

visions for STI policies in national budgets to ensure adequate funding.

Promote innovation at the enterprise level. The creation of an environment conducive to entrepreneurship is necessary to achieve sustained progress in technology and innovation. Governments can unleash the innovation potential of entrepreneurs through providing better infrastructure, building a skilled labour force, and eliminating regulatory obstacles that drive some entrepreneurs into the informal sector. They can also encourage entrepreneurs to innovate through setting up of technology parks and providing incentives (such as the establishment of innovation prizes and entrepreneurship awards) to young potential entrepreneurs. While governments have a major role to play in promoting innovation, it is not the responsibility of governments alone. Firms also have an important role to play but they can do so effectively if they adopt a systemic as opposed to a reactive innovation strategy.

Increase awareness of intellectual property rights (IPRs)

Lack of awareness of existing IPRs can create a disincentive for firms to invest in R&D and militate against innovation. It can also make young potential innovators reluctant to innovate for fear that their novel ideas could be stolen, patented and used by potential competitors. African governments can play a crucial role in addressing this issue by increasing awareness of existing IPRs in their countries through organisation of information dissemination events and exploiting opportunities created by the rapid growth and use of social media. Intellectual property offices in Africa should also be encouraged by governments to play a more active role in facilitating access to information on IPRs and also in disseminating technological information in support of local innovative activities.

Technology - Photo by Paul Frenzel on Unsplash.

