PROGRAMME

2026

GRC SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING

23 – 26 NOVEMBER 2026

LUANDA, ANGOLA

HOST: Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola

CO-HOST: National Research Foundation (NRF), South Africa



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Advancing African Research Futures: Curiosity, Innovation and Collaboration

Research funding organisations occupy a strategic position in shaping the direction, quality and sustainability of national research and innovation systems. Through their funding policies, institutional arrangements, strategic investments and partnerships, public funders influence not only what research is undertaken, but also the conditions under which knowledge is generated, scientific talent is developed and research contributes to society.

As research systems navigate changing policy priorities, fiscal constraints, technological advances and increasing expectations of demonstrable societal value, an important question for public funders is how to sustain the conditions for scientific discovery while ensuring that research remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of society.

The Luanda convening brings together three complementary engagements that address different aspects of this evolving research-funding landscape.

The 2026 Global Research Council (GRC) Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Meeting, hosted by the Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), will take place in Luanda, Angola. The meeting forms part of the GRC's regional engagement process leading to its 15th Annual Meeting, to be co-hosted by the National Research Foundation (NRF), South Africa and the German Research Foundation (DFG) in Cape Town in May 2027.

- The 2027 GRC Annual Meeting will focus on Making a Case for Curiosity-Driven Research (CDR), with discussions structured around three dimensions: Understanding curiosity-driven research and its role in research ecosystems.
- Examining the role of public funders in creating enabling environments for curiosity-driven research.
- Making the case for, and strengthening the communication of, the value of curiosity-driven research.

For research funding organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa, these questions are particularly relevant. Funding agencies operate within diverse and often resource-constrained research environments, where competing development priorities, limited funding, institutional capacity and expectations of immediate returns can influence the space available for curiosity-driven inquiry. The regional meeting will therefore provide an opportunity to reflect on how African research funding organisations can support scientific ambition and originality while remaining responsive to national development priorities and societal needs.

The discussions will also draw on practical experiences and institutional examples from across the region, providing opportunities to consider how different funding approaches, research environments and partnerships contribute to sustaining curiosity-driven research.

Preceding the Regional Meeting, a **High-Level Symposium on Artificial Intelligence in Research Funding** will take place on 23 November 2026. Building on the GRC's 2025 Discussion Paper and Statement of Principles on Research Management in the Era of Artificial Intelligence, the symposium will explore the potential applications of AI across the research funding cycle, as well as the institutional, ethical and governance considerations for its responsible adoption. It will provide an opportunity for funding organisations to reflect on emerging opportunities, institutional readiness and the implications of AI for the future of research funding and management.

The **SGCI CDR Programme Task Group Meeting on 25 November** will focus on advancing the development of a proposed multilateral CDR Programme involving participating Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) Councils, the NRF and the DFG. The programme aims to strengthen curiosity-driven research and intra-African research collaboration, while creating opportunities for collaboration with the German research ecosystem. The Task Group provides a mechanism for participating Councils to steer the programme's co-development. Building on progress made to date, the initiative is moving towards its first implementation phase through an Initiation of International Collaboration (I2I) Matchmaking Call, which will lay the foundation for the subsequent multilateral CDR Project Call. The meeting will provide an opportunity to advance this collaborative initiative and strengthen opportunities for African researchers to engage in international research partnerships.

Together, these engagements provide an opportunity to connect strategic dialogue on the future of research funding with practical regional collaboration and programme development.

Objectives

The Regional Meeting aims to:

- Advance dialogue on the evolving role of public research funders in shaping resilient, inclusive and sustainable research and innovation systems.
- Examine the value of curiosity-driven research and the role of funding organisations in creating enabling environments for original, exploratory and risk-tolerant research.
- Explore opportunities, challenges and responsible approaches to the use of artificial intelligence in research funding and management.
- Strengthen the ability of research funding organisations to communicate the value of curiosity-driven research within policy, institutional and societal contexts.
- Advance implementation of the SGCI multilateral CDR Programme through matchmaking, strengthening opportunities for international research collaboration and laying the groundwork for the subsequent multilateral CDR Project Call.
- Consolidate African perspectives and recommendations to inform the GRC 2027 Annual Meeting, while strengthening regional and international cooperation among research funding organisations and their partners.

