

December 2025

Call for Proposals: Research Study on Renewable Energy Governance, Political Economy, and Actor Landscape in Libya

Background

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany promoting democracy, peace, and sustainable socio-economic development. From its Tunis office, KAS closely follows developments in Libya, with a particular interest in political reform, governance, and economic transformation. The country's chronic electricity shortages, dependence on hydrocarbons, and long-term need for diversification place the energy sector at the centre of Libya's development debate. Libya is endowed with substantial renewable energy resources, particularly solar energy, and has periodically expressed ambitions to increase renewable energy deployment. However, progress has remained slow. A combination of political uncertainty, fragmented institutions, infrastructure degradation, and regulatory ambiguity continues to hinder the growth of both public and private renewable energy initiatives. At the same time, municipalities and local governance bodies increasingly emerge as practical entry points for service provision, including in the energy domain. Given Libya's ongoing electricity deficit, fuel smuggling, and structural supply disruptions, renewable energy is not only an environmental or technological issue but also a matter of economic resilience, security, and governance reform. This study will analyse the governance environment, political economy, and actor constellation surrounding renewable energy in Libya and identify realistic pathways for sectoral development.

Research Context

Efforts to expand renewable energy in Libya intersect with broader governance challenges. Overlapping mandates among state institutions, the absence of unified compliance mechanisms, and inconsistent policy implementation limit the adoption of long-term strategies.

Moreover, the electricity deficit exacerbated by fuel smuggling, technical losses, and operational disruptions, creates demand for alternative and decentralised energy solutions. Local authorities, in turn, operate within varying degrees of autonomy and stability, which may allow for renewable energy pilots or municipal-level initiatives. International companies, financial institutions, and regional partners also show growing interest in Libya's renewable energy potential. Yet investment remains constrained by

uncertainty, limited risk mitigation instruments, and insufficient regulatory clarity. Understanding how these actors interact, and where governance, financial, and political bottlenecks lie, is central to defining viable reform pathways.

This research seeks to provide a comprehensive, governance-centred assessment of opportunities and constraints for renewable energy in Libya, complemented by realistic policy recommendations.

Objective

The commissioned research paper should aim to:

- Analyse the **governance structures, political economy, and institutional landscape** shaping Libya's renewable energy sector.
- Map **local, national, and international actors**, including their influence, interests, and constraints.
- Examine the role of **local governance authorities** as potential entry points for renewable energy projects.
- Examine the role of international actors in shaping or influencing authorities strategies.
- Assess how renewable energy could contribute to **reducing the electricity deficit**, including deficits linked to fuel smuggling and supply-chain inefficiencies.
- Investigate how **political uncertainty and institutional fragmentation** hinder the adoption of coherent renewable energy policies and compliance standards.
- Evaluate **investment conditions, financing challenges, and risk factors** affecting renewable energy development.
- Explore the **socio-economic, environmental, and water-related implications** of renewable energy deployment.
- Develop **actionable policy recommendations** and outline realistic scenarios for Libya's renewable energy transition.

Key Research Questions

1. Governance and Institutional Framework

- How is the energy sector structured institutionally, and which entities hold formal and informal authority over renewable energy?
- What governance gaps—regulatory, administrative, financial, or compliance-related—prevent renewable energy development?
- How does political fragmentation affect long-term energy planning, coordination, and regulatory stability?
- What institutional reforms or baseline standards are needed to make renewable energy projects feasible?

2. Role of Local Governance

- To what extent do municipalities, local councils, and community authorities influence or support renewable energy initiatives?
- Can local governance structures provide practical pathways for pilot projects or decentralised solutions?
- What capacities or limitations exist at the local level regarding land allocation, permitting, or community engagement?

3. Political Economy and Energy Security

- How do fuel subsidies, fuel smuggling, and hydrocarbon dependency shape incentives for renewable energy adoption?
- What role could renewable energy realistically play in mitigating Libya's electricity deficit?
- How do political networks, armed actors, or patronage structures influence decision-making or project implementation?

4. Actor Mapping

- Which domestic actors (GECOL, REAOL, ministries, municipalities, private firms, armed groups) shape the renewable energy landscape?
- Which international actors (foreign companies, IFIs, donors, neighbouring states) are relevant, and what are their interests?
- Where do cooperation gaps, overlapping mandates, or competing priorities hinder progress?

5. Investment Climate and Financing

- What risks and obstacles deter private investment in renewable energy?
- Which financial mechanisms or risk-mitigation tools could realistically unlock investment?
- How can financing models be adapted to Libya's political and institutional environment?

6. Socio-Economic, Environmental, and Water Considerations

- What potential exists for domestic value creation (jobs, supply chains, affordability, community benefits)?
- How do environmental and water-related considerations influence renewable energy planning?
- What mechanisms could ensure equitable local benefits and social acceptance?

7. Scenarios and Recommendations

- What scenarios—minimal transition, incremental progress, or more ambitious pathways—are realistic over the next 5–10 years?
- What are the most feasible entry points for governance reform and international cooperation?

Methodology

The study should be grounded in a rigorous mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and analytical approaches.

Primary Data Collection

- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with:
 - Libyan energy institutions (e.g., GECOL, REAOL, ministries)
 - Municipal authorities and local governance actors
 - Private sector stakeholders (energy firms, contractors, investors)
 - Civil society, community leaders, environmental experts
 - International organisations, diplomatic missions, and financial institutions
- **Field observations**, where access allows, of local renewable energy pilots or electricity infrastructure.

Secondary Sources and Documentary Review

- Review of Libyan laws, decrees, strategies, regulatory documents, and institutional mandates.
- Analysis of existing studies, reports, academic literature, donor assessments, and technical datasets.
- Review of grid data, energy balance statistics, subsidy structures, and electricity supply-demand patterns.

Media and Social Media Analysis

- Assessment of public discourse, narratives, and sector-related reporting.
- Tracking of debates around electricity shortages, renewable projects, and governance issues.

Political Economy and Risk Analysis Tools

- Stakeholder mapping
- Institutional capacity assessment
- Risk and scenario matrices

Researcher Networks

Preference will be given to applicants with proven access to networks inside Libya to facilitate meaningful local insights, consistent with KAS standards for context-grounded research.

Deliverables

- A **10,000–12,000-word research paper**, copy-edited and ready for publication.
- **Visual outputs**, such as maps, actor diagrams, or infographics.
- **Summaries or transcripts** of KIIs (for internal use).
- A **policy brief** (2–3 pages) with key recommendations.
- Contributions to **social media content** for dissemination.

Timeline

- Submission of applications by **18 December 2025**
- Final paper due by **31 March 2025**
- Dissemination activities: to be arranged jointly with KAS.

Submission

Interested researchers should submit the following documents:

- A six-page proposal including:
 - Abstract
 - Research questions
 - Methodology
 - Work plan and timeline
 - Budget outline
- An updated CV, including previous research work relevant for this project, field experience, language skills, and access to relevant networks.

The total amount allocated for this assignment is 10,000.00 EUR, which will be disbursed upon timely delivery of the final paper and satisfactory fulfilment of all project obligations.

application should be submitted by email to firas.laouini@kas.de