



From Science to Impact: Every journey begins with a single step


ANNUAL
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A message from our Board Chair

Two years ago, SFA Foundation set out its vision to be the leader in strengthening African science for a better future in a global world. With our strategic intent of translating science into impact, the Foundation has continued to create and optimise opportunities across the continent by supporting African scientists, who know the challenges best and are therefore best placed to address Africa's most pressing development needs.

We, the SFA Foundation's board, have continued our work focusing on providing oversight and support to the executive team and the Foundation at large. We are impressed by the progress made over the years. Particular highlight is on the funds mobilised and partnerships to advance science that are being developed with key stakeholders including funders, partners in science and friends of SFA Foundation. This has contributed to the development and management of programmes across our pillars in health, agricultural and climate R&D across the region and has benefitted over 400 scientists across Africa.

As Africa's science and innovations ecosystem continues to evolve, and as the Foundation gets into year two of implementing the "science to impact" strategy, our commitment in providing continuous support for the wellbeing of SFA Foundation remains true.



Remarks from our CEO

2021 marked the birth of the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation). In just two years, the Foundation has achieved significant milestones: operationalising the organisation, attracting crucial funding, and supporting bold, impactful research with the potential to accelerate data-driven solutions that meet the needs of African communities.

In its short lifetime, the SFA Foundation has received important validation of the strength of its programmes and operational systems, most particularly from our partners. Our work is driven by a robust five-year organisational strategy, featuring strong governance structures and implementation of operational frameworks, enabling the organisation to earn the confidence of its partners. Each individual associated with the SFA Foundation is dedicated to driving change within the African science ecosystem by laying groundwork, enhancing infrastructure, building operational capacity and implementing robust governance structures. We believe that, combined, these efforts have resulted in a sound and sustainable organisation.

Our eleven-member Board, comprised of accomplished professionals from diverse geographical, gender and professional backgrounds and mostly from Africa has guided our strategic direction, culminating in the launch of SFA Foundation's five-year organisational strategy, From Science to Impact, in March (2023). The strategy serves to reinforce the research ecosystem -- and is already laying the groundwork for transformative outcomes. Our focus is on nurturing talent and fostering a research environment where scientists can thrive and produce high-quality work that addresses local challenges. We support our grantees so that they can work collaboratively, collegially and in a framework of open science. In doing so, our grantees are able to advance their careers as well as provide evidence to enrich sound policymaking. We are determined to build on these multidimensional benefits to make a lasting impact on African science and innovation.



About the **SFA Foundation**

The Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation) is a pan-African, non-profit and public charity organisation that supports, strengthens, and promotes science and innovation in Africa. The SFA Foundation serves the African research ecosystem by funding excellent research and innovation ideas; enabling interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers and building and reinforcing environments that are conducive for scientists to thrive and produce quality research that generates new, locally relevant knowledge. The SFA Foundation seeks to address the continent's most pressing developmental needs by generating knowledge that solves problems and informs decision-making.

“The SFA Foundation promotes science and innovation in Africa, funding research and fostering environments for scientists to thrive.”

Our Governance

The SFA Foundation Board and executive management are composed of skilled and diverse set of professionals drawn mainly from across Africa. The eleven-member board is drawn from global leaders in finance, science and lead key institutions on the continent.



Alinah Segobye
Board Chairperson



Aggrey Ambali
Board Member



Appolinaire Djikeng
Board Member



Éleine Ubalijoro
Board Member



Kevin Marsh
Board Member



Nabila Boautia Naji
Board Member



Paul Sagnia
Board Member



Victoria Sabula
Board Member



Martin Eigbike
Board Member



Victoria Simpkin
Board Member



Tom Kariuki
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Management



Tom Kariuki
Chief Executive Officer



Evelyn Gitau
Chief Scientific Officer



Raynold Zondo
Chief Operating Officer

Heads of Programmes & Departments



Hannah Ngugi
Head of Finance, Grants & Procurement



Christine Kuto
Head of Legal, Risk & Compliance, Corporation Secretary



Judith Omumbo
Head of Programmes, Science Solutions for Emerging Global Priorities



Shadrack Kirui
Head of Human Capital and Business Support



Moses Alob
Head of Programmes, Science Based Products



Allen Mukhwana
Head of Programmes, Science Knowledge in Society



Kabura Ciigu
Head of Strategy and Insights



Deborah-Fay Ndlovu
Acting Head Corporate and Science Communication



Steven Kinuthia
Manager, ICT

Highlights of 2023

Strategic direction

- Launched SFA Foundation Strategy: From Science to Impact
- Organised programmes into four portfolios

Programmes and initiatives onboarded in 2023

- Promoting youth mental health, Being initiative
- Leadership & training in science
- Clinical trials & ecosystem strengthening

Funding in 2023

- USD \$121M



Partnerships

- Established to advance social sciences and humanities and to accelerate scientific progress for Africa to achieve Agenda 2063

A five-year strategy to advance science and innovation

“The primary direct beneficiaries of the organisation’s five-year strategy are African scientists and innovators to whom \$250 million will be committed based on highly competitive criteria over the five years from 2023-2027.”

Prioritise

What are the key identifiable challenges and gaps that are solvable through R&D?

Design

What models or structures, programmes, systems, policies can be implemented for optimum delivery to reach impact?

