

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOR SOCIETY (STRI4SOCIETY) WEEK 2026

Concept Note



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME CABINET SECRETARY
AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN & DIASPORA AFFAIRS
State Department for Science, Research and Innovation



STRI WEEK
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION 4 SOCIETY

1.0 Background

Kenya is gearing up for a ground-breaking celebration of scientific excellence and top-notch innovations through hosting the inaugural Science, Technology, Research and Innovation (STRI) for Society Week from 18th-22nd May 2026 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya. Coordinated by the State Department for Science, Research, and Innovation (SDSRI), this flagship initiative promises to be a vibrant national showcase of Kenya's ingenuity, where cutting-edge research and innovations meets real-world impact. The STRI for Society Week 2026 will ignite curiosity, spark collaboration, and amplify the voices of researchers, innovators, students, and industry leaders—bringing science out of the lab and into the heart of society. With its bold vision and inclusive spirit, the event aims to inspire a new generation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) champions and accelerate Kenya's journey toward a knowledge-driven, innovation-led economy.

Anchored in the aspirations of Kenya Vision 2030, and aligned with the government's Medium-Term Plan IV (MTP IV) and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the STRI for Society Week 2026 responds to a growing national imperative: to position Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) as a catalyst for sustainable and inclusive development. Despite commendable progress in research and innovation, challenges persist—ranging from limited public awareness and weak academia-industry linkages to low uptake of research outputs and fragmented stakeholder engagement. The STRI for Society Week 2026 seeks to address these gaps by creating a dynamic, inclusive platform that connects knowledge generators with end-users, fosters dialogue, and elevates the role of STI in providing solutions to everyday life challenges.

2.0 Rationale

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are powerful tools for solving real-world challenges and driving national progress. Yet for their full potential to be realized, they must be understood, embraced, and applied across society. The STRI for Society Week 2026 is designed to do just that—by creating a space where researchers, innovators, industry leaders, policymakers, and the public can come together to share ideas, showcase scientifically proven breakthroughs, and build meaningful partnerships. It is an opportunity to highlight Kenya's scientific achievements, spark interest in STEM among young people, and encourage the uptake of research outputs in ways that benefit communities and bring economic transformation. In doing so, the STRI for Society Week 2026 aims to turn scientific potential into shared national progress and enhance the socialization of science.

3.0 Objectives

The objectives of the STRI for Society Week 2026 are to:

- i) Enhance awareness and appreciation of Science, Research and Innovation (SRI) as drivers of national development;
- ii) Showcase and disseminate scientific and technological innovations by Kenyan researchers, innovators and students;
- iii) Facilitate networking and partnerships among researchers, industry, policymakers and the public;
- iv) Promote STEM education and inspire youth engagement in science and innovation;
- v) Strengthen dialogue on emerging scientific issues, policy priorities and national development goals; and
- vi) Enhance uptake and commercialization of research outputs and innovations.

4.0 Theme

The theme for the inaugural STRI for Society Week 2026 is "Igniting Innovation: Bridging Science and Society for Sustainable Development". This theme underscores the transformative power of STI in addressing Kenya's development priorities and global challenges. It calls for dynamic collaboration between researchers, policymakers, industry, and communities to co-create solutions that are inclusive, ethical, and sustainable. By integrating frontier technologies, empowering youth through STEM education, fostering multi-sectoral partnerships, and promoting climate resilience and regional equity, the theme envisions a future where science and innovation serve as the driving force for national progress and global cooperation.

5.0 Thematic Areas

5.1 Science for National Development

This thematic area explores how scientific research and innovation contribute to Kenya's socio-economic transformation across sectors such as health, agriculture, energy, and infrastructure. It emphasizes aligning research outputs with national priorities to inform policy and improve public service delivery.

5.2 Digital Futures and Emerging Technologies

Focusing on frontier technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, and Extended Reality (XR), this thematic area highlights their transformative potential in reshaping production of goods and services and enhancing public service delivery. It also addresses ethical considerations and Kenya's preparedness to adopt digital innovations for inclusive growth.

