

START International
Strategic Plan
2019-2024
AT A GLANCE



Since 1992, START has contributed to strengthening scientific capacities in Africa and Asia for addressing critical challenges arising at the intersection of global change and sustainable development. Our work focuses on issues including climate change and extremes in the context of disaster risk reduction, land-use and land-cover change, natural resources and ecosystems, food and water security, human health, and urbanization.

With this strategic plan START reaffirms its commitment to advancing science capacity development that transcends disciplinary boundaries and promotes collaboration across science-societal interfaces. We are committed to maintaining a strong regional presence and continuing to grow the social capital that START has gained through our long-term partnerships and program alumni across Africa and Asia.

Over the next five years, START will prioritize the three focus areas described in the next page. Going forward, these priorities will ensure that we remain innovative in how we promote integrated knowledge and learning, and enterprising in how we engage early-career professionals in global change science.

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START.ORG/STRATEGIC-PLAN-2019-2024**



FOCUS AREAS

1

DEVELOPING CAPACITIES TO ADDRESS CRITICAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Over the next five years, our programs will emphasize the following four elements:

- Developing skills for **transdisciplinary research**, where researchers and societal partners collaborate in identifying priorities for research. We will anchor training in relevant cultural contexts and include opportunities for experiential learning.
- Pursuing opportunities to work with universities to develop **new curricula and learning innovations**, encouraging ‘pracademics’ alongside traditional academics.
- Creating opportunities for early-career researchers to develop **science communication skills**, including by offering writeshops, and integrating science communications into learning forums, advanced institutes, and other key modalities.
- **Bolstering links between global change data and decision making**, including by continuing to promote participation of scientists and data users in international events under the Global Observations of Forest Cover and Land Dynamics (GOFC-GOLD) program, and prioritizing capacity development in support of the Digital Belt and Road (DBAR) initiative.

2

STRENGTHENING SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

START is committed to ensuring that the next generation of scientists in Africa and Asia have the leadership skills to engage decision making and action on global change. We will advance science leadership through approaches including:

- convening cohorts of early-career professionals from academia, practice, and policy together with mentorship teams of experienced professionals, through a process of experiential and problem-based learning; and
- developing a holistic women-in-science leadership program that will bring women together for connection, professional development and wellbeing related to their scientific careers.

3

ADVANCING REGIONAL PRIORITIES IN GLOBAL CHANGE SCIENCE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Over the next five years, START will seek partnerships that amplify perspectives from the global south towards bringing a more regionally driven agenda forward; one that positively and proactively engages the donor community in more effectively supporting science capacity development.

As part of this effort, we will engage science leaders from Africa and Asia in learning forums that identify and articulate regional priorities for science capacity development, and we will seek opportunities to promote these priorities and perspectives within major global initiatives.

START acknowledges and sincerely thanks the United States Global Change Research Program for their long-term commitment to START’s mission. We are grateful for the valuable input from START’s partners in Africa and Asia who helped to shape the priorities reflected in the five-year strategy.