

# Research Engagement in Africa: Cost and Challenges

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## Abstract

Knowledge production is key to development worldwide. However, some countries are producers of knowledge used globally, whilst others are mainly consumers of that knowledge. There is a correlation between knowledge production and funding levels for research. Countries in Africa recognize the need to provide research funding at levels that would enhance knowledge production but struggle in balancing many competing needs. African countries have committed to funding research at the level of 1% of their GDP on Research and Development (R&D) which is the recommended percentage to be earmarked for Education, however, many countries have not been able to fulfil this. In 2015-2016 Science Granting Councils in 15 out of 54 African states came together to form a Science Granting Council Initiative to strengthen the research capacity in their countries and to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to the continent's economic and social development<sup>1</sup>. The members of the SGCI work collaboratively, however there is a challenge in addressing research problems that cut across national boundaries as many governments are more interested in prioritizing national issues given their limited resources. This article focuses on the governance structures of those Science Granting councils to understand and explore reasons for the continuing underfunding of research, the impact of research and perceived direct benefit of research outcomes in informing policy and in benefitting the broader society.

**Keywords:** Research, Science Granting Council (SGC), Funding, European Research Council (ERC), Africa.