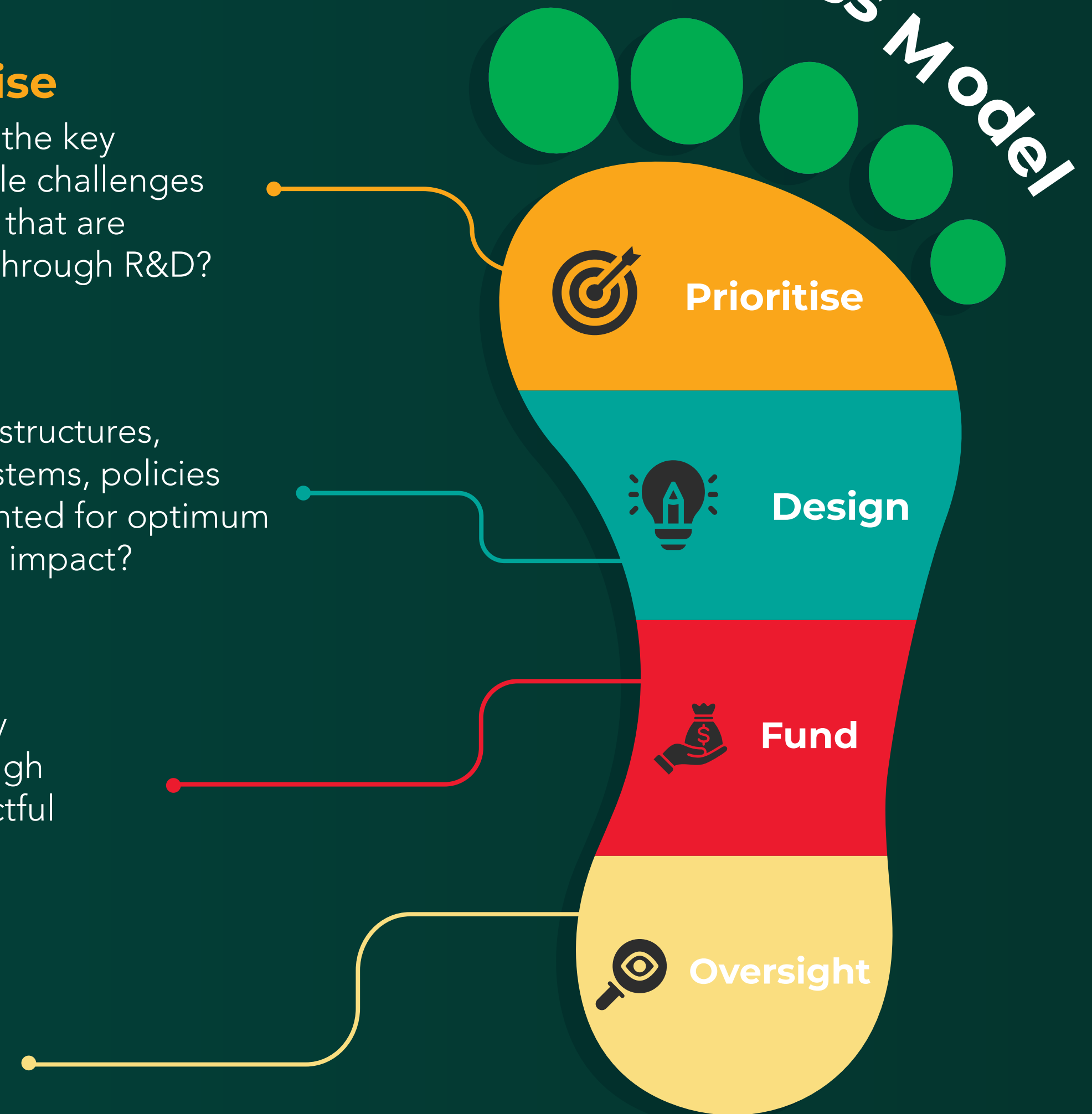
Fund

How much of the money that we mobilise is enough to fund and make impactful R&D change in Africa?

Oversight

What are the best class of metrics to apply for assurance and accountability from and to our grantees, funders and partners?

Our Business Model



A five-year strategy to advance science and innovation

In 2023, the SFA Foundation launched “From Science to Impact,” its five-year strategy, in parallel with the launch of 14 consortia on health and climate. The organisation’s strategy, a significant milestone in the delivery for science, is built on its core values of respect, excellence, accountability, diversity, equity and inclusion. The primary direct beneficiaries of this work are African scientists and innovators to whom \$250 million will be committed based on highly competitive criteria over the five years from 2023-2027. This funding will be distributed for research in the broad areas of health, agriculture, and climate and environment. In recognition of the interdependence of all forms of scientific research and human endeavor, the SFA Foundation has ensured its remit also includes research in the fields of mental health, social sciences and human creativity.



The SFA Foundation's work is based on five strategic objectives:



Creating science-driven products that respond to challenges within African communities:

The Foundation supports the development of robust innovation ecosystems by funding bold and innovative ideas, advocating for government funding and incentives for private-sector investment, and engaging with the private sector to support bold, innovative ideas addressing continent-wide challenges.

Developing globally competitive science leaders:

SFA Foundation support of Africa's scientists and innovators seeks to enhance the quality and productivity of science on the continent while developing globally-competitive science leaders through research training, leadership skills and career pathways for early-stage researchers.

Establishing strategic partnerships and networks that contribute to the growth and salience of science and innovation in Africa:

We believe that collective effort through strategic partnerships, and thoughtful positioning of its brand as a leading organisation in continental and global discourse on science and innovation in Africa, will result in true advancement of scientific research on the continent.

Improving the quantity, quality and productivity of science on the continent:

