

Cheers to a prosperous, safe, and productive 2022!



Albertina Ngurare

Allow me to welcome you all back from the festive season, with hope that this year will be more gracious, safer and healthier than the past two years. I believe we had time to rest and reinvigorate our bodies and mind as we consider the future with faith and new prospects. His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob declared 2022 to be the year of reimagining. In his message, the President stressed that 2022 should be a year in which we create a new and different mental picture that will guide the country's processes and actions.

"I believe the tenacity, resilience, persistence, and commitment shown during the past years will keep us going to bring all projects and programs to successful fruition."

NCRST have a number of projects and programs planned for implementation before end of this financial year as well as those to commence in 2022/23 financial year. Similarly, some programs are designed to stretch over a period of two to three years. I believe the tenacity, resilience, persistence, and commitment shown during the past years will keep us going to bring all projects and programs to successful fruition. I trust that team spirit and courage will carry us through all encounters during this calendar year and beyond. Let me therefore wish you and your families a blessed and flourishing 2022!

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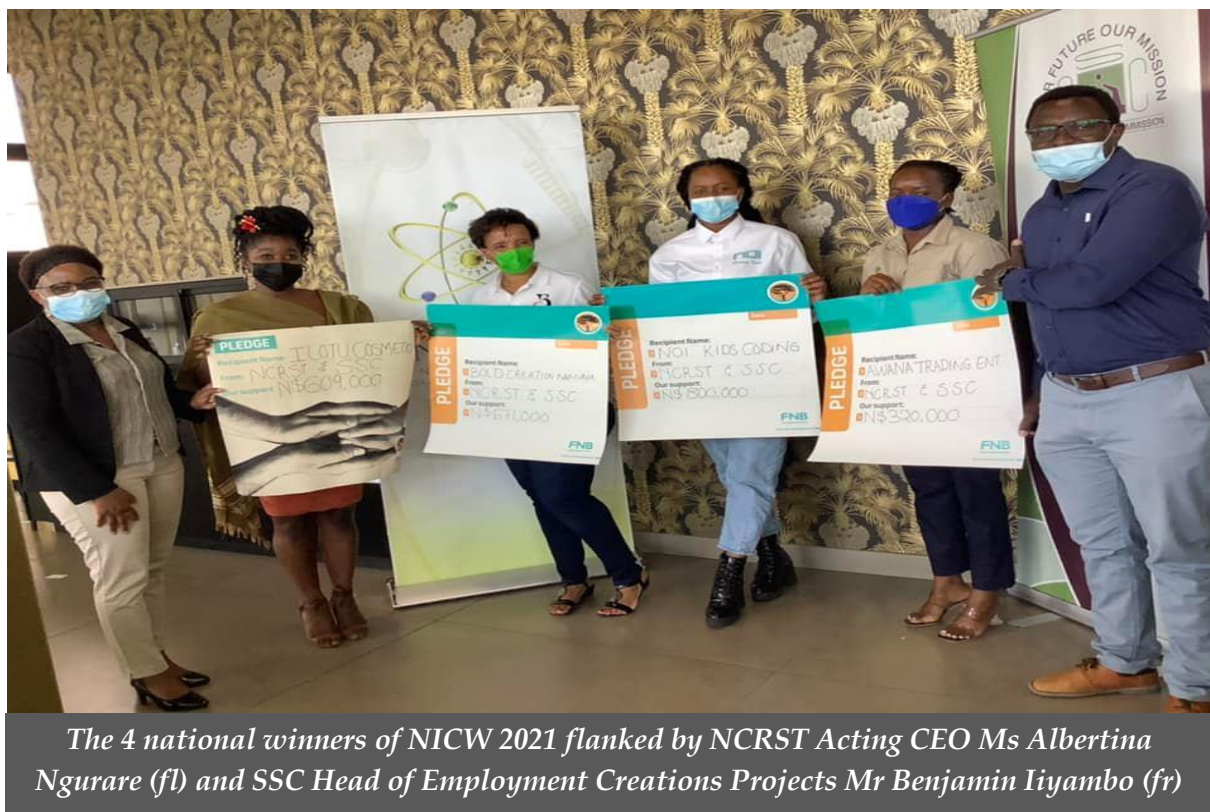
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The 4 national winners of NICW 2021 flanked by NCRST Acting CEO Ms Albertina Ngurare (fl) and SSC Head of Employment Creations Projects Mr Benjamin Iiyambo (fr)

Overview of the National Innovation Challenge for WOMEN 2021

The National Innovation Challenge for Women is a capacity building and business acceleration initiative designed to empower female innovators in various business concepts such as Business Model Canvas, Financial projections, Human Resources, marketing and branding as well as standards and regulations pertaining to their businesses.

