

Understanding knowledge systems and what works to promote science technology and innovation in Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda – insights from the Knowledge Systems

Innovation Project (KSI). Policy brief for Tanzania

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Summary

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) is a key enabler for transformation in achieving Tanzania's vision 2025, the country's long-term framework for development. The vision places emphasis on the role of research and innovation; local entrepreneurship and technological development to transform the country from a low productivity agricultural economy into a semi-industrialized economy. This ambition resonates with the aspirations of African Union Agenda 2063, the STISA 2024 framework 'knowledge driven economies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to build effective STI systems, Tanzania has made various strides including the establishment of various institutional arrangements to coordinate and fund research and innovation within the country. The Tanzania Commission for science and Technology (COSTECH), plays a major role in coordinating and fostering STI activities while the National Fund for the Advancement of Science and Technology (NFAST) is responsible for financing STI activities. Despite these efforts, the country still continues to lag behind in implementation of the STI policies as well as designing effective STI strategies that can contribute to addressing societal challenges.

To address the current situation, the United Kingdom Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the East Africa Research and Innovation Hub (EARIH) financed a pilot study to develop a practical approach to capacity development and investment in knowledge systems, in three East African countries (Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania). The study sought to gather evidence on the current STI environment including identifying opportunities for investment to support sustainable development. This policy brief provides an overview of the key characteristics of STI system in Tanzania, emerging opportunities supporting SDGs and possible policy options for future STI investments that can deliver for the SDGs.

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