



# ARIN AEEPA Mini-grants Scheme

## Call for Application – Deadline Extended

### A. About the project

The Alliance for Evidence and Equity in Policy-making in Africa (AEEPA) is part of the Learning Together to Advance Evidence and Equity in Policy-making for Achieving SDGs (LEEPS) partnership coordinated by R4D and funded by IDRC, Hewlett Foundation and Bosch Foundation. AEEPA is led by the African Institute for Development Policy ([AFIDEP](#)) in collaboration with the [Africa Research and Impact Network](#) (ARIN), the [African Institute for Health Policies and Health Systems \(AIHPHS\)](#) in Nigeria and the [Makerere University School of Gender and Women Studies](#) (MakSWGS) in Uganda.

AEEPA supports African countries in regaining their momentum toward achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind by championing and enabling the consistent and systemic use of the best available data, research, and equity analyses in policy and programme decisions.

Evidence Informed Policy-making (EIP) is critical in Africa's pursuit of sustainable development. Evidence and data help to inform appropriate actions in the present and future and facilitate collaboration among relevant stakeholders towards the achievement of sustainable development.

Africa has made several efforts towards enhancing evidence-informed policymaking through commissioning various studies to respond to needs e.g., COVID-19 or establishing evidence committees and platforms to enhance consolidation of evidence to inform decisions. However, these efforts remain relatively reactive and are not properly institutionalized due to two main impediments: First, there is limited availability of reliable evidence on what works in different sectors and for different populations, and second, there is insufficient capacity to help convert high-quality information into practical interventions, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This project responds to the second challenge by training ARIN Fellows across Africa on EIP institutionalization, as well as initiating a small grant scheme to build their capacity to systematically document and identify gaps, challenges, recommended actions and opportunities for advancing the EIP agenda within their institutions and/or the wider evidence ecosystem.

EIP sensitizations have been conducted to create awareness among ARIN Fellows on the LEEPS AEEPA project, its objectives, and the value of institutionalizing EIP and equity analyses in EIP. This was followed by a two-week training of the ARIN Fellows on evidence synthesis and translation and equity analyses as one of the critical steps in the EIP process.

Those who successfully underwent the EIP and equity training were invited to apply for the mentorship phase which is ongoing.

## B. Terms of Application

- ❖ Approximately 10-15 mini-grants of about USD 2000-3000 each will be issued on a competitive basis.
- ❖ A maximum of 5 mini-grants per African region, namely, East, South, West, and Central Africa, will be issued.
- ❖ Two thirds of the mini-grants will be awarded to EIP/equity trainees. With the training experience, these trainees will be well better placed to implement the mini-grants in line with the goals of the LEEPS project and to enhance impact.
- ❖ Mini-grants will generate evidence from different African countries beyond the ones earmarked for this study.
- ❖ The proposals will focus on case studies documenting existing<sup>1</sup> EIP leadership, financing, structures, mechanisms, tools and technical capacity within the applicant's institution or network they are part of or a policy institution they work with. The case studies will identify gaps, challenges, recommended actions and opportunities for strengthening the existing EIP structures, mechanisms and technical capacity. The case studies will explore gender equity and inclusion in all the aspects investigated.

## C. Thematic Focus of the Mini-grants

Recognizing the critical need for evidence-informed policymaking across Africa, and the importance of sharing knowledge across contexts and languages, we welcome country case studies in English and/or French. These studies should explore the existing EIP leadership, financing, structures, mechanisms, tools and technical capacity within the applicant's institution or network they are part of, or a policy institution they work with, to identify gaps, challenges, recommended actions and opportunities for strengthening the existing EIP structures, mechanisms and technical capacity. The case studies will explore gender equity and inclusion in all the aspects investigated.

Awardees will be expected to conduct self-initiated case studies focused on their home countries. Case studies in reproductive health and clean energy sectors will be prioritized. These case studies must promise to contribute significantly to the understanding of evidence-informed policymaking institutional capacity in Africa. The findings should not only benefit the fellow's home country but also hold broader applicability for other African nations.

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<sup>1</sup> EIP leadership is champions for EIP at leadership positions; EIP financing is funding allocated to EIP function; EIP structures include departments with the mandate of knowledge synthesis/ analysis and translation; EIP mechanisms include knowledge exchange platforms that bring together a wide range of stakeholders; EIP tools include databases, repositories, information systems, dashboards and periodic analytical/reports/ briefs or access to these; EIP technical capacity is skills for evidence synthesis and other needed analysis and knowledge translation activities.



