



MTHE's NSTIC Selects Five Project Proposals for Research and Development

In today's rapidly evolving landscape of global science and technology, staying abreast of emerging trends requires proactive measures in policy formulation and institution building. These strategic endeavors serve as the bedrock for fostering progress and innovation, empowering nations to leverage scientific breakthroughs for societal advancement.

The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) in Sierra Leone is deeply committed to expanding access to high-quality tertiary and vocational education. Guided by a mission to enhance skills development and educational opportunities, MTHE aligns its initiatives with the priorities set forth by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL). Key focus areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, and Mathematics (STEAM) are recognized for their pivotal role in driving economic growth and prosperity. Through tailored policies and legislations, MTHE endeavors to create an enabling environment that empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development agenda.

The commitment to fostering scientific excellence and innovation is evident in MTHE's collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to develop Sierra Leone's inaugural "National Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy." This policy framework not only provides strategic guidance for Sierra Leone's scientific pursuits but also emphasizes the importance of cohesive coordination and alignment of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policies and programs.



In line with this overarching objective, the re-establishment and restructuring of the National Science, Technology, and Innovation Council (NSTIC) play a pivotal role in facilitating the seamless execution of STI initiatives. By fostering collaboration and synergy among stakeholders, NSTIC ensures that research and innovation efforts are well-coordinated and effectively contribute to national development goals.

With a grant of two hundred and fifty thousand Dollars (USD 250,000) secured for research in 2023 from the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), NSTIC has proactively initiated calls for proposals from diverse groups of individuals and institutions. These proposals are solicited in four thematic areas of research and innovation:

- Promoting Good Health and Well-being through Effective Application of STI
- Promoting Food Security and Modern Agriculture
- Promoting Innovative Energy Solutions
- Promoting New and Emerging Technologies

This proactive approach fosters innovation and knowledge creation, while ensuring that research endeavors align with national priorities and contribute meaningfully to addressing key societal challenges. By leveraging external funding opportunities and mobilizing expertise from various quarters, NSTIC reinforces Sierra Leone's commitment to advancing scientific research and technological innovation for societal betterment.

Subject to reviews of international standards, the project proposals underwent rigorous evaluation, leading to the final selection of the top five based on criteria such as quality, relevance, impact on society, level of technology and innovation, and composition of the research team.

The five selected projects are:

No.#	TITLE OF PROJECT	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	INSTITUTION
1.	Evaluation of indigenous vegetable species potential as alternation to tackle malnutrition and food insecurity at rural household in Sierra Leone	Philip Mornya	Njala University
2.	A multi biomass fueled continuously running stove and its environmental and social impact	Sheriff Kamara	Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone
3.	Incorporating Drone and AI technologies for cost-effective vector controls in Sierra Leone	Kemoh Rogers	Njala University
4.	Artificial Intelligence In Education - Abu Sense Bod	Abdul Rahim Jalloh	Easy Stem (Steam Youth Group)
5.	Expanded Pulmonary Aspergillosis assessment in patients with respiratory diseases in Sierra Leone (ePARSLE)	Dalinda Giba	College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, University of Sierra Leone



Photo of MTHE's Minister, Dept. Minister & awardees of the selected project proposals

With a forward-looking vision aimed at catapulting Sierra Leone into a knowledge-based economy bolstered by a robust national innovation system, the NSTI Policy is pivotal in elevating the living standards of its citizens. Anchored on three core pillars – "Social Transformation, Economic Transformation, and Good Governance" – this policy framework underscores the nation's commitment to fostering technological and innovative interventions.

A notable aspect of the NSTI policy is its emphasis on promoting gender equity, equality, and inclusivity within Sierra Leone's STI landscape. Recognizing the stark under-representation of women in STI/STEM activities, the policy endeavors to rectify this disparity. Efforts are made to ensure gender inclusivity in the selection process of project proposals, actively promoting women's participation and leadership roles in STI/STEAM endeavors.

The integration of gender inclusivity within Sierra Leone's technological and innovative landscape is poised to yield far-reaching dividends, driving the nation closer to its aspirations of socio-economic advancement and inclusive growth.

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