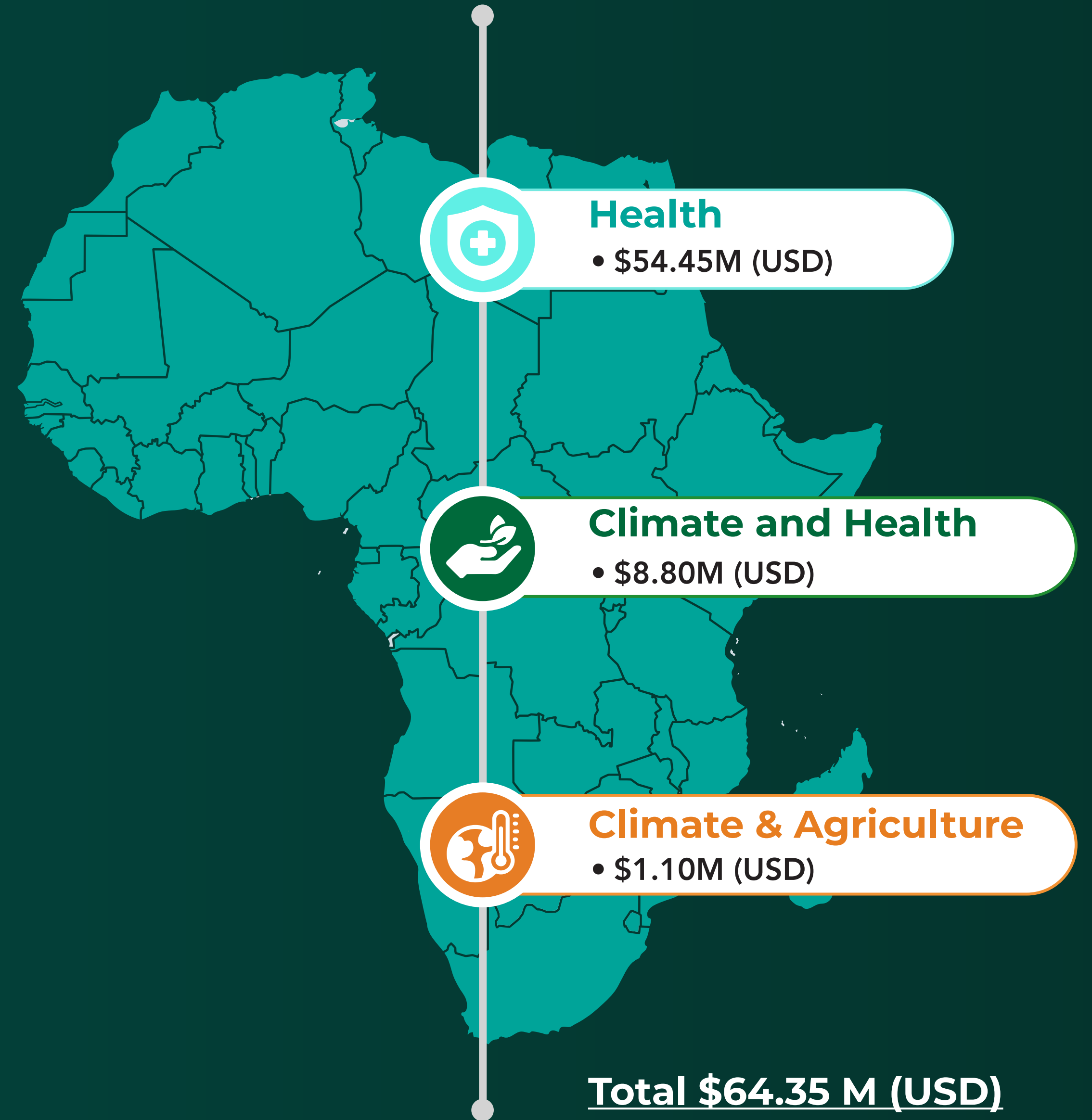
The Foundation supports initiatives that enhance research quantity, quality, and impact that is based on knowledge systems, shared resources, equitable access, partnerships, robust ethical standards, and contributions to regulatory affairs, research culture, capacity development, impact and utilisation in and beyond academia.

Building a sustainable, well-governed pan-African science funding institution that makes an impact in Africa:

The SFA Foundation's strengthened governance and robust oversight ensure stability, growth and sustainability of science and innovation funding in Africa, guided by global principles of good grants practice, research management standards, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and value-for-money -- strengthening the continent's science ecosystem and institutional governance.

