

African Energy Futures
3rd December 2025

Eligibility criteria for entities
responding to the AEF call for
proposals to host an energy
research hub

African Energy Futures Summary

Africa's energy future must be planned by Africans, for Africans.

African Energy Futures (AEF) will support the creation of a community of research hubs that empower African experts to shape energy policy and investment decisions in their countries and across the continent. These hubs will deepen in-country understanding of energy transition pathways and impact energy planning with a focus on development outcomes.



Why do we want to do this?

Effective energy planning is a multi-year, iterative and inclusive process. It requires policymakers and researchers working together to understand nuance and explore scenarios. Energy planning is as much a capacity building process as it is a modelling and research process. Yet, today African policymakers and investors make decisions relying on donor-funded single studies delivered by international consultants with a paucity of data. 60% of research on African energy systems involves no African authors. No wonder Africa suffers amongst the lowest energy investment rates when compared to the rest of the world.

We believe this demands a fundamental shift in Africa's energy research infrastructure. Researchers and think-tanks need long-term funding that allows institutions to invest in people and modelling infrastructure. Policymakers need long-term relationships with local researchers who understand the country's political, social, economic, and environmental constraints and opportunities - teams they can trust.



African Energy Futures' approach

AEF will channel international philanthropy and donor support into three-to-five-year funding support for "hubs" of research institutions, think-tanks and policymakers focussed on energy decision making in a particular country (or region, or topic). This will allow the hubs to invest in academic staff and modelling infrastructure and build the overall human capability base.

The AEF team will provide these hubs with technical support to develop good future proposals, develop inclusive processes, connect them to partner-driven training, further resources, and help them tell compelling stories that will attract policymaker and industry interest. Alongside technical support, AEF will provide coordination support to this growing community, strengthening the African voice through connecting them to each other, international partners, and other support.

Over time we will establish 20 such hubs who will anchor an African network focussed on African solutions, and who will train over 400 African energy analysts. Better capacity will result in better planning and therefore better policy and investment environments.

Call for Proposal Eligibility

We anticipate proposals from individual institutions or consortia of institutions. Proposals should be led by one organisation who will be responsible for management of the hub, will act as the contracting party, and who will be accountable for deliverables. Consortia, however, especially where they combine needed skills across institutions, are welcomed.

Bidding institutions must be prepared to help lead the building of an African wide community of practice and must have the intention of using the grant support provided by AEF to build a long-term sustainable institution engaged in collaborative research and training that will continue post-AEF funding. This is not project specific funding but support intended to strengthen or establish institutions focused on energy modelling and planning in Africa.

The purpose of AEF is to stimulate capacity in energy planning and modelling. Bids must therefore be focussed on some aspect of quantitative energy modelling and be staffed by people sufficiently experienced in research and teaching. It is expected that hubs will coordinate a range of research and model types over time.

Any questions about eligibility may be addressed to info@africanenergyfutures.org.

Who can apply?

Research institutions that are based in Africa are eligible to apply for AEF Energy Research Hub Grants. This includes public or private tertiary research institutions, including technical and academic universities and technical and vocational colleges, public research entities like councils for scientific and industrial research, and non-profit think-tanks.

This also includes international universities who have established campuses in Africa and who are largely staffed by African citizens.

With the support of their host institutions, units, centres, and research institutes within tertiary education institutions or larger local or international think-tanks are encouraged to apply. Already established and newly established entities, even if established in response to this call for proposals, may apply.

Not-for-profit arms of private sector entities with a clear separation of duties and a track-record may apply.

Civil society organisations who are focussed on and have a track record in research may apply.

International institutions may act as partners in a consortium.

Minimum criteria

Institutions that apply for this grant must at the minimum:

- Be able to receive payments in a foreign currency and bear and manage the currency risk associated with milestone payments.
- Be able to keep unspent monies received in a separate account or be separately accounted for.
- Be willing to undergo a due diligence prior to the awarding of a grant.
- Be subject to an annual external financial audit by a reputable audit provider.
- Be prepared to report regularly and transparently on delivery and expenditure.

Who cannot apply?

Individual persons may not apply. Only institutions are eligible, and proposals must be submitted on behalf of the institution.

Private for-profit companies or organisations, including consulting firms, may not apply.

Government departments, regulators, or state-owned entities (including utilities) or non-research-oriented government entities may not apply. However, government support of hubs and participation in research is critical to hub success. Government entities are therefore encouraged to lend their support to hub proposals and may form part of consortia.

Civil society and community groups whose focus is not primary research may not apply.

Organisations of any type not based in Africa are ineligible to apply.

Participation in multiple Proposals

Individual people or institutions are allowed to participate in more than one consortium, and a single institution may submit multiple proposals (sufficiently differentiated, perhaps with different focus areas and/or partners).

Bidding entities must make a convincing argument that they will be able to fulfil the functions of a hub. That is, to conduct research (that will ultimately be peer reviewed), train students (either or both of students and state or private sector individuals), and coordinate a community of practice, that includes policy makers, whose collective efforts will build greater modelling capacity within a country and provide policy relevant research and outputs.

African Energy Futures reserves the right to change the eligibility criteria for future rounds based on funding available, concepts received, and market need.

How to get involved in AEF

There are several ways to engage with the AEF community



Research Institutions

Register your intent to host a hub on our website.

Prospective hosts must be interested in leading multi-disciplinary projects with inclusive research practices. AEF will support hub hosts to lead long-term modelling capability in their countries.

Hubs will be expected to help develop an African wide community of researchers engaged in energy planning and development.



Partner Programmes

Start a discussion to help AEF scale its support.

If you think there is an opportunity to partner with us, we would love to hear from you.

If you are a university or research institution with experience in energy or economic modelling and would like to act as a mentor or collaborator with an African hub, please let us know.



Policymakers

Support a local hub in your country.

If you are involved with or leading energy planning processes in your country and would like robust, contextually aware modelling support, please contact us.



Donors

Collaborate with AEF on energy modelling and capacity building.

If you are a donor or philanthropist and would like to support the AEF, support could be through:

- Supporting policy specific research projects in hubs.
- Supporting one or more small or large hubs.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, would like to enquire about establishing a hub, or would like more information, please reach out to info@africanenergyfutures.org. You can also follow us on social media or get more information on our website: www.africanenergyfutures.org.

Blue Sky: [@AEFcomms.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/aefcomms.bsky.social)

X: [@AEFComms](https://twitter.com/AEFComms)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/african-energy-futures>