Expected Outcomes

The convening is expected to contribute to:

- A consolidated African perspective on the value of curiosity-driven research and the role of public funders in sustaining it.
- Regional insights and recommendations to inform the GRC 2027 global discussions.
- Practical examples of funding approaches and institutional arrangements that enable CDR.
- A clearer understanding of opportunities and considerations for responsible AI adoption in research funding and management.
- Progress in the implementation of the SGCI multilateral CDR Programme, including alignment on the Matchmaking Call and the pathway towards the subsequent multilateral CDR Project Call.
- Stronger connections and opportunities for collaboration among African research funding organisations and their international partners.

Significance

The Luanda convening provides an opportunity to connect regional policy dialogue with practical collaboration. It will enable African research funding organisations to contribute to the global debate on curiosity-driven research while advancing a concrete multilateral initiative to support CDR across the continent. By bringing together perspectives on research funding, emerging technologies and collaborative programme development, the engagements will help strengthen African research systems and their contribution to global scientific excellence.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Date	Engagement	Venue
Sunday, 22 November 2026	Arrivals	
Monday, 23 November 2026	**Whole day:** High-Level Symposium on AI in Research Funding **PM:** Networking Cocktail	Brasil Room Terrace
	Evening: Dinner	Origami Terrace Restaurant
Tuesday, 24 November 2026	**Whole day:** GRC Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Meeting – Day 1	Brasil Room
	Evening: Welcome Dinner	Terrakota Restaurant
Wednesday, 25 November 2026	**AM:** GRC Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Meeting – Day 2	Brasil Room
	PM: Closed Meeting of the AHORCs	Guiné Meeting Room
	PM: SGCI Curiosity-Driven Research Multilateral Programme Task Group	Mozambique Room
	Evening: Farewell Dinner	Switch Supper Club
Thursday, 26 November 2026	**AM:** Institutional Visits and Bilateral / Partner Engagements	Luanda Science Centre, Luanda PCDL – Luanda Tech and Armed Forces Museum
	PM: Informal Lunch	Luanda Island
Friday, 27 November 2026	Departures	

DAY 1

Date: Monday, 23 November 2026

Venue: Brasil Room

HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON AI IN RESEARCH FUNDING

The workshop will provide a high-level platform for research funding organisations, researchers and relevant stakeholders to consider the opportunities, challenges and implications of artificial intelligence for research funding. It will also provide continuity with the GRC's previous work on research management in the era of AI and create an opportunity to reflect on how principles and emerging approaches can be translated into practice.

