

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS KNOWLEDGE BASE CONSULTANT (RESEARCH COORDINATION AREA)

To develop a knowledge base for each of the network's research coordination areas

Background

The AfricaLics network was founded in 2012 due to a growing recognition of the need for more support for academic 'research on innovation' that has relevance to the contextual environments of African countries. There was an acknowledgement that the heavy focus on 'research in innovation' (i.e., research and development of specific inventions to solve practical problems) would be undermined if the enabling environment for developing and commercialising such inventions was not conducive. The concept of 'research on innovation' focuses on innovation processes, what fosters innovation and on what may help new solutions get accepted and adopted. It is particularly interested in understanding the impact of innovation on the social and economic development of African countries. It considers these issues at the firm, network, and collaboration levels, as well as at the national, continental, and global levels. As such, the work of scholars in the AfricaLics network is multidisciplinary, at the intersection of the established academic fields of innovation studies and development studies (innovation and development (I&D) studies). However, the network also includes members from other disciplines, such as engineering, economics, and political science. The network's vision is to facilitate the production and use of high-quality research at this intersection of innovation and development, thereby promoting inclusive and sustainable development in African countries.

The network aims to support and expand teaching and learning, as well as research, on the continent in the field of innovation and development studies. One way it does this is through the provision of a Knowledge Base; an online resource that acts as a 'one-stop-shop' for initial materials to help guide those developing teaching programmes or who are starting out in their research in this area with details of the core, foundational readings and details of where to find more material.

These terms of reference outline the requirements for up to four consultants to assist in updating the AfricaLics online knowledge base focusing specifically on creating a list of resources related to each of the network's Research Coordination Areas (RCAs). The RCA areas are:

1. STI measurement in Africa;
2. Global Value Chains (GVCs), Innovation, and Industrialization;
3. Innovating Resilience: Advancing Inclusive Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa and Innovation;
4. Sustainable Energy Transition in Africa (i-SET Africa).

Details of these RCAs are available here: <https://africalics.org/thematic-areas-rcas/>

Consultants to develop online materials in the network's current research coordination areas

The work to be undertaken in 2026 will comprise of but may not be limited to the following tasks. Each consultant will be responsible for a single RCA area. Consultants will need to develop these resources in conversation with AfricaLics' RCA leads or designated focal persons to validate content relevance.

1. Compile annotated resource lists and summaries to guide users in identifying relevant materials for teaching and research in each RCA. This includes but may not be limited to:
 - a) Organising and categorising resources that fit the designated thematic areas/ research coordination areas (RCAs) aligned with AfricaLics priorities, taking the State of the Art reports by each RCA as point of departure.
 - b) Identifying and uploading relevant African case studies, policy reports, and empirical research to strengthen contextual relevance.
2. Verifying and updating links to ensure accessibility of all resources (prioritising open-access materials where possible).
3. Develop recommendations for improving the structure, navigation, and usability of the AfricaLics Knowledge Base.
4. Prepare a brief report summarising updates made, identified gaps, and recommendations for future maintenance and periodic updates of the Knowledge Base.

A total of four consultants (one for each RCA) will be recruited. The consultants will work closely with the RCA coordinators to ensure the development of high-quality products.

Minimum deliverables

These will be fine-tuned during the discussion on the scope of work but are provisionally expected to include:

1. A brief inception report (in August 2026).
2. A brief final report (4-6 pages) on activities undertaken and methods used (in October 2026).
3. At least one annotated bibliography of core material for the designated research coordination area.
4. At least one list of additional resources that students and researchers would find useful (e.g. databases, reference reports, events to attend etc.).

Duration of the assignment and quality assurance

This assignment for each consultant is a part-time assignment for a maximum of 15 days estimated to start on 15 June 2026 and running to 31 December 2026.

The successful candidate(s) is/are expected to be self-driven, working to ensure timely, high-quality deliverables that will be reviewed from time to time by the AfricaLics RCS project team, the AfricaLics Secretariat and the responsible ASB Working Group.

Qualifications of the applicants

- a. Be a holder of a PhD Degree in Innovation Studies or another relevant field,
- b. One to three years of research experience in an innovation-relevant field is preferable. However, PhD students with knowledge in innovation studies may be considered.

In addition, candidates should also outline their competencies in the following areas:

- Ability to write teaching materials and/or ability to work on context-specific needs/topics.
- Flexible when it comes to change and open to receiving and integrating feedback.

Terms of engagement

- The applicant will receive a moderate fee for the task.
- Duration of engagement – 15 days between June 2026 – December 2026.
- Applicant must be affiliated with a research or academic institution, preferably in Africa.
- Engagement may be on an individual basis, but a partnership with the respective institution may also be considered.

Contract value and payment

- This is not a fully funded position. This is a part-time, volunteer position with a small token fee available to cover a portion of the time this role will take to fulfil it. The work will be done for a maximum of 15 days between June 2026 – December 2026.
- Payment will be conditional upon completion of all tasks as per the approved work plan and sign off of deliverables. Payment will be based on days worked, up to a maximum of 15 days in 2026, based on an agreed work plan and evidenced by timesheets.
- The rate will be 100 USD/ day up to a maximum of 15 days.
- The contract attracts a withholding tax (the rate of tax is dependent on the location of the applicant with different rates for a national in Kenya and those residing internationally). This will be removed at source by ACTS before payment. The daily rate includes this tax.

Management

- This consultancy will be administered by ACTS under the AfricaLics Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) project funded by Sida, with supervision from AfricaLics RCS team.

Applications

To apply for this position, please send as a single PDF document:

1. A one-page letter outlining your motivation and fit with the qualifications.
2. A one-page outline of how you propose to tackle this assignment.
3. Your CV.

Please submit your application before the close of day, Friday 5th June 2026 to the RCS team, specifically Ann Numi: a.numi@acts-net.org

If you have queries about this work, please contact Prof. Rebecca Hanlin, from the AfricaLics RCS team: rebecca@africalics.org