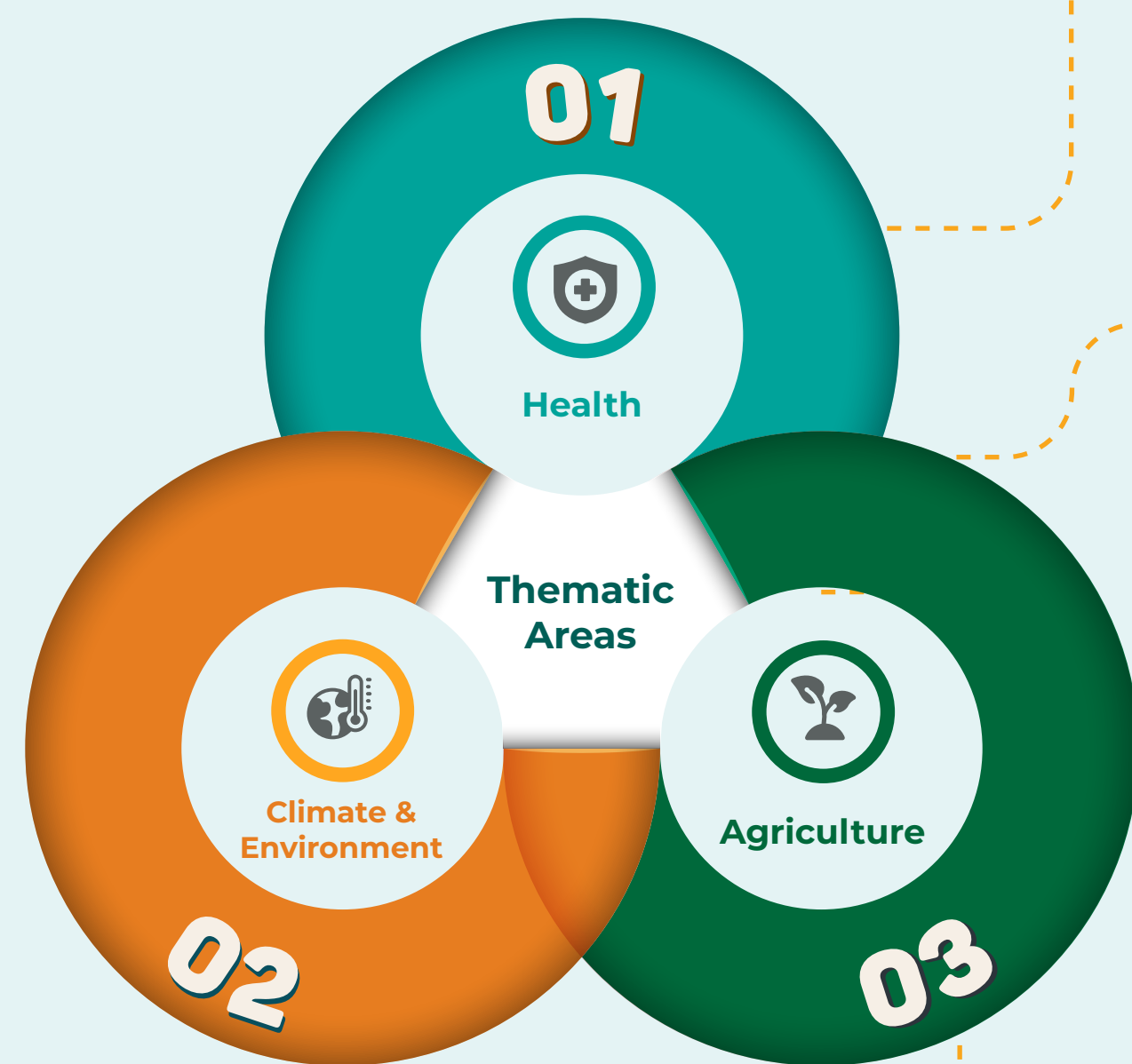
Our Growing Footprint in Africa

We fund science in 33 African countries to empower local researchers, foster innovation, and address the continent's unique challenges, ultimately driving sustainable development and positively impacting African lives. Of the \$121 M we have received from our funding partners to date in 2023, we have awarded \$64.35 M to researchers working in the thematic areas outlined in the map.



Our Science Portfolio

The SFA Foundation prioritises three interconnected thematic areas: health, climate & environment, and agriculture. Programmes are organised around four portfolios designed to accelerate progress toward a healthier and more sustainable future for Africa:



Leadership and Excellence in Science cultivates a critical mass of African scientists to produce data, knowledge, and actionable solutions to guide decision-making. It includes programmes that support the development of these skilled individuals into leaders who can mentor and train the next generation of African scientists.

Science-based Products build a strong science innovation ecosystem in Africa, fostering economic growth, job creation, and improved livelihoods. Its work includes enhancing the visibility and capacity of clinical trials in Africa to ensure drug suitability for African populations.

Science Solutions for Emerging Global Priorities programmes are structured to enhance pandemic preparedness, environmental conservation and integrated responses to major environmental challenges, including climate change, health, agricultural sustainability and biodiversity. These initiatives support networks of scientists, benefiting the people of Africa and beyond.

Science Knowledge in Society strengthens research and grant management capabilities in African institutions, creating supportive environments that enable researchers to thrive and ensure that research is impactful and informed by the communities it serves.

Within the four portfolios are 10 long-term programmes that drive science and innovation forward and span various disciplines, including basic, applied, and translational sciences, as well as social sciences, humanities, and arts.

Developing Africa's science leaders

Strong science leadership is a prerequisite to creating a sustainable science ecosystem on the continent.

In March 2023, the SFA Foundation funded 14 consortia to develop world-class Africa research and scientific leaders on the continent, while strengthening African institutions. \$70 million has been provided through the joint funding support of Wellcome and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and marks a refined approach through broad consultation, expansion to include social sciences and humanities, proportionally more focus on low-resourced institutions, and the addition of North African and Lusophone countries.

Fourteen consortia in nine African countries, with partnerships and networks in 75 institutions across 36 countries, have been funded to produce quality scientific data and information for evidence-based decision making generated by world class science leaders working in conducive and enabling environments. The 14 consortia, led from Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe, are advancing evidence and knowledge in Africa on key R&D priorities, including infectious diseases (malaria, HIV, tuberculosis), neglected tropical diseases, non-communicable diseases, and social sciences and humanities. The 14 were announced at a meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, attended by scientists, funding partners and policymakers from 15 countries across the globe.



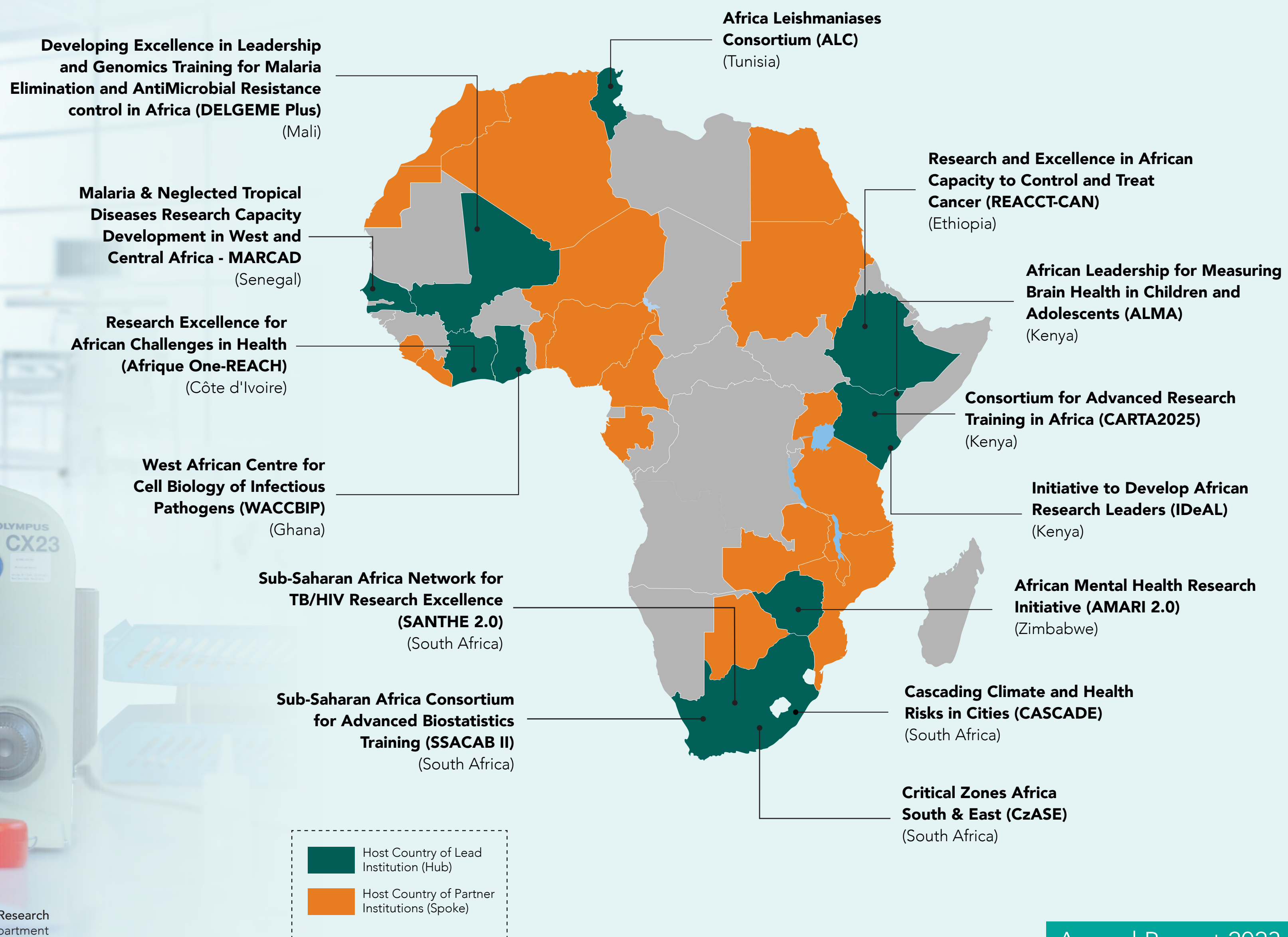
Programme Directors drawn from the 14 Consortia on stage during the official launch of the initiative on March 14 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.
PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