The goal is to have an empowered female population running and spearheading RSTI focused businesses. Priority is given to products and services with high socio-economic impact targeting businesses in Agri-food, Nutrition, Biosciences, Health, ICT/tech, Waste (upcycling), Cosmetics and Better agriculture services.

During the 2021 season of the NICW program phase 3, which was financed by NCRST and the Social Security Commission, 22 female innovators were taught in business modelling,

business strategy development, financial management, intellectual property protection, and pitching, among other things. At the conclusion of the training program, four national winners were chosen to advance to the program's final phase. The winners were eligible for awards of up to \$800,000 in the form of a development voucher that they could use to enhance their businesses.

The 4 national winners are;

- Noi Kids Coding- N\$ 800 000.00
- Bold Creation – N\$ 671 000.00
- Ilotu Cosmetics - N\$ 609 000.00
- Awana Food – N\$ 320 000.00

The winners will use the funds to expand their businesses by purchasing machinery, raw materials, and whatever else they need to support their operations to create jobs.

About the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)



SGCI - Namibia

About the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)

The Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) is a five-year project which is being implemented in fifteen (15) countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is aimed at strengthening the capacities of Science Granting Councils in the region to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development.

Objectives of the initiative are to strengthen the ability of the councils to manage research, design and monitor research programmes based on the use of robust science, technology and innovation indicators, support knowledge exchange with the private sector and to establish partnerships between councils and other science system actors.

The initiative is jointly funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF).

Participation of the NCRST in the SGCI

The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) participated in the SGCI phase one (SGCI -1) by co-funding a regional project together with the Fundo Nacional de Investigação (FNI), Mozambique.

Participation in the SGCI-1 further enabled the NCRST to secure funding for the continuation of the project that was sponsored during SGCI-1. The continuation project is titled "Processing, upscaling and commercialization of food products derived from underutilized fruits and plants in Mozambique and Namibia" managed by the NCRST and FNI. The continuation of the project was awarded under the 2020 NRF/ Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) Call for Expression of Interest: SGCI-1 Research Projects Continuity.

The participation in the initiative enabled NCRST to mobilize funds for five new projects under the SGCI phase 2 (SGCI 2), of which one is a joint project between Namibia and Mozambique, titled “Application of indigenous knowledge in the management of infectious diseases (Malaria, Tuberculosis and COVID-19) in Manica and Tete provinces of Mozambique, and in the Zambezi region of Namibia”. The five (5) research and innovation projects fall within thematic areas which aims at:

- (1) improving climate resilience and food security through smart agricultural technologies and biotechnology;
- (2) streamlining indigenous knowledge resources into the mainstream economy;
- (3) improving value addition to natural resources; and
- (4) promoting local manufacturing.

In addition, the NCRST received supplementary funding for the SGCI-2 which enabled funding of three (3) women innovators in the above-mentioned thematic areas to upscale their business as an extension of the National Women in Innovation Challenge programme (NICW).

Collaboration with various Collaborating Technical Agencies (CTAs)

The NCRST participated in various projects as follow:

- The Evidence for Policy (Evipol) project which is led by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in collaboration with the Centre for Science, Technology, and Innovation Indicators (CeSTII) and l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) at Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (UCAD). Additional support is provided by the University of Johannesburg and the United Kingdom's Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) from University of Sussex;
- Change Management team for the SGCI Gender Inclusivity Project conducted by Genderatwork;
- The NCRST, FNI and Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBIO) conducted a project management online training course for all project members of both institutions as well as the research project teams in July – August 2021;



- Participated in the Digitalization Project for the transformation of its grant management system from manual to online with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST);
- Conducted a Monitoring and Evaluation workshop with Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) for all relevant staff members; and
- Collaborated with CeSTII on a project which produced comparative fact sheets on business innovation in SA and Namibia as well as conducted a workshop on new science, technology and innovation indicators and datasets in Southern African Development Community (SADC), for Namibia.

The participation in the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) contributed to the following positive changes for the NCRST:

- Provides the NCRST the opportunity to transform its processes, especially improve the monitoring and evaluation process;

- Enabled the NCRST to foster collaboration with other Councils and SGCI Collaborating Technical Agencies (CTAs) as well as between research institutions; and
- Provided more funds to the NCRST to enable it to fund more research projects in different thematic areas.

During the implementation of SGCI projects the NCRST has learned the following major lessons thus far:

- Holding frequent physical meetings and active communication with grant winners and other stakeholders from outset is essential, especially for efficient cross-country research collaboration;
- Sufficient time is required regarding the response period for potential applicants in response to Calls for application/proposals; and
- Challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic is that it is imperative for the institution to transform its operational processes, especially in grant management from manual to online.