Time	Session / Topic	Speaker(s) / Moderator(s)
08:30 – 09:00	**Arrival and Registration**	
Master of Ceremonies Drª Rosa Maurício, Directora Geral Adjunta, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola		
09:00 – 09:30	**Session 1: Opening Session**	
09:00 – 09:15	**Welcome Address**	**Drª Rosa Maurício,** Directora Geral Adjunta, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola
09:15 – 09:30	**Symposium Overview**	Introduction to the symposium, its objectives and expected outcomes, including the importance of considering AI's implications for research funding and management. **Prof Mário Fresta,** Director Geral, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola
09:30 – 11:30	**Session 2: Panel 1 – Research Funding Practices and Approaches** This panel will explore national and institutional approaches to research funding, drawing on experiences and developments in Angola and other research systems. It will provide context for considering how AI may influence research funding practices, institutional processes and the management of research funding. Moderator: **Prof Amilcar Silva,** Director Nacional de Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Angola	
09:30 – 09:50	Global Practices in Research Funding	**Dr Steven Sebbale,** Head of Policy, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, Uganda
09:50 – 10:10	Annual Plans for ST&I (PLANCTI), 2013–2014/15, Angola	**Prof Orlando da Mata,** Antigo Secretário de Estado para a Ciência e Tecnologia e Antigo Reitor, Angola
10:10 – 10:30	Science and Technology Development Project (PDCT)	**Prof Ricardo Queirós,** Coordenador do Projecto de Desenvolvimento de Ciência e Tecnologia (PDCT), Angola
10:30–10:50	Foundation for Scientific and Technological Development (FUNDECIT)	**Prof Mário Fresta,** Director Geral, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola
10:50–11:10	Science Block-Funding in HEIs	**Prof Eduardo Ekundi Valentim,** Presidente do Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Angolanas (CRUANG)
11:10 – 11:30	**Discussion**	Participants and Audience
11:30 – 11:45	**Coffee Break**	
11:45 – 13:00	**Session 3: GRC Guidance and National Approaches to AI in Research Funding** This panel session presents and discusses two important GRC documents concerning the use of AI in Research Funding Moderator: **Prof José Luis Alexandre,** Director Nacional do Ensino Superior, Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Angola	
11:45 – 12:00	**Keynote:** Artificial Intelligence in Research: Exploration, Funding and Management	The keynote will explore how artificial intelligence is changing the way research is conceptualised, conducted and communicated, and what these developments mean for organisations that fund and manage research. It will consider emerging applications of AI across the research funding cycle, from proposal development and assessment to grant management and reporting, while examining the opportunities, institutional implications and governance considerations that science granting councils need to anticipate as they navigate this evolving landscape. **Prof Randhir Rawatlal,** Associate Professor, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Time	Session / Topic	Speaker(s) / Moderator(s)
12:00 – 12:15	**GRC Statement of Principles:** Research Management in the Era of AI	Presentation of the GRC Statement of Principles, focusing on its key considerations and implications for research funding organizations in promoting responsible, transparent and accountable use of AI. **Prof Anicia Peters,** Chief Executive Officer, National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, Namibia and GRC Sub-Saharan Africa Governing Board Member
12:15 – 13:00	National Perspectives and Experiences in AI for Research Funding	Sharing of national experiences and institutional perspectives on the use of AI in research funding, including emerging practices, opportunities, challenges and considerations for implementation. 1. **Dr Yaya Sangare,** Secrétaire Général Le Fonds pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation (FONSTI), Cote d'Ivoire 2. **Prof Dickson Andala,** Chief Executive Officer, National Research Fund (NRF), Kenya 3. **Prof Michelo Syakalima,** Executive Secretary, National Science and Technology Council, Zambia
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**	
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 4 – Opportunities and Challenges of AI in Research Funding** This session will examine practical applications of AI across the research funding cycle, from proposal assessment and reviewer matching to post-award monitoring, risk management and the assessment of research outcomes. It will consider both the potential benefits and implementation challenges associated with these applications. Moderator: **Dr Diogo Morais,** Director Geral do Centro de Ciência de Luanda (CCL), Angola	
14:00 – 14:20	**Pre-award Stage:** AI for Proposal Assessment and Reviewer Matching, AI-assisted Proposal Evaluation Support and Conflict Screening	Explore potential applications of AI in the pre-award stage, including support for proposal assessment, reviewer identification and matching, evaluation processes and conflict-of-interest screening. The discussion will consider opportunities to improve efficiency while maintaining fairness, transparency and appropriate human oversight. **Ms Nosisa Dube,** Manager: Evaluation and Impact, National Research Foundation, South Africa
14:20 – 14:40	**Post-award Stage:** AI for Monitoring, Risk Detection, Intervention Support, Impact and Outcome Assessment	Examine how AI can support post-award grant management, including monitoring project progress, identifying potential risks, informing interventions and supporting the assessment of research outcomes and impact. **Facilitated Discussion**
14:40 – 15:00	**Open Discussion**	Interactive exchange on the opportunities, limitations and practical considerations associated with using AI across the research funding cycle.
15:00 – 16:45	**Session 5: Panel 2 – Ethics, Scientific Integrity, Human Oversight and Responsible Use of AI** This panel will examine the ethical, institutional and policy considerations associated with the adoption of AI in research and research management. Drawing on technical expertise and perspectives from research institutions, innovation ecosystems, government and the health sector, the discussion will explore issues of transparency, accountability, data governance, scientific integrity and human oversight. It will consider how appropriate policies, institutional safeguards and responsible practices can support the effective and ethical use of AI in research. Moderator: **Doutor Helder Francisco,** Director Geral Adjunto do Centro de Ciência de Luanda (CCL), Angola	
15:00 – 15:25	Ethical and Technical Considerations in the Development and Use of AI	**Prof MALO Sadouanouan,** Associate professor in Artificial Intelligent, University of Nazy Boni, Burkina Faso
15:25 – 15:45	Ethics, Scientific Integrity, Human Oversight, and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence	**Prof Antonio Alcochete,** Presidente do Conselho de Administração do Parque de Ciência e Tecnologia de Luanda (PCTL – Luanda TEC), Angola
15:45 – 16:05	Ethics, Scientific Integrity, Human Oversight, and the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Science	**Doutora Sandra Afonso,** Directora Geral do Centro Nacional de Investigação Científica (CNIC), Angola