“Broad consultation led to proportionally more focus on low-resourced institutions, and the addition of North African and Lusophone countries.”

Funding 14 consortia in health and climate



Caroline Ngetsa, Lab Manager-Clinical Trials Lab at the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme in Kilifi, Kenya. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department



Promoting youth mental health

One in seven adolescents globally experience mental health issues; suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-to-29 year-olds. In low- and middle-income countries, the mental health needs of up to 90% of young people remain unmet, due mostly to resource constraints. These challenges can lead to social exclusion, discrimination, stigma and poor physical health. In 2023, the SFA Foundation joined the Being initiative — a global partnership to improve the mental wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 24. Through the Being initiative, the SFA Foundation is managing longitudinal research programmes in low- and middle-income countries to understand and predict the long-term effects of stressors (such as COVID-19, urbanisation and emergency circumstances) on the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Global partners include Fondation Botnar, Grand Challenges Canada (funded in part by the Government of Canada), United for Global Mental Health, Orygen and the UK Department of Health and Social Care (through the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research.) Being is focused in 13 priority countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Vietnam. This is the first intercontinental collaboration of low-resourced countries for the SFA Foundation, which gathered experts to inform the design of a funding call to be issued in 2024.

“Being, works with young people from 13 priority countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Vietnam to improve their mental wellbeing.”



90%

The mental health needs of up to 90% of young people globally remain unmet, due mostly to resource constraints.

Strengthening social sciences

Social sciences and humanities contribute valuable insights into society, yet in Africa these disciplines are underfunded, with little national government or continental alliance support. The little support that exists for research in these important fields relies heavily on international funding. The SFA Foundation joined with the Carnegie Corporation of New York to establish Preparing Outstanding Social Science Investigators to Benefit Lives and Environments in Africa (POSSIBLE-Africa) to advance social sciences and humanities research in Africa by driving the production of evidence to inform sustainable development on the continent. In 2023, twelve grantees across Africa were selected to receive preliminary awards and are to participate in an intensive training workshop, enabled by an MoU with the Africa Humanities Association and the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa.



Prof Adamu Addissie based at the University's College of Health Sciences and an SFA Foundation grantee educating communities on cancer. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Recognising Africa's science leaders

In 2021, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) launched the Calestous Juma Science Leadership Fellowship to cultivate scientific leadership in global health post-COVID-19. The SFA Foundation joined as a partner in 2023 to enhance communication skills of the current cohort of 14 CJ fellows, elevating their visibility and impact on local, regional, and global audiences, preparing them to disseminate knowledge and evidence to the public through multiple media channels and platforms.



Calestous Juma Science Leadership Fellows.
PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Strengthening innovation and clinical trials ecosystems

Bolstering innovation

Grand Challenges Africa (GC Africa) seeks to build a robust science innovation ecosystem to drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve millions of lives. GC Africa supports big, bold impactful, innovative ideas that have a potential for impact, scale and sustainability. The current cohort of 24 grantees are focusing their research on COVID-19, maternal and neo-natal child health and drug discovery. In 2024, GC Africa will fund innovations in climate and agriculture and non-hormonal contraception for women. GC Africa advocates for more public R&D funding by incentivising African governments to boost R&D funding by supplementing government support of innovators in their countries. Two such country initiatives have been launched, in Malawi and Rwanda. This year, the Rwandan government matched \$1 million from the SFA Foundation and other partners to support national research priorities through Grand Challenges Rwanda.



From left: Eugene Mutimura, Executive Secretary, National Council for Science and Technology, Rwanda and SFA Foundation CEO, Tom Kariuki after a signing a partnership agreement to establish Grand Challenges Rwanda. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Strengthening Africa's clinical trials ecosystem

Africa bears ~25% of the global disease burden, but only about 4% of global clinical trials occur in Africa. Clinical trials that do take place in Africa are unevenly distributed and concentrated in few countries. As a result, most medicines are developed based on clinical trials conducted outside Africa, which may result in their failure to be fit-for-use in African patients or health systems. To help address these inequities, the Clinical Research and Trials Community (CRTC) programme is creating a sustainable clinical trials ecosystem in Africa. CRTC seeks to increase investment in ethical clinical trials in Africa, foster trust among researchers, regulators, sponsors, funders and the community, strengthen capacity in clinical research and create a sustainable clinical trials ecosystem in Africa. These efforts are implemented through:

- The Clinical Trials Community Africa Network (CTCAN) launched in the year to provide a network for clinical research stakeholders in Africa to facilitate increased, sustainable and coordinated clinical trials on the continent. The initiative is a partnership among nuvotQ.io, the Science for Africa Foundation, BIO Ventures for Global Health (BVGH), Global Public Health R&D, a Division of Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Fondation Merieux, and Medicines Development for Global Health Ltd (MDGH). CTCAN is a platform for all African stakeholders including clinical researchers, regulators, industry partners, and other relevant stakeholders; it is identifying priority diseases for clinical research.
- The Cross Pharma Capacity Development Initiative (CPCDI) to increase the number of clinical research and trial investments on the continent by drawing together local and sector partners to collectively develop clinical trial capacity and sustainably bring more trials to Africa. CPDI is implemented with the support of the Johnson & Johnson Foundation (Scotland).
- The Clinical Trials Community (CTC) platform to raise the visibility of African clinical trialists and sites to increase clinical trial investment in Africa.



