

# Indigenous Knowledge

Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into national economic and innovative frameworks not only holds the potential to mitigate environmental harm, it also fosters resilient and inclusive socio-economic development, as well as safeguard cultural heritage. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are deeply rooted in cultural and social fabrics worldwide, encompassing practices like medicinal plant usage, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource management. They operate on two interconnected levels: i) the empirical; and ii) the cognitive. The empirical addresses nature, technological and architectural, as well as socio-cultural spheres, showcasing indigenous communities innovative and adaptive practical applications, adaptations, and developments. Conversely, the cognitive level conceptualizes theories and perceptions of nature and culture, emphasizing the co-evolution of the spiritual, natural, and human worlds. This dynamic and evolving nature underscores IKS' potential to inform and enrich national innovation systems, facilitate participatory development processes, enhance socio-economic resilience, and boost a country's competitive advantage in the global economy. Consequently, this holistic approach ensures that knowledge is practical and deeply integrated with the community's worldview and values. The results of this integration can be seen in sustainable agricultural practices,

effective medicinal treatments, innovative technologies, and robust social systems, all of which contribute significantly to community resilience and development.

African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) have been integral to the cultural and practical lives of indigenous communities across Africa for millennia. Despite historical significance, formal recognition in scientific and academic circles has emerged only in recent decades, influenced by shifting political, economic, and cultural landscapes. Furthermore, it encompasses all facets of life and the environment, including ecology, biodiversity, agriculture, medicinal practices, crafts, governance, and more. These systems offer unique perspectives and solutions, providing locally adapted strategies for sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, which are essential for mitigating the impacts of climate change, health crises, and biodiversity conservation. Integrating these systems into economic frameworks involves recognizing and supporting indigenous innovation and knowledge within policy and development initiatives. By bridging these gaps, AIKS can empower communities to tackle modern challenges while preserving cultural heritage and fostering self-reliance in the face of global uncertainties.

**Our Indigenous Knowledge thematic area integrates traditional wisdom into modern practices, empowering indigenous communities and preserving cultural heritage, while ensuring accessibility and integrity for future generations.**

Focus Areas:	Overarching objectives	Overarching objectives
<b>Nature &amp; Conservation (ecology, biodiversity, &amp; agricultural practices)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage indigenous communities natural and social capital for them gain autonomy over their own livelihoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and strengthen indigenous knowledge practical applications in managing natural resources</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing (traditional medicinal practices)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen rural livelihood diversification</li> <li>Enhance social inclusion by integrating indigenous communities into national socio-economic developmental trajectories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and strengthen alternative health and wellness solutions developed by indigenous communities</li> </ul>
<b>Technology &amp; Architecture (crafts, food processing, and building techniques)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve cultural heritage and foster self-resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and strengthen innovative and adaptive technologies developed by indigenous communities</li> </ul>