Time	Session / Topic	Speaker(s) / Moderator(s)
16:05 – 16:25	From the Use to the Institutionalization of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation in Angola: Governance and Implementation Model	**Prof Domingos da Silva Neto,** Antigo Secretário de Estado para a Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Angola
16:25 – 16:45	Ethics, Scientific Integrity, Human Oversight, and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Health Sciences	**Profª Joana Morais,** Directora Geral do Instituto Nacional de Investigação em Saúde (INIS), Angola
16:45 – 17:00	**Coffee Break**	
17:00 – 17:30	**Session 6: Closing Conference** Explore the relationship between AI, scientific data sharing and open science, with particular attention to the opportunities and challenges for Angola. The session will consider the importance of accessible research data, open science practices and responsible digitalisation in strengthening research and innovation systems. Moderator: **Prof Emanuel Catumbela,** Antigo Director Nacional do Ensino Superior, Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Angola	
	Artificial Intelligence, Scientific Data Sharing, and Open Science in Angola	**Prof Eurico Wongo Gungula** (Ponto Focal da UNESCO para a Ciência Aberta em Angola e Coordenador da Cátedra UNESCO em Ciência Aberta, Digitalização Resposável e Impacto Social Doutora Josefina Castillero Velásquez (Investigadora, Cátedra UNESCO em Ciência Aberta, Digitalização Resposável e Impacto Social
17:30–17:45	**Closing Remarks** Closing reflections on the symposium discussions and key considerations for advancing responsible and effective approaches to AI in research funding. **Drª Rosa Maurício,** Directora Geral Adjunta, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola	
END OF SESSION		
17:45-19:00	**NETWORKING COCKTAIL** **VENUE:** TERRACE	
19:30-21:30	**DINNER** **VENUE:** ORIGAMI TERRACE RESTAURANT	