Clinical Trials Community Africa Network (CTCAN) consortium members and the EDCTP Networks of Excellence Face to Face Meeting during the EDCTP Annual Conference Meeting, held on 7 November 2023 in Paris, France. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

“Creating sustainable clinical trials and innovations ecosystems in Africa will foster economic growth, improved livelihoods and productivity and healthy individuals”

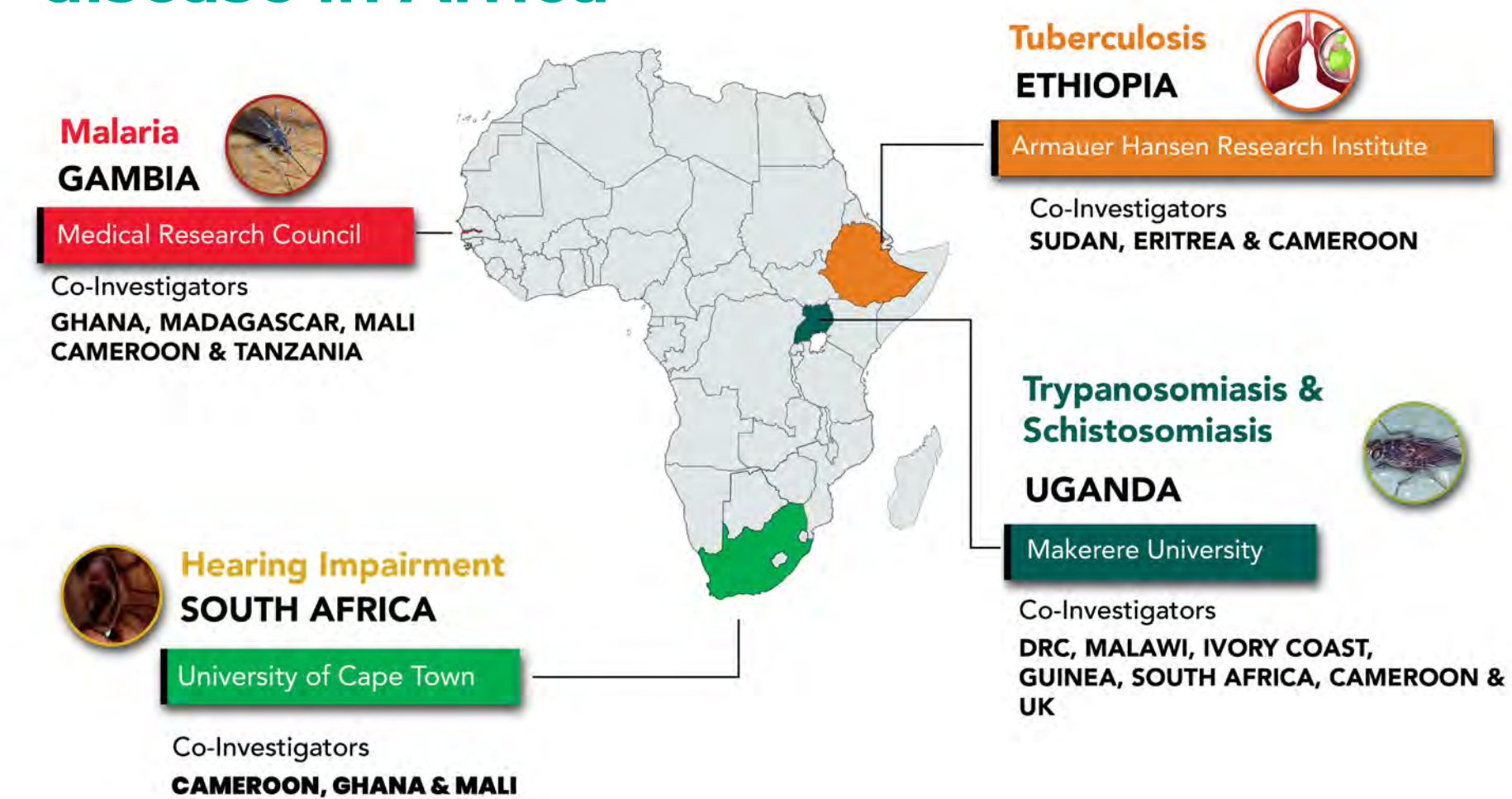
Tackling emerging global priorities

Pandemic sciences networks

Africa faces over 100 ongoing disease outbreaks at any given time, with risks intensifying due to rapid demographic growth, increased connectivity and environmental degradation. Investment in African epidemic and pandemic research and preparedness, drawing from lessons of resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, will protect healthcare systems and bolster economic stability by mitigating future health and socio-economic impacts of epidemics and pandemics. The SFA Foundation partnered with the Pandemic Sciences Institute at the University of Oxford and Mastercard Foundation in 2023 to issue a call for proposals for networks of transdisciplinary research excellence in pandemic sciences across Africa.



Studying how genomics influence the prevalence of disease in Africa



Africa's unique genetic diversity has the potential to provide insights into why certain diseases are more prevalent and severe on the continent compared to other regions, which can lead to tailored public health interventions that reduce disease burden and healthcare costs through preventive medicine. Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) supports population-based studies using genetic, clinical, and epidemiological tools to understand how genes interact with the environment to influence disease susceptibility, pathogenesis and prevention, ultimately improving the health of African populations. H3Africa was launched in 2010 as a partnership among the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), Wellcome, and the African Society of Human Genetics (AfSHG). The SFA Foundation managed the Wellcome component of H3Africa, consortia for which were based in Ethiopia, South Africa, the Gambia and Uganda. The programme concluded in 2023.

