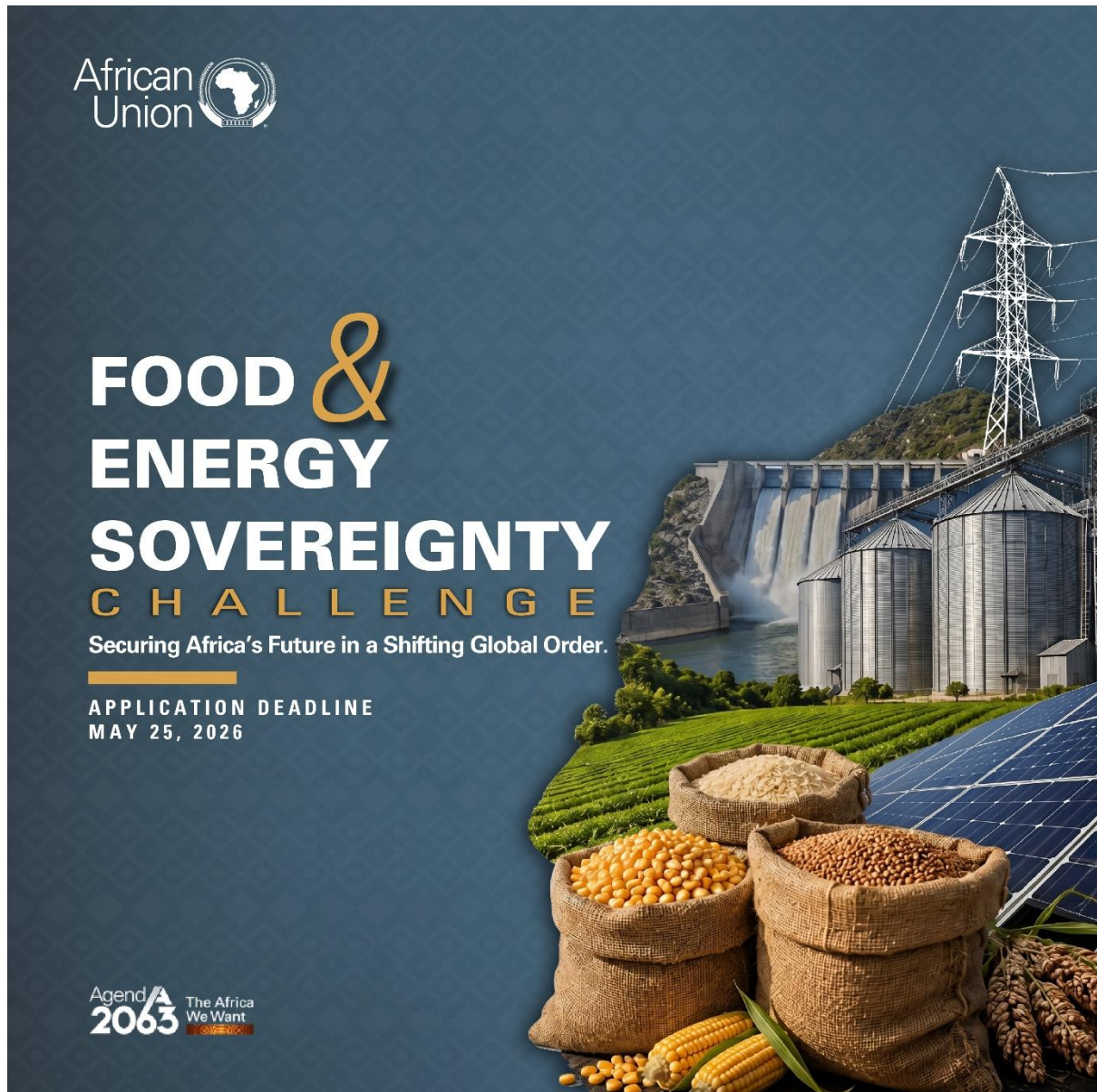



THE FOOD & ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY CHALLENGE

“Rooted and Powered in Resilience”

Securing Africa’s Future in a Shifting Global Order

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS | 11 MAY 2026




African Union 

**FOOD &
ENERGY
SOVEREIGNTY
CHALLENGE**

Securing Africa’s Future in a Shifting Global Order.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
MAY 25, 2026

Agenda 2063  The Africa We Want

Background

For decades, Africa’s economic trajectory has been defined by reactive adaptation to external geopolitical shocks and the structural vulnerabilities of asymmetrical integration into global value chains.

The escalating security crisis in the Gulf and the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz – a corridor vital for nearly 30% of global hydrocarbon and agricultural trade – constitute a definitive inflection point. This instability exposes the terminal limits of import-dependent food and energy security models, necessitating an urgent transition toward endogenous resilience.

In alignment with the strategic imperatives of Agenda 2063, this Call for Applications serves as a catalyst for a sovereign industrial shift: from reactive scarcity management toward active resilience. Its mandate is to deploy African technological innovation to architect self-sufficient food and energy systems, transforming local technological dynamism into a resilient growth engine capable of substituting imports and ensuring the continent's resilience against global supply chain disruptions.

About the Challenge

This Call for Applications constitutes a large-scale industrial mobilization aimed at propelling African technological ingenuity to secure the continent's food and energy future. We are mobilizing the "Sovereignty Builders": an elite cohort of high-growth SMEs, startups, and deeptech companies possessing the technical maturity to transform proof-of-concepts into structural pillars of the African continental market.