DAY 2

Date: Tuesday, 24 November 2026

Venue: Brasil Room

GRC SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING – DAY 1

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
08:30 – 09:00	**Arrival & Registration**	
SESSION 1: Opening and Contextual Framing Opening the Regional Meeting, introducing the GRC and its priorities, and setting the context for the discussions. Moderator: **Dr Sepo Hachigonta,** Acting Group Executive: Business Advancement, National Research Foundation (NRF), South Africa		
09:00 – 09:20	**Welcome and introductory remarks**	Welcome remarks from the host institution, regional GRC leadership and the relevant government representative, setting the context for the meeting and highlighting its significance for Sub-Saharan Africa. 1. **Prof Mário Fresta,** Director Geral, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola 2. **Prof Anicia Peters,** Chief Executive Officer, National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, Namibia and GRC Sub-Saharan Africa Governing Board Member 3. **Minister of Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, Angola**
09:20 – 09:30	**Contextual Framing of the Global Research Council**	Introduction to the GRC, its role and priorities, key structures and processes, the annual cycle of engagements and decision-making and opportunities for engagement by participating organisations. **Ms Phindile Masimula,** Science Officer, GRC Executive Secretariat
09:30 – 09:40	**From Regional Dialogue to GRC 2027**	Significance of the 2027 Annual Meeting theme, "Making a Case for Curiosity-Driven Research," and the opportunity for Sub-Saharan African research councils to contribute to and shape the 2027 programme. **Dr Marcus Wilms,** International Affairs: Africa and the Middle East, German Research Foundation (DFG)
09:40 – 10:00	**Presentation of GRC Discussion Paper**	Overview of the paper's purpose, three dimensions and guiding questions to frame the Regional Meeting discussions. **Dr Kwezi Mzilikazi,** Deputy Vice Chancellor, Rhodes University, South Africa and GRC 2027 Annual Meeting Scientific Advisory Committee Member
10:00 – 10:20	**Keynote Address**	A strategic perspective on curiosity-driven research, its contribution to research ecosystems and its significance for knowledge generation. **Dr Teresa Matoso,** Senior Professor and Tenured Scientist, Instituto Superior Politécnico de Tecnologias e Ciências
10:20 – 10:30	**Reflections and Responses**	Brief reflections on the opening presentations and keynote address, providing an opportunity to highlight key considerations and questions to inform the subsequent discussions.
10:30 – 11:00	**BREAK & GROUP PHOTO**	
SESSION 2: Understanding Curiosity-Driven Research This session will explore how CDR is understood across different research systems, its contribution to knowledge and society, and the implications of resource constraints for intellectual risk-taking in Sub-Saharan Africa. Moderator: **Prof Abigail Opoku Mensah,** Administrator, Ghana National Research Fund (GNRF)		

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
11:00 – 11:15	**Framing the Discussion:** What Do We Mean by Curiosity-Driven Research?	Explore the characteristics of CDR and its relationship to basic, fundamental, discovery, blue-skies, exploratory and open-ended research. **Dr Kwezi Mzilikazi,** Deputy Vice Chancellor, Rhodes University, South Africa and GRC 2027 Annual Meeting Scientific Advisory Committee Member
11:15 – 12:15	**Round Table:** Curiosity-Driven Research Across Research Systems	Perspectives from African and international research funding organisations and researchers. Guiding questions: • How is CDR defined and classified? • How do organisations identify or measure CDR within their portfolios? • What examples demonstrate its contribution to society, innovation, researcher development or knowledge generation? • How can underrepresented research systems develop their own ideas, methods and discoveries? • **Regional question:** How much intellectual risk can researchers afford to take when funding is scarce, and does scarcity encourage innovation or constrain the questions researchers can pursue? 1. **Prof Michelo Syakalima,** Executive Secretary, National Science and Technology Council, Zambia 2. **Prof Jonas Redwood-Sawyerr,** Chairman, National Science Technology and Innovation Council, Sierra Leone 3. **Dr James Kisaale,** Executive Secretary, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, Uganda 4. **Prof Natasha Ribeiro,** Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
12:15 – 12:45	**Interactive Dialogue:** What Should We Protect When We Fund Curiosity?	Open exchange between research funders and researchers.
12:45 – 13:00	**Session Synthesis**	Consolidation of key messages on how CDR is understood and valued across the region, including common perspectives, areas of difference and implications for research funding in Sub-Saharan Africa.
13:00 – 14:00	**LUNCH**	
SESSION 3: The Role of Public Funders in Building Enabling Environments for Curiosity-Driven Research Examine how public funders can support CDR through funding instruments, assessment and reporting frameworks, institutional arrangements and research incentives. Moderator: **Prof Dickson Andala,** Chief Executive Officer, National Research Fund (NRF), Kenya		
14:00 – 14:15	**Framing the Funding Environment**	Overview of the policy, funding and institutional conditions that influence the ability of researchers to pursue CDR, with attention to the role of public funders in creating supportive research environments. **Prof Dr Marian Burchardt,** Professor of Sociology, Leipzig University, Germany and GRC 2027 Annual Meeting Scientific Advisory Committee Member