The nexus of climate change, health and agriculture

The SFA Foundation, recognising Africa's vulnerability to climate change impacts, prioritises climate change and its effects on health, agriculture and biodiversity. The Climate, Health, Agriculture, and Biodiversity (C-HAB) programme, launched in 2023, strengthens and supports transdisciplinary research and collaboration at the nexus of climate change, health, biodiversity, agriculture and food security to strengthen Africa's resilience. The programme harnesses Africa's leading science and innovation to inform policy, research, and capacity-building in these vital areas.

In its first year, C-HAB focused on establishing strong partnerships for climate and health research and securing funding from partners. To ensure an African voice in global discussions on climate change, C-HAB sponsored the attendance at the COP28 in Dubai for five African innovators in climate adaptation for agriculture.

Safeguarding Africa's biodiversity

Africa is home to mega biodiversity hotspots. But these are experiencing an unprecedented loss of biodiversity due to human overexploitation and environmental degradation, resulting in an estimated loss of 50% of Africa's bird and mammal species, and 20-30% of loss of biodiversity by the end of the century. In 2023, the Foundation partnered with the African BioGenome Project (AfricaBP) to advance scientific approaches to safeguarding Africa's biodiversity through genomics. This is a coordinated, pan-African effort, created in 2019, to build capacity and infrastructure, and to generate, analyse and deploy genomics data for the improvement and sustainable use of biodiversity and agriculture across Africa.

"The SFA Foundation, recognising Africa's vulnerability to climate change impacts, prioritises climate change and its effects on health, agriculture and biodiversity."

Knowledge that advances society

Fostering public engagement with science

Community engagement is essential to ensure that research is conducted ethically and in service to the community. Such engagement also fosters a supportive environment for science and innovation to thrive. The SFA Foundation's Public Engagement with Science programme seeks to empower scientists in Africa to engage and co-create science with the public and provide mechanisms for society to shape, trust and access science, and use research evidence. In 2023, the SFA Foundation launched the inaugural Art for Science Exhibition, featuring 42 science and medical still images and 24 short video clips aligned to research thematic areas, including cancer and malaria. The British High Commission, Africa CDC, and the African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer are coordinating with the SFA Foundation to mount similar exhibitions.



Attendees to the SFA Foundation organised event photo exhibition dubbed 'Art for Science' as part of our public engagement with science activities. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Strengthening science communication

Science journalism must be strong in Africa in order to enable its people to confront its numerous development challenges. It is of particular importance in this era of misinformation, which can cause serious damage to public wellbeing, as seen in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, resources for science coverage often loses out to more popular beats, such as sports, politics and entertainment. To raise the visibility of quality science reporting, the SFA Foundation conceptualised and launched the Africa Science Journalism Award (ASJA) The Award recognises excellence in science journalism across the continent. Over 200 applications were received from 17 African countries in all five regions of the continent for the 2023 awards. Winners for Best News Story/Feature and Innovative Story of the Year were announced at the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Conference on Public Health in Africa.



Winners at the inaugural Africa Science Journalism Awards (ASJA) held in November 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia. PHOTOS | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Strengthening Africa's research and grant management systems

Professional research management is essential for creating productive research environments in universities and institutions. In 2023, the SFA Foundation implemented the Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening (REMACS) programme to address these needs. The programme's initiatives include reviewing the Good Research Management Practice Standard with 47 members from 18 African countries. The standard will enable the establishment and maintenance of environments and systems to build research capacity, translation, uptake and impact. It is also revising the Good Financial Grant Practice Standard, global metric used to promote transparency and strengthen the governance of grant funding worldwide, with ARSO as well as expanding research management training across Africa. Additionally, the programme contributed to key publications on effective research capacity strengthening, highlighting the growing importance of specialised research management skills.



From left: SFA Foundation team members: Faith Kiyuka and Vincent Nkundimana at the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) 2023 meeting held in Durban, South Africa. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Evidence based decision making for Africa

The SFA Foundation both generates scientific knowledge directly and supports institutions in Africa to generate knowledge. The Science Policy Engagement for Africa programme (SPEAR) seeks to influence science, technology and innovation policies and facilitate the translation of research into policy and practice. SPEAR implemented the AI and Data Mapping Initiative to represent an African perspective in the governance of Artificial Intelligence in global health. SPEAR convened African stakeholders and global partners to identify AI and data science policy gaps in global health. Participants came from 47 countries from all five regions of Africa. Findings have already informed the Africa CDC technical working group on Africa's digitalisation and innovation agenda; the Africa Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 24, STISA 34 strategy, and the WHO Afro pandemic Preparedness R&D agenda.



SFA Foundation staff and attendees at the Science Prioritisation & Policy Engagement for Africa (SPEAR), Artificial Intelligence & Data Science Policy convening held in South Africa (photo 1&2) and Mali (photo 3). PHOTOS | Corporate and Science Communication Department



Levelling the global publishing field

Researchers in Africa often face significant barriers publishing their science, resulting in Africa's relatively low global knowledge output. To address this, the SFA Foundation offers Open Research Africa (ORA) through a partnership with F1000/Taylor & Francis to provide a rapid, peer-reviewed, indexed and accessible publishing platform. ORA accepts diverse research outputs beyond traditional articles, including methods, reviews, conference proceedings, and data. To date, ORA has received 124 article submissions and recorded 764 citations from its published work.

Partnerships that advance science

“We are expanding our influence and contributions to science by growing and leveraging strategic relationships within the African science landscape.”



Partnerships that advance science

To achieve scale in Africa's science and innovation environment requires collective effort. The SFA Foundation is building diverse partnerships which include:

Social sciences partnerships

MOUs with two key continental social sciences and humanities organisations — the African Humanities Association and South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) – to help bridge the gap between science and humanities. This partnership will develop collaborative training programmes, implement social sciences programmes and mobilise funding for joint activities.



SFA Foundation staff members: CEO Tom Kariuki (middle) and Head of Programmes Judy Omumbo (right) at the 2023 Africa Climate Summit. PHOTO | Judy Omumbo



Gift Kadzamira a Director at the Malawi National Commission for Science and Technology and SFA Foundation's Moses Alobo at the launch of Grand Challenges Malawi on 30 August 2023. PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

Partnerships that advance science



SFA Foundation staff engage with a representative from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).
PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

The African Union technical agency

An SFA Foundation-African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) MoU to advance Africa's Agenda 2063 Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan. This will require the implementation of long-term scientific programmes on the continent to accelerate scientific progress towards achievement of the transformational aspirations of Agenda 2063. These include improved living standards, inclusive and sustainable economies and empowered women, youth and children, to create a well-governed and integrated-Africa.

