AKADEMIYA

The Expertise We Need. The Africa We Want.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

AKADEMIYA2063 is a pan-African non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. Inspired by the ambitions of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and grounded in the recognition of the central importance of strong knowledge and evidence-based systems, the vision of AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa with the expertise we need for the Africa we want. This expertise must be responsive to the continent's needs for data and analysis to ensure high-quality policy design and execution. Inclusive, evidence-informed policymaking is key to meeting the continent's development aspirations, creating wealth, and improving livelihoods. AKADEMIYA2063's overall mission is to create, across Africa and led from its headquarters in Rwanda, state-of-the-art technical capacities to support the efforts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of Agenda 2063 of transforming national economies to boost economic growth and prosperity. Following from its vision and mission, the main goal of AKADEMIYA2063 is to help meet Africa's needs at the continental, regional, and national levels in terms of data, analytics, and mutual learning for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of its outcomes by a critical mass of countries. AKADEMIYA2063 strives to meet its goals through programs organized under five strategic areas: policy innovation, knowledge systems, capacity creation and deployment, operational support, data management, digital products, and technology, as well as strategic partnerships, and outreach activities. For more information, visit www.akademiya2063.org.

I. Vacancy Details:

Position Title:	Soil Health Information Scientist - Long-Term Embedded Consultant
Host Department:	AUC Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) - Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture Division
Location:	African Union Commission, Addis Ababa - Ethiopia
Duration:	Two years, renewable subject to performance and availability of funding
Contract Type:	Long-term consultancy contracted and managed by AKADEMIYA2063, with the consultant embedded at the AUC
Technical Reporting:	Head of Division, Agriculture and Food Security

AKADEMIYA
The Expertise We Need. The Africa We Want.

II. Organizational Context and Background

The African Union Commission (AUC), through the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), is committed to advancing sustainable agricultural transformation across the continent. Soil health is foundational to achieving food security, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability. In line with Agenda 2063, the Kampala Declaration, and the CAADP framework, the AUC seeks to strengthen its leadership and coordination role in promoting soil health across Member States. The Nairobi Declaration and the ten-year Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan, adopted at the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in May 2024, call for stronger soil data and monitoring systems to target fertilizer and soil health interventions and to track progress. Soil data across the continent nevertheless remain fragmented, collected with inconsistent methods, and difficult to access for policy use. Soil health is also central to developing food baskets and trade corridors: reliable soil data are needed to identify and prioritize the production basins that corridors connect to areas of demand.

III. Position Summary

The Soil Health Information System Expert will lead the development, coordination, and operationalization of the AU Soil Health Information System (SHIS), aimed at improving soil data generation, harmonization, analysis, and reporting to support evidence-based decision-making across Member States. The SHIS will be a federated system: it will help users discover, access and harmonize soil information held by Member States and partner institutions, rather than duplicating existing databases. The role supports the AU's commitments under Agenda 2063, the Kampala CAADP Declaration and the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035, the Nairobi Declaration and Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan, and continental agrifood systems transformation priorities. The role will also provide the soil health evidence needed to identify and prioritize production basins under the AUC's food baskets and trade corridors agenda, working closely with the CAADP Special Advisor.

IV. Key Duties and Responsibilities

a. <u>System Development and Management</u>

- Design and operationalize the AU Soil Health Information System as a federated system that connects to, rather than replicates, soil data held by Member States and partner institutions, ensuring interoperability with national and regional platforms.
- Develop data standards, protocols, metadata systems, and the overall data architecture for soil information management.
- Lead on the scientific dimensions of the SHIS, namely standards, methods, data governance and priority use cases, and specify requirements for, and provide technical oversight of, its software engineering, hosting and infrastructure, which will be

delivered by AUC information technology services or a contracted technical partner rather than by the post holder.

- Coordinate integration of GIS, remote sensing, and digital mapping tools into the SHIS.
- Build on, and ensure interoperability with, existing soil data initiatives, including the FAO Global Soil Partnership and its Global Soil Information System (GloSIS), the African Soil Partnership, ISRIC – World Soil Information, iSDAsoil, and national soil information systems, to avoid duplication.

b. Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

- Lead the compilation, cleaning, validation, and harmonization of soil health data from Member States and partners.
- Lead the harmonization of legacy soil data from national surveys, research archives and partner databases, documenting and reconciling differences in analytical methods, sampling depth, laboratory quality assurance, measurement uncertainty and data provenance.
- Produce soil status analyses, dashboards, and technical reports for policy and investment planning.
- Translate soil data into policy-relevant products, such as soil fertility maps and evidence for soil health investment targeting, for ministries, RECs and investors.
- Provide soil evidence to agronomic and fertilizer decision support systems operated by Member States and partners, recognizing that soil information alone is not sufficient for fertilizer recommendations and must be combined with crop, climate, management and economic information.
- Lead the technical preparation of a baseline continental soil health status report and establish recurrent monitoring cycles.
- Align SHIS indicators with the results framework of the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and with the CAADP Biennial Review, so that soil health data feed directly into continental accountability reporting.