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
14:15 – 15:15	**Panel:** Enabling Curiosity: What Can Research Funders Do Differently?	Selected councils share practical examples of funding instruments, programmes or approaches that have enabled investigator-led and curiosity-driven research. **Guiding questions:** • What funding instruments have been effective in supporting and advancing CDR in your country? • How can funders include the funding of CDR elements in applied or mission-oriented funding programmes? • How can assessment, reporting and incentive frameworks support CDR without discouraging risk taking, originality, longer-term inquiry and ensure that there are no biases against the participation and support of women and underrepresented groups? • **Regional Questions:** To what extent have funding instruments been developed to support CDR activities in mission-oriented research? 1. **Dr Yaya Sangare,** Secrétaire Général Le Fonds pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation (FONSTI), Cote d'Ivoire 2. **Mr Philip Nyoni,** Director General, National Commission for Science and Technology, Malawi 3. **Ms Lesego Thamae,** Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, Botswana 4. **Prof Samora Andrew,** University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
15:15 – 15:45	**Interactive Discussion:** From Funding Instruments to Enabling Environments	Interactive discussion on the broader institutional and systemic conditions required to sustain CDR.
15:45 – 16:00	**Session Synthesis**	Consolidation of key messages on the role of public funders in creating enabling environments for CDR, including effective funding approaches, institutional conditions and areas requiring further attention or collaboration.
16:00 – 16:30	BREAK	
SESSION 4: GRC Business and Regional Engagement This session will provide an opportunity to engage with updates on GRC activities, including the work of the Executive Support Group and GRC Working Groups. It will highlight key developments, areas of ongoing work and opportunities for Sub-Saharan African research funding organisations to participate in and contribute to the GRC's activities and global agenda. Moderator: **Ms Dirce Madeira,** Head of Projects and M&E Department, Fundo Nacional de Investigacao, Mozambique and GRC Responsible Research Assessment Working Group		
16:30 – 17:40	**Updates on GRC Working Groups**	**Update:** Multilateral Collaboration Working Group TBC
		Update: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group **Ms Bestina Daniel,** Senior Research Coordination Officer, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Tanzania and GRC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group
		Update: Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) Working Group 1. **Ms Nosisa Dube,** Manager: Evaluation and Impact, National Research Foundation, South Africa 2. **Mr Kelvin Mubiana Katukula,** Manager: Resource Mobilisation and Grants Management, National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, Namibia
17:40 – 17:45	**Reflections and closing**	
END OF SESSION		
18:30 – 21:00	**GRC DINNER** **VENUE:** TERRAKOTA RESTAURANT	

DAY 3

Date: Wednesday, 25 November 2026

Venue: Brasil Room

GRC SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING – DAY 2

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
08:30 – 09:00	Arrival & Registration	
SESSION 5: Making a Compelling Case for Curiosity-Driven Research Explore how funders can sustain support for CDR in policy and institutional environments increasingly focused on demonstrable impact, societal priorities and short- to medium-term outcomes. Moderator: **Dr Dembele Tiertou Edwige,** Director General, Fonds de Soutien à l'Education et à la Recherche (FOSER), Burkina Faso		
09:00 – 09:15	**Framing the Tension:** Curiosity, Impact and Public Value	Explore how curiosity-driven and impact-oriented research complement one another within a healthy research ecosystem, and how the value of research can be understood beyond immediate or predictable outcomes. **Prof Dr. Marian Burchardt,** Professor of Sociology, Leipzig University, Germany and GRC 2027 Annual Meeting Scientific Advisory Committee Member