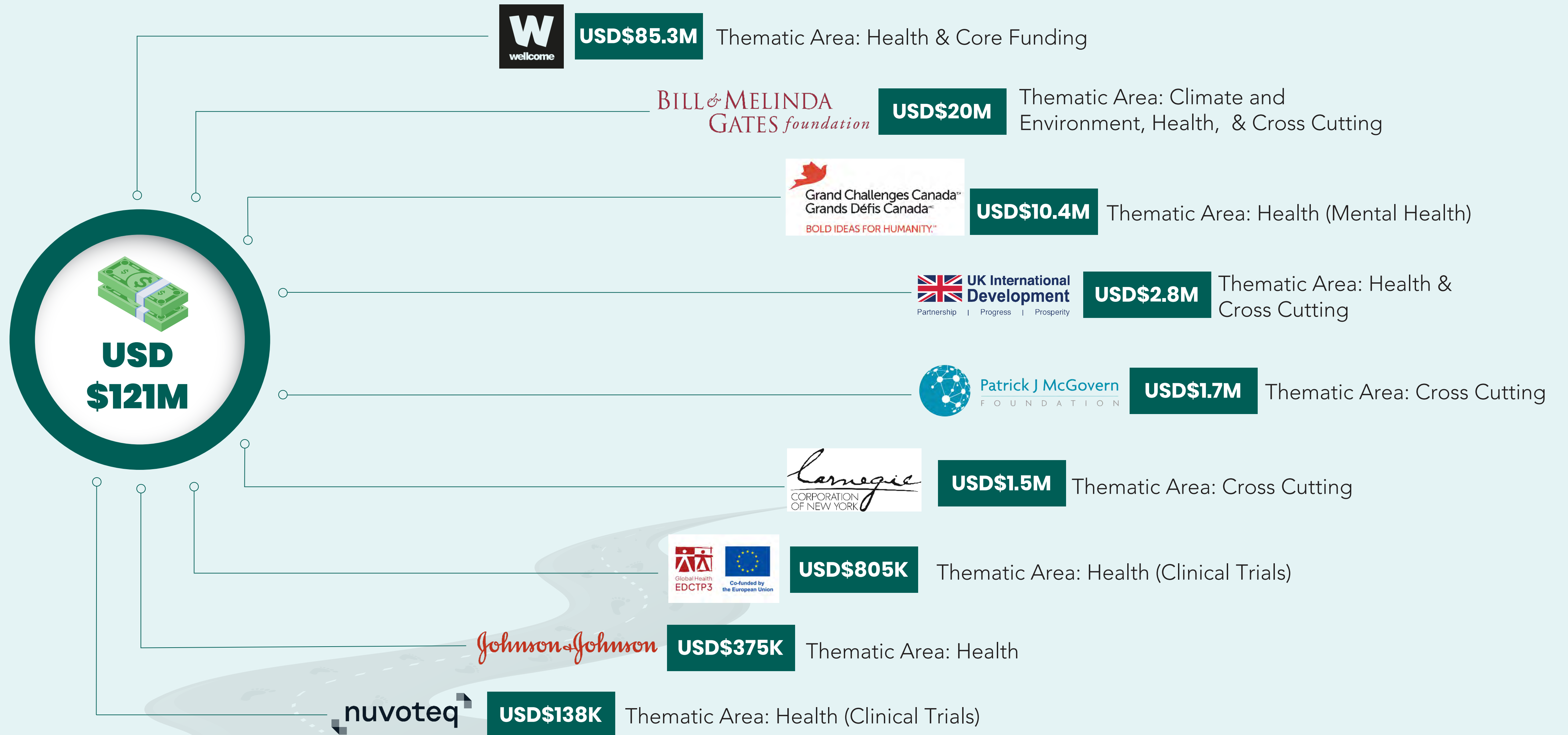


SFA Foundation CEO Tom Kariuki in talks with high level delegates at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA78) Science Summit in September 2023.
PHOTO | Corporate and Science Communication Department

UN agencies

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is being developed with UNESCO to create high-level collaboration mechanisms to foster regional science dialogue and co-create science products that will benefit African societies. The SFA Foundation was a pivotal partner in UNEP's global strategy development in 2023, facilitating the Africa regional foresight workshop.

Our funding partners and their contribution



Institutional efficiency

“Recognising that strong financial and human resource are essential for the SFA Foundation’s success, we are bolstering our human capital and funding”



Institutional efficiency

The SFA Foundation recognises that a strong human resource structure is essential for its success. Fifteen new FTEs were recruited in the year, bringing the total staff count to 51 (28 women and 23 men). SFA Foundation staff come almost exclusively from African countries – a plurality from Kenya, plus Uganda, Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe. A small number of individuals are nationals of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In 2023, the SFA Foundation introduced a paid internship programme to offer professional exposure and experience to young Kenyan university graduates and to serve as a recruiting pipeline for the organisation. Three interns started in 2023, one in operations, and two in programmes. To streamline operations and enhance efficiency we have implemented robust, fit-for-purpose systems and established an ICT Steering Committee to guide these efforts, monitor the management of ICT-related risks, and enhance ICT governance.



Internal and external audits

Audits establish compliance, integrity and financial reliability – essential as SFA Foundation seeks more funding and partnership building. The SFA Foundation Board implemented an internal audit plan comprising four internal audits and two external audits, which revealed strong performance as well as progress in building robust operations and systems.



Looking Forward

“The future is ours to shape”

As we move ahead, the SFA Foundation remains dedicated to making a profound impact on Africa’s scientific landscape. Guided by our strategic blueprint, we will explore new scientific frontiers, supporting scientists using AI to address critical health challenges and continue backing research in infectious and non-communicable diseases.

In 2024, new grantees in the social sciences and humanities will receive funding, recognising the field's vital role in informing and advancing development across the continent. Strengthening partnerships, especially with African governments, will be vital as we work together to place science at the heart of global progress.





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