



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research Fellow: Implementation Systems and Operationalisation

African Institute for Sustainable Energy and Systems Analysis (AISESA)

About AISESA

The African Institute for Sustainable Energy and Systems Analysis (AISESA) is a pan-African institute that brings together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to generate knowledge, strengthen capacity, and support decision-making on Africa's energy, climate, and development priorities. Grounded in the belief that Africa's energy transformations must be African-led and aligned with the continent's development goals, AISESA works to strengthen connections between research and policy.

AISESA operates through five interconnected clusters covering clean energy pathways, implementation, policy and governance, finance and technology, and institutional capacity. Together, these clusters advance integrated research and engagement on themes such as powering livelihoods, inclusive industrialization, and urban transformation.

About Cluster 2: Effective Implementation Approaches

The Cluster focuses on one of the most persistent challenges: the gap between successful pilots, technical solutions, policies, and plans, and their transition into a system-wide impact. The cluster seeks to build a systematic understanding of how implementation occurs, why implementation pathways vary across contexts, and what institutional, political, financial, organizational, and behavioral factors enable solutions to move from pilot initiatives to sustained outcomes. The cluster aims to develop practical and analytical approaches that help governments, practitioners, funders, and researchers better understand, diagnose, and design implementation pathways capable of delivering long-term impact.

About the Fellowship

AISESA is seeking a Research Fellow to contribute to the research, analytical, and engagement activities of Cluster 2. The Fellow will help advance AISESA's understanding of how energy solutions move from plans and pilots to sustained implementation and scale. This includes developing and applying approaches to analyse implementation pathways, generating evidence on enabling and constraining factors, and translating insights into practical tools for decision-makers.

The Fellow will work closely with AISESA's existing Effective Implementation Research Fellow, contributing complementary expertise and perspectives as part of a collaborative research effort. The two positions are designed to bring together different but complementary capabilities, combining technical, analytical, and contextual perspectives to advance AISESA's work. The successful candidate will also closely work with other AISESA clusters to strengthen connections between research, policy and implementation.

Key Responsibilities

Research and Analysis

- Contribute to the development of structured frameworks for understanding how energy solutions move from pilot or planning stages into sustained implementation and scale.
- Identify key stages, critical transition points, enabling conditions, and implementation bottlenecks across different cases and contexts.
- Conduct research and analysis on selected technologies, programmes, policies, planning processes, or implementation initiatives.
- Examine how institutional, political, organisational, financial, and contextual factors shape implementation outcomes.
- Generate evidence on implementation pathways through case studies, comparative analysis, and applied research.
- Lead or support implementation tracing and comparative case analysis of selected interventions across countries and sectors, including the development of case narratives and implementation profiles.

Applied Engagement and Knowledge Translation

- Facilitate implementation-learning workshops.
- Support country engagement activities and policy dialogues.
- Conduct stakeholder mapping and implementation ecosystem analysis.
- Develop interview protocols, consultation frameworks, and engagement instruments.
- Document lessons emerging from country implementation processes.
- Support stakeholder consultations, learning processes, and collaborative engagements.

Cross-Cluster Collaboration

- Collaborate with other AISESA clusters to strengthen integration between implementation, systems analysis, governance, finance, technology, and capacity development.
- Contribute implementation perspectives to thematic work on powering livelihoods, inclusive industrialisation, urban transformation, and other cross-cutting initiatives.
- Contribute to AISESA's broader ambition to strengthen connections between research, policy, finance, implementation, and institutional learning.

Publications and Outputs

- Produce high-quality and policy-relevant outputs, including peer-reviewed journal articles, working papers, policy briefs, and other knowledge products that inform research, policy, and practice.
- Present findings through conferences, policy forums, practitioner networks, and stakeholder engagements. Support the preparation of cross-cluster synthesis outputs.

Profile and Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have:

- A PhD completed in public policy, development studies, economics, energy systems, public administration, organisational studies or a related field.
- Strong understanding of how policies, programmes, and interventions are operationalised within real institutional and political contexts.
- Demonstrated experience analysing why interventions succeed, stall, adapt, or fail in practice.
- Experience conducting applied and policy-relevant research and working with government agencies, implementing institutions, research organisations, or similar entities.

- Strong analytical, writing, and communication skills. Interest in bridging research and practice to improve implementation outcomes.
- Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of French is highly desirable.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent analytical and critical thinking skills.
- Strong academic and policy writing abilities.
- Ability to synthesise complex implementation challenges into practical and actionable recommendations.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and facilitation skills.
- Commitment to advancing African-led knowledge and practice.

Terms of Appointment

- Full-time consultancy contract
- Fellowship duration of two years
- Remote working arrangement
- Opportunities for travel may arise through country engagement activities, collaborative research, conferences, workshops, and policy dialogues

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following documents as a single PDF:

- A cover letter (maximum two pages) outlining their interest in the fellowship and how their experience aligns with AISESA's work.
- A detailed CV (maximum four pages).
- A list of relevant publications, analytical outputs, or implementation-related work.

Applications should be sent to: recruitment_aisesa@akademiya2063.org

Subject line: Effective Implementation Fellow – Cluster 2

Application deadline: July 3, 2026.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.