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
09:15 – 10:00	**Breakout Session: Communicating the Value of Curiosity-Driven Research**	Three facilitated group discussions exploring how research funders can communicate the value of CDR and sustain support across policy, institutional and societal contexts. Each group will identify key messages and practical approaches to inform the regional contribution. **Overarching question:** How can research funders make a compelling case for curiosity-driven research and sustain support for it across policy, institutional and societal contexts?
		Discussion 1: Positioning Curiosity-Driven Research in Policy and Public Priorities **Facilitator: Dr Cephas Adjei Mensah,** Director: Research, Statistics, and Information Management, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST), Ghana Rapporteur: **Mrs Fatmata Kaiwa,** National Coordinator, National Science Technology and Innovation Council, Sierra Leone **Focus:** Strengthening the case for CDR in government priorities and policy environments and demonstrating its contribution to national development and research ecosystems. **Guiding questions:** What experiences or practices do you have in communicating the value of CDR to government, policymakers and society?
		Discussion 2: Communicating Research Value, Risk and Uncertainty **Facilitator: Dr Kossi Sénamé Dodzi,** Directeur de la recherche scientifique et technique, Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche (MESR), Togo Rapporteur: **Ms Rudo Tamangani,** Research Council Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe **Focus:** Communicating the value of CDR while recognising its inherent uncertainty, longer time horizons and potential for unexpected or explanatory outcomes, and ensuring equitable support for researchers. **Guiding questions:** How can funders communicate the value of CDR while also managing expectations about risk, uncertainty, long timeframes and possible "negative" or explanatory outcomes? How can the bias against specific groups be prevented?
		Discussion 3: Building Public Understanding and Engagement Around Curiosity-Driven Research **Facilitator: Dr Rejoice Maseko,** Director, Eswatini National Research Council (NRC), ESwatini Rapporteur: **Abraham Mathodi,** Acting Director, Ministry of Communications and Innovation, Botswana **Focus:** Strengthening public understanding of CDR and fostering meaningful engagement between research funders, researchers, communities and other stakeholders. **Guiding questions:** How can public understanding of CDR be strengthened among different audiences, including policymakers, the wider public, students, early-career researchers and research institutions? What kinds of engagements have there been with governments, the private sector and the community at large to enhance their understanding of the importance of CDR and its funding?
10:00 – 10:20	**Plenary Reporting of Breakout Discussions**	Rapporteurs share the key messages and recommendations emerging from the three group discussions, highlighting common themes, different perspectives and practical approaches to communicating the value of CDR.