## D. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for an ARIN AEEPA Mini-grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- a) **Current ARIN Fellow:** We welcome applications from all interested researchers, however, those actively participating in the ARIN Fellowship program will be prioritized.
- b) **Research and/or Policy Experience:** Applicants should demonstrate experience in conducting research or working in a policy-related field. Applications focusing on reproductive health and clean energy sectors will be prioritized.
- c) **Institutional Affiliation:** Applicants must be affiliated with a recognized research institution (e.g., universities, think tanks) or a relevant policy organization (e.g., government departments).
- d) **No Prior ARIN Funding:** Applicants cannot have received full or partial funding from ARIN for the same proposed project.

**Selection Preference:** While all applications will be considered, preference will be given to applicants from the Global South.

## E. Expected Outputs

The ARIN AEEPA Mini-grant program fosters knowledge exchange and capacity building through a variety of outputs:

### Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration:

- **Learning and exchange webinars:** Awardees will participate in webinars to share research findings and engage with a wider audience.
- **Research seminars:** Awardees will present their research at the annual ARIN conference in November 2024 to foster discussion and collaboration.
- **Monthly convenings:** Throughout the grant period, ARIN will host monthly meetings specifically focused on the EIP and the progress of awardees' case studies. These meetings will culminate in the Fellows' Assembly in November 2024.

### Capacity Building:

- **Mentorship and training:** Fellows will receive ongoing mentorship and training in scientific writing, research translation and communication skills, equipping them to effectively communicate their findings in various formats.

### Knowledge Products:

- **Book volume:** A book volume will be published, featuring in-country case studies authored by the awardees.



## **F. Application Requirements**

Applicants will be selected through a competitive process based on the following criteria:

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section D.
- **Application Materials:** A complete application package includes:
  - a) A statement of motivation speaking on the applicant's qualifications and suitability
  - b) Curriculum Vitae (CV)
  - c) Verified academic documents
  - d) At least 1 academic reference letter
  - e) Research Concept Note: This document should outline the proposed research topic, methodology, and expected outcomes.
  - f) Detailed Project Budget: Specify costs associated with all project activities. Please note that budgets exceeding the indicated maximum allocation will only be accommodated under exceptional circumstances.
  - g) Electronic copy of a representative publication where the applicant is the lead or senior author.

## **G. Evaluation Process**

The selection committee, composed of the ARIN regional focal points, the ARIN Executive Director, relevant ARIN program managers (i.e. Research, Policy & Engagement, and Fellowship) and the AFIDEP AEEPA LEEPs Technical Lead and Project Manager, will evaluate applications through a two-stage process involving an initial screening and an in-depth merit review.

A shortlist of qualified applicants will be selected for further evaluation based on:

- Applicant Motivation
- Concept Relevance
- Research-Policy Experience
- Alignment to the overall goal and conceptualisation of the project
- Potential for impact
- Methodological robustness, among others including gender equity, equality, and inclusion.

Finalists will be notified of the award and invited to attend an orientation session to discuss research project objectives and expectations. Upon successful completion of the orientation, finalists will be presented with a fellowship agreement to sign.

## **H. Gender Equity, Equality and Inclusion**

ARIN recognizes that gender equity, equality, and inclusion are fundamental human rights and essential foundations for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Therefore, we strongly



encourage applicants to submit gender-responsive or transformative project proposals that prioritize these principles.

For more details on how gender considerations will be integrated into the evaluation process and potential research topics, please refer to ARIN's online gender guidelines.

### **I. Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure successful project implementation, ARIN will employ a monitoring and evaluation process throughout the mini-grant cycle. Awardees will be required to submit regular progress reports to the ARIN Fellowship Manager. These reports will detail implementation progress, achieved results, and any challenges encountered. The reports will track performance against pre-determined indicators established collaboratively between the Fellowship Manager and each recipient.

Upon project completion, recipients must submit a final report. This comprehensive document will assess the project's success, catalog deliverables, and provide a financial summary. The report will also capture key learnings and experiences throughout the grant period. It serves the dual purpose of meeting ARIN's reporting requirements and informing decisions regarding future grant awards.

The ARIN Secretariat will review these reports to evaluate project success, potential for further funding, and overall program impact.

### **J. How to Apply**

For fullest consideration, applications must be submitted via e-mail to [E.akinyi@arin-africa.org](mailto:E.akinyi@arin-africa.org) copying [ednakowenje62@gmail.com](mailto:ednakowenje62@gmail.com), and [l.ochieng@arin-africa.org](mailto:l.ochieng@arin-africa.org) no later than **21 July 2023**.

Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered.