in driving economic and social transformation in developing countries.	Contributes to sustainable development by examining how innovative financing can accelerate green and inclusive economic transformation.
Elvis Ingadi Ludenyo	Kenya	Artificial Intelligence for enhancing healthcare service delivery in Level 6 hospitals in Nairobi.	Demonstrates how digital innovation and AI can improve healthcare systems and public service delivery.
Byonanebye Komugisha	Uganda	Energy sustainability in Uganda's agro-based manufacturing sector.	Supports research on sustainable industrial development and the transition to cleaner, more resilient production systems.
Elia Somani Mbwile	Tanzania	Social innovation and youth empowerment among artisan entrepreneurs.	Promotes inclusive innovation by examining how entrepreneurship can create opportunities for youth and strengthen local economies.
Woinshet Dilebo	Ethiopia	Digital transformation and Industry 4.0 in Ethiopia's industrial parks.	Explores the role of digital transformation and advanced manufacturing in enhancing industrial competitiveness and economic development.

Call for AfricaLics VFP 2027 Cohort

The call for applications for the AfricaLics VFP 2027 cohort is expected to be released in late August or early September 2026. Stay connected with AfricaLics on our social media channels for updates on the call and application process.

We also encourage you to share the call with PhD students and researchers in your networks who may be interested in the programme and could benefit from this opportunity.

Celebrating Our VFP Graduates

AfricaLics is proud to celebrate five Visiting PhD Fellows who successfully completed their PhD studies in the first half of 2026. Their achievement reflects the value of sustained research capacity strengthening, mentorship, academic exchange and networking offered through the VFP programme.

We congratulate our five graduates on this important milestone and celebrate the contributions they are making to Africa's growing community of Innovation and Development scholars. Their stories, research journeys and achievements offer an opportunity to showcase the impact of the VFP programme while inspiring the next generation of African researchers.

We look forward to keeping them connected through the AfricaLics alumni network and celebrating their continued contributions to research, policy and development.

MEET THE 5 GRADUATES



Mulatu Telahun
January 2026



Simon Rop
February 2026



Wisdom Kaleng'a
May 2026



Bekele Hundessa
May 2026



Dismas Kimaro
August 2026

ACADEMY CONTRIBUTIONS

Building Africa's Next Generation of Innovation Scholars: 12th AfricaLics PhD Academy



This November 2026, 36 doctoral researchers from across Africa will come together in Johannesburg, South Africa, for the 12th AfricaLics PhD Academy on Innovation and Competence Building Systems. More than just a training programme, the PhD Academy is a transformative learning experience that equips emerging scholars with the skills, networks, and mentorship needed to advance high-quality research on innovation and development in Africa.

Since its inception, the AfricaLics PhD Academy has served as one of the network's flagship research capacity strengthening initiatives. The Academy brings together doctoral and masters students whose research focuses on understanding how innovation can contribute to addressing Africa's development challenges, from industrial development and digital transformation to sustainability, entrepreneurship, agriculture, health, and science, technology and innovation (STI) policy.

Over the course of the Academy, participants engage in intensive academic training led by internationally recognised scholars and experts in the field of innovation and development studies. A key feature of the programme is the opportunity for students to present and discuss their doctoral research, receiving detailed feedback from faculty members and peers that helps strengthen both their research design and academic outputs.

Beyond research training, the Academy offers practical professional development opportunities. Participants take part in sessions on academic writing and publishing, research communication, career development, and research management, helping them build the skills needed to thrive in academia and beyond.

The Academy also creates a unique space for peer learning, enabling doctoral researchers from different countries and disciplines to exchange ideas, build networks, and develop future collaborations.

One of the most valuable aspects of the programme is its emphasis on mentorship.

Through interactions with senior scholars and the broader AfricaLics community, participants -

gain access to guidance, support, and professional networks that often extend well beyond the duration of the Academy itself.

This years Academy is co-organised by Wits University, the AfricaLics Secretariat and the AfricaLics RCS team with inputs from the AfricaLics Scientific Board. It is linked to the 7th AfricaLics Research Conference, providing participants with an opportunity to engage with a wider community of researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners. This exposure allows emerging scholars to connect their research to real-world policy and development challenges while becoming active members of a growing pan-African research network.