What We Aim to Achieve

- Incentivize innovators to identify and address major structural bottlenecks in Africa's food systems and energy autonomy.
- Source and scale industrial-ready solutions for continental adoption, replication, and expansion.
- Build strategic innovation partnerships involving industrial leaders, research institutions, governments, and financial stakeholders.
- Support policy dialogue between innovators and governments to align national industrial plans with AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 priorities.
- Assist Member States in leveraging emerging technologies, including AI and robotics, to optimize resource management and strengthen the "Soil and Energy" nexus.

Solution Tracks

Applicants must choose one of the two following tracks. The African Union strongly encourages solutions that recognize the "Nexus" – the interdependence of energy costs and food production.

Track A: Innovation for Food Sovereignty

Objective: Reduce dependence on imported chemical fertilizers and foreign seeds through large-scale bio-industrialization.

- Bio-Input Revolution: industrial production of bio-fertilizers and organic pesticides derived from local minerals and biomass.
- Seed Autonomy: multiplication and preservation of indigenous and climate-resilient seed varieties.
- Circular Bio-Economy: industrial-scale nutrient recovery systems (waste-to-value solutions).
- Post-Harvest Resilience: solar-powered cold chains and modular storage systems to cut post-harvest losses.
- Precision Ag-Tech: AI and IoT-based tools for optimized resource management and last-mile distribution.

Track B: Innovation for Energy Sovereignty

Objective: Decouple African industry and transport from the volatility of global hydrocarbon markets.

- Distributed Renewable Power: modular renewable energy systems (solar, wind, micro-hydro) for industrial clusters.

- Advanced Storage and Green Hydrogen: battery solutions using African minerals and green hydrogen for heavy industry.
- E-Mobility and Resilient Logistics: electrification solutions and infrastructure for commercial and rural transport.
- Smart Grids and Peer-to-Peer: digital platforms enabling community-based energy sharing and industrial efficiency.
- Sustainable Industrial Heat: renewable thermal solutions for agro-processing and manufacturing industries.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Applications are accepted from citizens of AU Member States leading an organization that meets all four mandatory requirements below.

Mandatory Requirements

Nationality & Ownership	The company must be at least 51% owned by African citizens, whether residing on the continent or part of the diaspora.
Legal Standing	The entity must be legally registered in an AU Member State.
Technological Maturity	TRL 6 or higher: proven prototypes or market-active solutions.
Sector Alignment	The innovation must strictly focus on either Food Sovereignty or Energy Sovereignty as defined in the two tracks.

Selection Scorecard

Submissions undergo a comprehensive technical review by the Joint Selection Panel (AUC, AfDB, Afreximbank) based on the following weighted scorecard.

Criterion	Description	Weight
Innovation & Distinctiveness	Uniqueness of the solution within the African context and its immediate deployment capacity (TRL 6+).	30%
Economic Viability & Scalability	Robustness of the business model, growth plan, and capacity for large-scale continental expansion.	20%
Socio-economic Impact & Nexus Focus	Job creation potential, contribution to climate resilience, and proof of a direct synergy within the “Soil and Energy” nexus.	20%
Intellectual Property	Proof of patents (filed or pending) and protection of intangible assets.	20%
Team & Execution Capacity	Technical expertise of founders and a proven track record of successful implementation.	10%

Benefits for Selected Innovators

Selected “Sovereignty Builders” gain access to the following support:

Industrial Scalability

Dedicated support to expand production capacity from current stages to robust, continental-scale industrial output.

Market Access

Institutional support to facilitate the acquisition of national and regional public procurement contracts, anchoring solutions in public infrastructure.

Finance Networking

Targeted matchmaking with Venture Capital firms, institutional investors, and privileged access to high-level government decision-makers for strategic deal-making.

Trade and Industry Missions

Inclusion in official African Union delegations for premier international business, trade, and innovation forums.

Continental Visibility

Featured publication in the “Africa Food & Energy Sovereignty Catalog 2026”, a reference document for AU Member States.

Policy Dialogue

Structured engagement between innovators and governments to align national industrial plans with AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 priorities.

Submission Requirements

All submissions must adhere to the following strict constraints to ensure standardized evaluation.

Written Sections

Section	Content	Limit
Problem Statement	Concise definition of the specific food or energy sovereignty bottleneck your solution addresses.	300 words
Innovation & Implementation	Detailed description of your solution’s functionality, revenue model, and explicit alignment with the “Soil and Energy” nexus.	500 words
Impact & Outcomes	Report on verifiable performance, job creation potential, and contribution to climate resilience.	500 words

Supporting Documents

Document	Specifications	Limit
Pitch Deck	PDF only, optimized for 10–12 slides.	5 MB
Video Demonstration	MP4 or MOV, or a secure external link (Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive). No temporary links.	3 min / 50 MB

IP Documentation	Consolidated PDF of operating licenses and patent or IP certificates.	2 MB
Product Photos	Up to 3 high-resolution images. JPEG or PNG.	1 MB each

How to Apply

- Application Collection: A 2-weeks period starting Monday, May 11, 2026 to May 25, 2026
- Click [here](#) to apply
- For further inquiries: FoodEnergySovereignty@AfricanUnion.org