



## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

# **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: LEEPS PHASE II INSTITUTIONALISATION MINI-GRANTS**

**ISSUED BY: AFRICA RESEARCH AND IMPACT NETWORK (ARIN)  
APPLICATION DEADLINE: 30 JUNE 2026**



# 1. BACKGROUND

The Learning Together to Advance Evidence and Equity in Policymaking for Achieving the SDGs (LEEPS) is a multi-partner initiative supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). LEEPS aims to strengthen evidence-informed and equitable policymaking (EIP) across Africa, with a focus on renewable energy, reproductive health, climate change and health, and the integration of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) into policy processes. The partnership brings together leading evidence organizations from across Africa to learn from each other, exchange knowledge and experiences, and jointly problem solve – to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking and accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

The partnership comprises three regional hubs: the Centre of Excellence Evidence Policy Action established by the African Center for Equitable Development (ACED), the East African Regional Evidence Synthesis Initiative established by the Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES), and Alliance for Evidence and Equity in Policy-making in Africa (AEEPA) established by the African Institute for Policy Development (AFIDEP). Each initiative is developing and testing different approaches for promoting equitable use of evidence in policymaking with a focus on strengthening capacity and building vibrant country-level evidence networks. The three initiatives are designed to support knowledge translation efforts, documenting how these efforts are influencing policy or program change, and building an evidence base for the most effective approaches. AEEPA brings together AFIDEP, the Africa Research Impact Network (ARIN), the Makerere University Institute of Gender and Development Studies (MakIGDS), and the Evidence Use in Environmental Policymaking in Nigeria (EUEPiN).

ARIN is a pan-African network of over 450 researchers and policymakers across 41 countries. As a core partner in the AEEPA Hub, ARIN's role is to extend EIP capacity-building and institutionalisation efforts to the wider continent. During the first phase of LEEPS, ARIN successfully trained and mentored **52 fellows** (28 women, 24 men) in knowledge translation and EIP. Among these, **ten fellows were awarded small grants** to conduct case studies on EIP institutionalisation in their respective countries. These case studies explored topics ranging from solar energy deployment in health facilities to parliamentary evidence use, and from solid waste management policy to gender-inclusive energy transitions. The findings were consolidated into a book volume titled *Strengthening Evidence-Informed Policymaking in Africa: Insights from Case Studies and Cross-Cutting Lessons*, whose publication is in progress.

These case studies revealed that while individual champions are essential, sustainable and gender responsive EIP requires formal institutional structures such as evidence synthesis units, embedded knowledge translators, and mandated evidence-use frameworks. Without these, even highly motivated champions risk isolation and burnout. Additionally, mentorship schedules must be flexible, GESI integration must be deliberate from recruitment to dissemination, and policy engagement must be sustained over time rather than one-off events.

Building on these lessons, Phase II (2026-2027) shifts focus from documenting gaps to **actively institutionalising EIP**. The new mini-grant scheme will support Phase I fellows to implement concrete, context-specific activities that embed evidence use into the structures, processes, and culture of their home institutions. This is a targeted investment in sustainability, ensuring that the capacities built during Phase I translate into lasting organisational change.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE MINI-GRANTS

The objective is to support **five Phase I mini-grant recipients** to design and implement concrete, context-specific institutionalisation activities that strengthen the routine use of evidence in policymaking, programme design, or research within their organisation.

### **Examples of eligible activities include:**

- Establishing or strengthening an evidence synthesis unit or knowledge management function, e.g., getting a new unit endorsed or working with an existing unit to develop a strategic and/or action plan, etc.
- Developing and adopting a gender responsive EIP framework, tool, or standard operating procedure.
- Integrating EIP and gender-equitable policymaking modules into existing training curricula.
- Creating mentorship or peer-learning programmes for colleagues on evidence use.
- Piloting a mechanism to link researchers with decision-makers within the institution.
- Formulating and advocating for, and securing leadership endorsement for, an evidence-use policy and policy implementation plan.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

This call is open exclusively to the ten ARIN fellows who received a mini-grant during LEEPS Phase I (2023-2025). Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed Phase II activity builds directly on their Phase I case study findings and contributes to lasting institutional change.

**Note:**

- *If you are a Phase I mini-grant recipient but are unable to apply, please notify ARIN so that another fellow from the broader training cohort may be considered.*
- *Female applicants are encouraged to apply*

### 4. GRANT AMOUNT AND DURATION

- Maximum per grant: USD 4,500
- Implementation period: 6 months per grant

Funds may be used for personnel time, materials, training sessions, stakeholder meetings, documentation, and other direct costs directly related to the institutionalisation activity. Overheads or indirect costs are not covered. We encourage applicants to demonstrate how they will leverage their institution's existing resources, given the small size of the grant, e.g., by building on already existing EIP structures and mechanisms in your institution, holding meetings or workshops in meeting rooms at your institution or via virtual meetings/webinars, etc.

### 5. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested fellows should submit a short proposal (maximum 3 pages) that includes:

- a) Applicant information (name, institution, contact details)
- b) Institutional context (brief description of the institution and the EIP gap or opportunity identified in Phase I)
- c) Proposed activity (concrete steps to institutionalise EIP, including timeline and key stakeholders)
- d) Expected outcomes and indicators (what will change in structures, processes, or capacities)
- e) Budget breakdown (in USD, with justification)
- f) Sustainability plan (how the change will endure beyond the grant period)

Applications should be submitted as a single PDF to [E.akinyi@arin-africa.org](mailto:E.akinyi@arin-africa.org), copying [j.mandela@arin-africa.org](mailto:j.mandela@arin-africa.org). Subject line: "LEEPS Phase II Mini-Grant Application"

Applications should be received by **30 June, 2026**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

## 6. SELECTION CRITERIA

| Criterion                                    | Weight |
|----------------------------------------------|--------|
| Relevance to institutionalising EIP          | 30%    |
| Feasibility and clarity of the activity plan | 20%    |
| Alignment with Phase I case study findings   | 20%    |
| Potential for lasting institutional change   | 15%    |
| Inclusion of gender equity considerations    | 15%    |

A selection committee comprising the AEEPA representatives will review applications. Successful applicants will be notified within reasonable timelines.

## 7. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Grantees will be required to:

- Participate in monthly check-in calls with ARIN.
- Submit a brief progress report midway through the grant period.
- Submit a final report (including evidence of institutional changes, such as policies, tools, or training materials) and a financial statement upon completion.
- Attend engagement sessions such as the ARIN Friday reviews
- Attend relevant conferences, workshops and/or webinars whenever called upon.

## 8. CONTACT

For any inquiry, please contact: [j.mandela@arin-africa.org](mailto:j.mandela@arin-africa.org), copying [e.akinyi@arin-africa.org](mailto:e.akinyi@arin-africa.org).