As AfricaLics prepares to welcome the 12th PHD cohort this November, the Academy remains a powerful testament to the importance of investing in the next generation of African researchers. By strengthening research capacity, fostering collaboration, and supporting academic excellence, the PhD Academy continues to help shape the future of innovation and development research across the continent.



AFRICALICS PHD ACADEMY

The 12th AfricaLics Ph.D. Academy on Innovation and Competence Building Systems will be held in Johannesburg, hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the AfricaLics Research Capacity Strengthening Project.

DEADLINE 1 ST MAY 2026

Important Dates

- **Academy period** : 02 – 12 November 2026
- **Application Deadline** : 1 May 2026
- **Accepted Applications** : 15 May 2026



**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



RCS PROJECT UPDATES

Africa faces complex development challenges that require locally generated, evidence-based solutions informed by high-quality research. Yet many early-career researchers across the continent continue to face barriers such as limited funding, inadequate mentorship, and few opportunities for international collaboration.

Recognizing these challenges, and building on more than a decade of research capacity-building and strengthening activities undertaken by AfricaLics between 2012 and 2025, AfricaLics launched the Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) Project. The five-year initiative (2025–2029), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and hosted by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), builds on this foundation to further strengthen research capacity across Africa.

The RCS Project represents a new chapter in AfricaLics' long-standing commitment to strengthening research and higher education in the fields of innovation and development. Building on more than a decade of supporting African scholars, the project seeks to nurture a new generation of researchers capable of producing rigorous, policy-relevant knowledge that contributes to sustainable and inclusive development across the continent. At its core, the project focuses on enhancing doctoral education, expanding research collaboration, and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange among researchers, universities, policymakers, and development partners.



Abiodun Egbetokun and Ann Numi, PHD Academy Alumni



AfricaLics Alumni plus members of the RCA's

Beyond strengthening individual researchers, the RCS Project aims to support the overall AfricaLics vision which is to foster a vibrant and connected African research community where knowledge is shared across disciplines, institutions, and countries.

By promoting collaboration and supporting evidence-informed policymaking, the project and AfricaLics as a network, contributes to building stronger innovation systems that can drive Africa's economic transformation and sustainable development.

NIGERIALICS ACTIVITIES

As a national spoke of the AfricaLics network, the NigeriaLics network has continued to support regional capacity building and research development through a series of webinars conducted between February and June 2026. The webinars featured local and international experts who explored key issues such as artificial intelligence, professional networking, global value chains, entrepreneurship education, and sustainable development in education. These engagements have contributed to knowledge sharing, strengthened research and innovation capacity, and supported discussions on future economic and industrial development in Nigeria and Africa.

NigeriaLics • Live webinar

Topic

Artificial Intelligence and Competence building in Nigeria: Opportunity and Risks



Prof. Abdulkareem Oloyede,
Secretary-General, NigeriaLics & Speaker,
Director of Centre for Research,
Development and In house training (CREDIT)



Dr Sanni Maruf
President, NigeriaLics & Host

Time: 04:30 PM West Central Africa **Date:** Feb 25, 2026 **Register in advance for this meeting:** <http://bit.ly/4rXD0SB>

► **Location:** Zoom



NigeriaLics • Live webinar

Topic

Impact of Network on Capacity Building and Research



PROF. ABDULKAREEM OLOYEDE
Secretary General, NigeriaLics



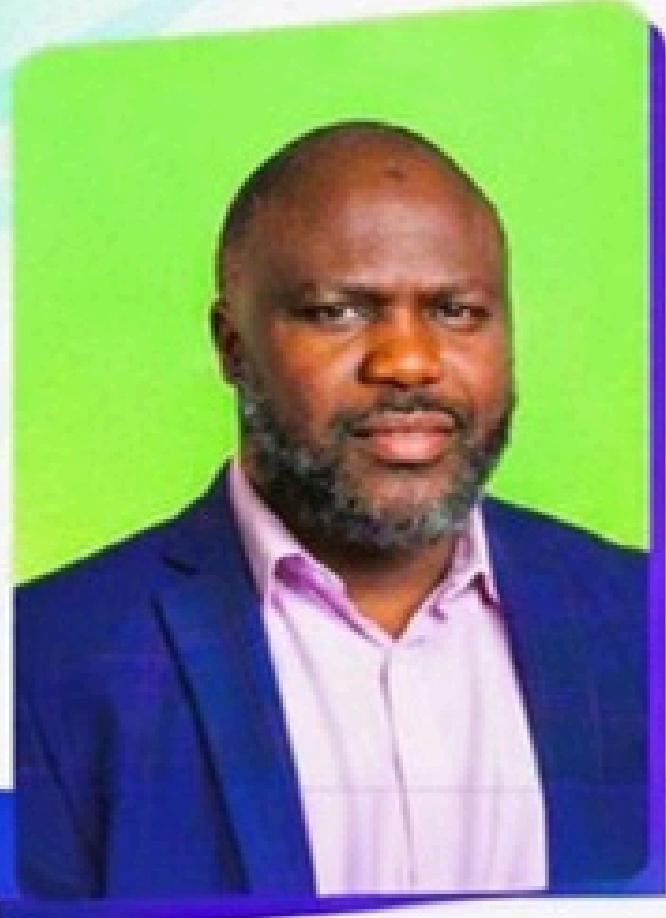
PROF. OPEYEMI AYINDE
Speaker

Time: 04:30 PM West Central Africa **Date:** March 26, 2026 **Register in advance for this meeting:** <http://bit.ly/3P4M2iv>

• **Location:** Zoom



Leveraging Innovation-Driven GVC Integration for Africa's Industrialisation



PROF. ABDULKAREEM OLOYEDE
Secretary General, NigeriaLics



PROF. OLUSEYE JEGEDE,
FHEA, RTS, IQA
Dean, Footprint School of
Business,
United Kingdom

Webinar Date: 23rd April, 2026 | **Time:** 1 PM WAT

NigeriaLics • Live webinar

Topic

Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Development



DR ABIODUN EGBETOKUN
Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship
and Innovation De Montfort University
Leicester, UK



DR CALEB ADELOWO
Deputy Director of Research,
NACETEM, Nigeria

26th MAY 2026 | 04:00 PM
West Central Africa

• **Location:** Zoom

Register in advance for this meeting: <https://bit.ly/4mNM0s9>



Conferences

7th AfricaLics Research Conference

Preparations are well underway for the 7th AfricaLics Research Conference, which will take place from 10–12 November 2026 at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Bringing together researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and development partners from across Africa and beyond, the conference promises to be another landmark event for advancing research on innovation and development.

Held back to back with the 12th AfricaLics PhD Academy, the conference will provide a platform for emerging and established scholars to exchange ideas, present new research, strengthen collaborations, and contribute to policy dialogue on some of Africa's most pressing development challenges.

The 2026 conference theme, "Critical, Retrospective and Creative Perspectives on Innovation and Society in Africa," invites participants to explore the relationship between innovation and society through diverse lenses, including inequality, sustainability, digital transformation, industrial development, science, technology and innovation (STI) policy, inclusive innovation, health, agriculture, and the creative economy.

As AfricaLics' flagship research event, the biennial conference has, since 2013, provided an important space for showcasing cutting-edge African scholarship while fostering collaboration between researchers, policymakers, industry, and civil society. Previous conferences have been hosted in Maputo (Mozambique), Kigali (Rwanda), Oran (Algeria), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Yaoundé (Cameroon), and Ilorin (Nigeria), reflecting the network's continued growth and continental reach.

With paper submissions now underway and the programme continuing to take shape, the conference is expected to bring together around approximately 200 participants from across Africa and internationally. Beyond paper presentations, delegates can look forward to keynote addresses, policy dialogues, thematic sessions, and valuable networking opportunities that strengthen research partnerships and support evidence-informed policymaking.

The AfricaLics community looks forward to welcoming participants to Johannesburg this November for three days of learning, collaboration, and dialogue that will help shape the future of innovation and development research in Africa.

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AFRICALICS