5.3 Youth, STEM Education and Innovation Culture

This area promotes STEM education and youth engagement through competitions, mentorship, and career guidance. It aims to cultivate a vibrant innovation culture and inspire the next generation of scientists and innovators.

5.4 Industry-Academia-Government Synergy

This thematic area fosters collaboration among academia, industry, and government to drive innovation, technology transfer, and commercialization of research. It provides a platform for dialogue, networking, and co-creation of solutions to national challenges.

5.5 Climate Action, Sustainability and Green Technologies

Addressing environmental sustainability, this area showcases innovations in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, bioeconomy and circular economy solutions. It aligns with Kenya's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and continental strategies for climate resilience.

5.6 Inclusive Innovation and Regional Development

This area emphasizes equitable access to innovation by promoting county-level participation, gender equity, and indigenous knowledge systems. It seeks to ensure that STI benefits all communities and supports balanced regional development.

5.7 Africa and Global STI Partnerships

Highlighting Kenya's role in regional and international science collaboration, this thematic area explores joint research initiatives and global scientific diplomacy. It aims to strengthen partnerships that advance continental and global STI agendas.

6.0 Scope

- There will be multiple strategic activities targeted at the diverse audience and tailored to meet their respective needs and interests. These activities are:
- A Scientific Conference and policy dialogues: Thematic sessions on national STI priorities, policy frameworks, and global scientific trends.
- Exhibitions and innovation fairs: Display of research outputs, prototypes and innovations from academia, research institutes, start-ups and the private sector.
- Youth and schools' competitions: Hackathons and an essay competition to motivate students.
- Recognition of outstanding scientists, young innovators and institutions contributing to the STI ecosystem.
- Industry and Academia Roundtable engagement(s).
- STI career clinics/ mentorship booths where professionals from academia, industry and government guide students and early career scientists on education pathways and career planning.
- Africa science collaboration forum: Engaging international partners to highlight Kenya's collaboration in SRI with other African countries and regional organizations.
- Innovation pitches: a platform where young innovators, researchers, and start-ups pitch their ideas or prototypes to panels of investors, policy makers and potential partners.

7.0 Expected Outcomes and Impact

- i) Increased public understanding of and support for SRI.
- ii) Strengthened multi-sectoral partnerships for knowledge transfer and commercialisation of research.
- iii) Enhanced motivation and participation of youth in STEM fields.
- iv) Identification and scaling up of promising innovations to address national challenges.
- v) Contribution to the national, continental and global STI agendas, including the National STI Priorities, the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa from 2025 to 2034 (STISA-2034) and the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

8.0 Implementation and Stakeholders

The inaugural STRI for Society Week 2026 will be spearheaded by the SDSRI in partnership with the:

- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI);
- National Research Fund (NRF);
- Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA);
- Universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions;
- Research Institutions;
- Private sector, development partners, and international organisations; and County Governments to promote regional inclusivity.



9.0 Organizing Committee



Chaired by NACOSTI and the Secretariat provided by the Directorate of Research, Science and Technology (DRST) in the State Department for Science, Research and Innovation (SDSRI). Members are representing DRST, NACOSTI, NRF, KeNIA, the State Department for Higher Education (SDHE) in the Ministry of Education (MoE), public research institutions (Kenya Medical Research Institute - KEMRI), public universities (University of Embu), the State Department for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (SDTVET) in the MoE, the State Department for Basic Education (SDBE) in the MoE and the Scientists of Kenya Association (SCOKA). An Advisory Committee has been put in place to support the Organizing Committee

10.0 Budget and Resource Mobilization

A detailed budget will be developed covering venue costs, publicity, logistics, and technical support.

Funding is proposed to be sourced through:

- Government allocations
- Sponsorships from the private sector and development partners
- Registration fees for exhibition booths
- In-kind support (media coverage, volunteer services etc.)



11.0 Conclusion

The inaugural STRI for Society Week 2026 represents a strategic opportunity to mainstream SRI into Kenya's development discourse. It is envisaged that it will catalyze a science culture, bridge gaps between knowledge producers and users, and accelerate the journey towards the desired knowledge-based, efficiency-driven and innovation-led economy in Kenya on trajectory towards first world status.

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