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
10:20 – 10:30	**Session Synthesis**	Consolidation of insights on practical approaches to communicating the value of CDR, strengthening public and policy understanding, and securing sustained support.
10:30 – 11:00	**BREAK**	
SESSION 6: Regional Case Studies: Curiosity-Driven Research in Practice This session will showcase practical examples of how curiosity-driven research is supported and pursued across different research systems, highlighting the approaches, experiences and wider value of such research. Moderator: **Prof Florêncio Maulano,** Executive Director, Fundo Nacional de Investigacao, Mozambique		
11:00 – 11:45	Regional Case Studies: Curiosity-Driven Research in Practice	Showcasing how research funders enable curiosity-driven research through funding approaches that accommodate originality, uncertainty and unexpected outcomes, and demonstrating the scientific and wider value of such research. 1. **Ms Atridah Mulonga,** Acting Manager: Programme Development and Implementation, National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), Zambia 2. **Mr Kelvin Mubiana Katukula,** Manager: Resource Mobilisation and Grants Management, National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, Namibia 3. **Prof Barima Sabas,** Scientific Advisor, Secrétaire Général Le Fonds pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation (FONSTI), Cote d'Ivoire
Strengthening Connections Across Research Funding Systems This segment will provide a platform for participating councils to share institutional experiences, learn from one another and strengthen connections across the GRC network. Moderator: **Mr Edwin Mtotela,** Acting Executive Director, Research Council of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe		
11:45 – 13:00	**Spotlight on GRC Participating Councils**	An engaging showcase of GRC Participating Councils, highlighting their mandates, institutional arrangements, national research-funding priorities and approaches to strengthening their respective research systems. The session will provide an opportunity to share institutional experiences, promote peer learning and strengthen visibility and connections among African research funders within the GRC network. 1. **Prof Abigail Opoku Mensah,** Administrator, Ghana National Research Fund (GNRF), Ghana 2. **Dr Dembele Tiertou Edwige,** Director General, Fonds de Soutien à l'Education et à la Recherche (FOSER), Burkina Faso 3. **Dr Franck Otete Djamba,** Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Democratic Republic of Congo 4. **Prof Momodou Sallah,** Executive Director National Research and Innovation Fund (NRIF), The Gambia 5. **Dr Rejoice Maseko,** Director, Eswatini National Research Council (NRC), ESwatini
13:00 – 14:00	**LUNCH**	
SESSION 7: From Reflection to Convergence: Consolidating Regional Insights and Contribution Bring together insights from the three CDR dimensions, identify shared priorities and regional patterns, and agree on key messages to inform the GRC's global discussion and future agenda on curiosity-driven research. Moderator: **Ms Neema Tindamanyire,** Senior Research Coordination Officer, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and GRC Executive Support Group		
14:00 – 14:20	**African Perspectives on Curiosity-Driven Research**	Presentation of the consolidated regional synthesis, drawing on the discussions and contributions throughout the meeting. The synthesis will bring together the region's key messages, perspectives and recommendations across the three dimensions of the GRC Discussion Paper. It will also incorporate insights from the regional case studies and participating councils. **Dr Melody Mentz,** Independent Researcher

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details / Speakers
14:20 – 14:45	**Consolidating the SSA Contribution**	A facilitated discussion led by the moderator, providing Heads of Research Councils, researchers, policymakers and GRC representatives with an opportunity to engage with the presented synthesis, identify any gaps, propose amendments and ensure that the key messages, perspectives and recommendations adequately reflect the discussions and contributions across the meeting. The discussion will help refine and strengthen the regional contribution ahead of its submission to the GRC.
SESSION 8: Closing Session Conclude the Regional Meeting by reflecting on the key outcomes and looking ahead to the GRC 2027 Annual Meeting in Cape Town. Moderator: **Prof Nourou Soulemane Yorou,** Director General, Benin Agency for Research and Innovation, Benin		
14:45 – 15:00	**Closing Reflections: From Luanda to Cape Town**	Reflections on the outcomes of the Regional Meeting and the significance of the African contribution to the GRC's 2027 global discussions on curiosity-driven research. **The Road to GRC 2027** **Dr Sepo Hachigonta,** Acting Group Executive: Business Advancement, National Research Foundation (NRF), South Africa Closing remarks by host council **Prof Mário Fresta,** Director Geral, Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (FUNDECIT), Angola
15:00 – 15:30	**BREAK**	
15:30 – 17:00	**Closed Meeting of African Heads of Research Councils** **Venue:** Guiné Meeting Room African Heads of Research Councils	**SGCI Curiosity-Driven Research Multilateral Programme Task Group Meeting** **Venue:** Mozambique Room Task Group Members
END OF SESSION		
18:30 – 20:00	**FAREWELL DINNER** **VENUE:** SWITCH SUPPER CLUB	

DAY 4

Date: THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2026

GRC SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING – DAY 3

Time	Session / Programme Item	Details
09:00 – 11:00	**Institutional Visits**	Luanda Science Centre Luanda PCDL – Luanda Tech
11:30 – 13:00		Armed Forces Museum
13:00 – 16:00	**Informal Lunch**	Luanda Island

Key Contact Persons

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