

Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship
Postdoctoral Fellowships
2026-2028**Scope of Research**

We are looking for THREE Postdoctoral Research Fellows to contribute capacity on three intellectual projects newly initiated by the Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship (AGCAE) at Stellenbosch University.

**South African Innovation
Ecosystem Policy HUB**

The Policy Hub will help us better understand how and when to create bridges and the necessary scaffolding needed for collaboration opportunities between the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation ecosystem. This research project is funded by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and aims to build within the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem the basis of innovation ecosystem, and vice versa. The envisioned research outcomes can help frontload the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem with innovation capabilities and enablement to deliver on AI-based, deep tech and other forms of R&D innovations. This first-of-its-kind research initiative will be the core basis of a three-year pilot plan to institutionalise a dedicated national Policy Hub in the medium term. We are looking for **one** Postdoc to focus on three cross-cutting research initiatives and sister activities we see as a roadmap for seeding the successful setting up of a National Innovation Ecosystem Policy Hub in South Africa: i) Ecosystem Intelligence, ii) Funding and Financing of Innovations, and iii) Ecosystem Building for creating policy bridges and scaffolding work to connect the entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation ecosystem.

Connecten

Connecten, initiated in 2023, seeks to measure and build a regional and national understanding of "ten" conditions that are generally associated with healthy entrepreneurial ecosystems in response to the lack of regional and national data on the same. Lack of data makes it difficult to identify conditions that require support and testing of potential solutions to drive social change. In pursuit of addressing this issue, Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa is diligently conducting high-level research on all ten conditions in South Africa, with a vision to cascade this research to the provincial and local level through government collaboration. We host a series of Provincial Dialogues with the aim to introduce Connecten to the dynamic players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem within provinces. We do this to foster productive partnerships with municipalities and to collectively develop a comprehensive understanding of all ten conditions within and across the nine provinces of South Africa. This collaborative endeavour involves close cooperation with various stakeholders, including all district municipalities and district (regional) economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, and other influential business fora. The ultimate objective is to leverage Connecten's insights to inform and shape entrepreneurship-led local economic development. By working hand-in-hand with stakeholders, Connecten envisions empowering municipalities to facilitate impactful solutions and foster local environments conducive to entrepreneurial success and social change. We are looking for **one** Postdoc to contribute to the translation of our research efforts into envisioned journal papers along the title lines of "Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Regional Economic Development in South Africa" and "Custodians of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in South Africa".

AEEI

We have partnered with Innovation for Policy (I4Policy) and Utrecht University in an ambitious effort to understand entrepreneurial ecosystem conditions at a continental level. The goal is for this research endeavour to continue the **Africa Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Index** (AEEI) we recently launched (see https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5254687) and used as first basis for understanding national conditions of 29 countries, with subsequent dialogues to foster productive entrepreneurship. We are looking for **one** Postdoc to complement our efforts with additional data collection capacity and research assistance on specific conditions (e.g., entrepreneurial culture) to improve future iterations and overall research programme. Our overall aim is to contribute new knowledge and policy innovations to ongoing debates on how to better foster entrepreneurship-led sustainable development in Africa.

Requirements

- A relevant PhD (must have graduated within the last five years).
- Good organisational skills, attention to detail and professionalism.
- Strong planning skills, including the ability to work under pressure, set priorities, and function effectively under strict deadlines and shifting priorities.
- The ability to function effectively and efficiently within a multicultural team environment.
- Willingness and availability to work extra hours during busy weeks.
- A valid driver's licence and the willingness to travel domestically and abroad for meetings and programme activities where necessary.
- Fluency in oral and written English.
- Proficiency in MS Office and Excel.

Recommendations

- Being a South African or living in South Africa will be an advantage because Connecten is a South African initiative at the moment.
- Past exposure or experience in youth development and/or working in different African markets will be an advantage.
- Past exposure or experience in entrepreneurship development will be an advantage.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for coordinating across teams and stakeholder groups.
- A drive to learn and master new technologies and research methods.
- Proficiency in data staging, analysis and/or visualisations will be advantageous.
- Passionate about the transformative power of entrepreneurship.

Commencement date: 1 January 2026 or "As soon as possible".

Appointment period: Three Years.

Closing date: 17 October 2025

Enquiries: tyracole@sun.ac.za

Contact details of the host (Dr Phumlani Nkontwana): pnkontwana@sun.ac.za

- Applicants should request their referees to forward confidential reports by the closing date directly to the same address.
- Note: Postdoctoral fellows are not appointed as employees and as their fellowships are awarded tax-free, they are not eligible for employee benefits. The University reserves the right NOT to make an appointment if suitable candidates do not apply.
- Note: Extension of the contract beyond two years will be subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory annual academic progress.

APPLY ONLINE AT <https://agcae.africa/careers> BY USING THE APPLY NOW LINK AT THE TOP RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF THE POSTDOC FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY. Your application should be supported by the following documentation:

- Send a cover letter of motivation.
- Accompanied by a comprehensive curriculum vitae and certified copy of PhD Certificate.
- Include a list of publications or one academic writing sample (paper, book chapter or dissertation chapter).
- The names and contact details of at least two referees.

About AGCAE

The Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship (AGCAE) is a new flagship research project within the School of Public Leadership in Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). Our mission, vision, strategic priorities and values are inspired by Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies' (AGGP) mission to lead social change by contributing to job creation and poverty alleviation through the development of responsible entrepreneurs across the African continent in service of the common good.

We are also aligned with Stellenbosch University's mission to be a research-intensive university that attracts outstanding students, employs talented staff and provides a world-class environment. We also seek to be a place connected to the world that enriches and transforms local, continental and global communities.

We plan to achieve our strategic priorities through a triad of specialist services: research, ecosystem building and developing a data hub of hubs.



Our Mission

The AGCAE creates, integrates and diffuses knowledge to improve data- and dialogue-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem development in Africa in order to increase the well-being of communities with entrepreneurship.



Our Vision

The AGCAE aims to enable entrepreneurship-led development in Africa with a data- and dialogue-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem approach.



Our Strategic Priorities

- 1. Create and integrate** entrepreneurial ecosystem data of African countries and regions.
- 2. Analyse and interpret** entrepreneurial ecosystem data of African countries and regions.
- 3. Develop and communicate** scientifically rigorous and societally relevant entrepreneurial ecosystem research.
- 4. Create** a platform for stakeholders that provides and uses entrepreneurial ecosystem data and knowledge in Africa. Relevant stakeholders include academics, governments, entrepreneurship service providers, entrepreneurship associations, philanthropies, NGOs, and venture capitalists.
- 5. Contribute** to the development of entrepreneurship and economic development scholarship in Africa.