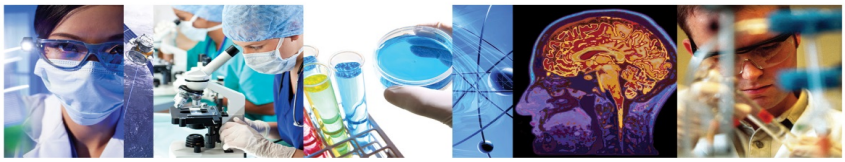
UK Science & Innovation Network



UK Science & Innovation Network Country Snapshot:

Kenya

Country position in Global Innovation Index:

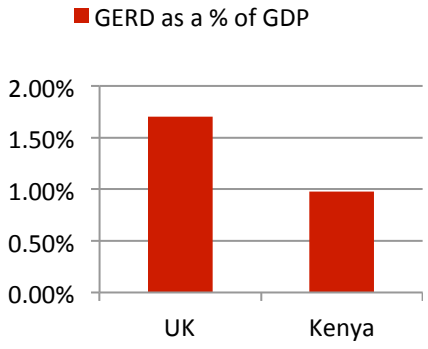
80

Kenyan Science and Innovation Landscape

Kenya, through its **Vision 2030**, aims to be a middle income country by 2030 and science and innovation lies at the centre of its development strategy. The **Constitution of Kenya, 2010**, which is the supreme law of the land, recognizes the value of Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) for national development and prosperity and the **Science, Technology, Innovation Policy and Strategy (STIPS), 2009** mainstreams the application of science and innovation in all sectors and processes of the economy. Building on this, the **National Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013** mandates a doubling of research and development government spending from the 1% of GDP in 2010 to 2%, and an increase in infrastructure spending.

The STI sector is driven by the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI), Kenya National Innovation Agency (KENIA) and the National Research Fund (NRF) which are governed by the Ministry of Education. The higher education sector comprises of 23 public universities and 17 private universities making it one of the largest higher education systems in Africa. The University of Nairobi has been ranked 8th in Africa in the Times Higher Education ranking in 2016. The gross expenditure on research and development (GERD) is at 0.98 percent positioning Kenya third after South Africa and Egypt. The country has about ten research institutes and hosts a number of international research organisations including the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research Centres (CGIAR), International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) and a number of institutions conducting research in life and healt sciences.

Kenya's economy is the largest in the East Africa and sixth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The country attained a Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC) status in 2014 following the revaluation of its GDP. It is an infrastructure powerhouse in the region, leading in investments on mega projects in transport, energy and technology sectors. It is on course in ensuring that 90 percent of its energy comes from renewable energy and has invested heavily in geothermal power and wind energy- (it currently houses the largest geothermal power plant on the continent). A $ 14.5 billion world class technology hub dubbed "Konza City" is under construction and the country has been named as one of the eight partner countries to host component of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA).



Kenya is a recognized IT hub (christened the 'Silicon Savannah'). It is ranked 80th in the Global Innovation Index Report, 2016 and classified as the chief innovation achiever in Sub-Saharan Africa. It holds the highest number of venture capital deals in Africa and is home to a growing number of home grown innovations including *MPESA*- world's most successful money transfer and payment system and *Ushahidi*- a crowd sourcing technology platform

Value of exports to Kenya:
£206 m

Value of imports from Kenya:
£148 m

ONS Pink Book 2016

established in the wake of post-election violence in 2008, now replicated in more than 156 countries. The use of mobile phone and internet penetration is on the increase making Kenya a more fertile market for e-commerce start-ups. In 2015, mobile telephone penetration rate was at 85.4 per cent while internet access was at 54 percent of the population. Bloomberg reports that the Kenya's tech scene will be much more than $ 1 billion in the next three years.

Foreign direct investment has also increased and multinational corporations such as Google, IBM, Phillips, General Electric, Intel and Microsoft now have operations in Nairobi. Since the establishment of iHub – an open space for technology innovators, in 2010, the number of incubation centres, accelerators, co-working spaces and venture capital firms has been on the increase, most universities now have incubation centres within their engineering and IT departments and the private sector is beginning to invest in incubation programmes. The leading university, Nairobi University, has opened the C4D Lab (a software incubation centre) and will soon start its own science park, Kenyatta University hosts the Manu Chandaria Incubation Centre and Strathmore University, the largest private university, now hosts three incubation centres. All universities have a senior staff member in charge of research which has further resulted in the development of supporting infrastructure.

UK Science and Innovation in Kenya

UK's Science and innovation footprint in Kenya is considerable and growing. We have an array of partnerships between our academics and researchers, both at individual and institutional level. Kenya is the fifth most successful country in the 7th Framework programme (FP7) both in terms of numbers of participations in projects and in terms of total EU contribution between 2007 -2013 and is now participating in Horizon 2020.

The main bilateral S & I programme is the UK/Kenya Newton Fund, launched in July 2016. Activities will focus on food security, sustainable and renewable energy, health, manufacturing for SMEs, environment and climate change and cross cutting issues to include: capacity building, big data, innovation and entrepreneurship.

SIN Kenya recent stories/ forward look

- The launch of the Newton- Fund partnership opening a range of multi-year opportunities in capacity building and applied research links which will deliver direct benefits to society.

- SIN is supporting the Properity team in organising a renewable energy conference in October where Lord Hollick, the newly appointed, Trade envoy for Kenya and Tanzania will be attending.

- In 2016, Kenya SIN will focus on increasing engagement with Kenyan research funding agencies, local science and innovation policy makers and industry to identify priority areas and increase UK's reputation in innovation in Kenya.

- In 2016/2017, SIN Kenya will develop priority themes for exploration and development. Sectors being considered include: Agriculture, Clean Energy, Health and Life Sciences and ICT. In addition to these priorities the SIN will remain responsive to emerging and disruptive areas of importance for Kenya.

SIN Kenya Contacts

Serah Nderitu
Science and Innovation Officer
Serah.Nderitu@fco.gov.uk