c. Technical Support and Capacity Building

- Provide guidance and technical assistance to Member States and RECs on soil data management and assessment methodologies.
- Develop training materials and lead capacity-building sessions for national focal points and technical staff.
- Support Member States in strengthening national soil information systems.

d. Coordination, Partnerships, and Stakeholder Engagement

- Coordinate with soil research centers, universities, international partners, and AU technical bodies.

- Support the establishment and operationalization of a Continental Soil Information Technical Working Group.
- Facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among Member States.

e. Quality Assurance and Sustainability

- Develop quality assurance and data governance frameworks for the SHIS, including data-sharing agreements with Member States that respect national data ownership and apply FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) data principles.
- Develop a sustainability and financing plan for the SHIS beyond the initial contract period and contribute to resource mobilization efforts.
- Ensure compliance with AU IT, cybersecurity, and data management policies.

f. Soil Health in Production Basins and Food Corridors Agenda

- Provide soil health evidence, including soil fertility status, key constraints, and degradation risks, to inform the identification and prioritization of production basins under the AUC's food baskets and trade corridors agenda, working closely with the CAADP Special Advisor.
- Contribute the soil health component of the Special Advisor's plan of work and report progress against agreed milestones.
- Contribute soil health analysis to the AU vision note on food corridors and production basins.
- Assess soil constraints and soil health and fertilizer investment needs in priority production basins, drawing on existing national, continental and partner soil data rather than new primary surveys.
- Where the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD confirm the need, advise on soil health indicators for tracking progress on production basins and food corridors within the Kampala CAADP monitoring framework.

V. Academic Requirements and Relevant Experience

- Master's degree or higher in Soil Science, Agronomy, Environmental Science, GIS/Remote Sensing, Natural Resource Management, Data Science, or a related field.
- At least 7–10 years of professional experience in soil health monitoring, soil information systems, GIS/remote sensing, or agricultural data platforms.
- Demonstrated experience developing or managing soil or agricultural information systems at national, regional, or international level.
- Experience applying soil data to agricultural investment targeting, land-use planning or value chain development at landscape or basin scale is an advantage.
- Experience with African Member States, RECs, development partners, or research institutions is an advantage.

AKADEMIYA
The Expertise We Need. The Africa We Want.

VI. Required Skills and Competencies

Technical Competencies

- Strong technical expertise in soil analysis, soil mapping, geospatial technologies, and digital data management.
- Experience with remote sensing platforms, GIS tools (ArcGIS, QGIS), and soil laboratory standards.
- Experience harmonizing legacy soil data, including conversion between laboratory methods, depth standardization, quality assurance and uncertainty estimation, and understanding of how soil data feed agronomic and fertilizer decision support systems.
- Proficiency in data science and programming tools for soil data (e.g. R or Python, SQL/PostGIS) and in digital soil mapping and predictive modelling methods.
- Experience specifying requirements for, and overseeing the development of, web-based data platforms, APIs and dashboards; familiarity with soil spectroscopy (MIR/NIR) is an advantage.
- Knowledge of continental and global frameworks relevant to soil health, including CAADP, the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan, and the UNCCD land degradation neutrality agenda.

Core Competencies

- Strong analytical and report-writing skills.
- Excellent coordination and stakeholder engagement abilities.
- Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment.
- Excellent communication skills (written and verbal).
- Ability to translate technical soil data into clear messages for policymakers and non-specialist audiences.

Language Requirements

- Full professional proficiency in English.
- Knowledge of a second AU working language is highly desirable (Arabic, English, French, Kiswahili, Portuguese or Spanish).
- Excellent written (drafting) and verbal (presentation) skills are required.

VII. Deliverables

- SHIS architecture, data standards and technical specifications documented and validated by the Continental Soil Information Technical Working Group, and a first operational version of the SHIS launched with data from an initial group of pilot Member States.
- Standardized soil data collection templates, guidelines, and tools for Member States.
- A documented protocol for harmonizing legacy soil data, covering analytical methods, depth, laboratory quality assurance, uncertainty and provenance, applied to data from pilot Member States.
- Training modules and capacity-building sessions delivered.

- A baseline continental soil health status report and regularly updated data dashboards.
- Technical briefs, policy notes, and knowledge outputs.
- Soil health assessment of priority production basins, contributed to the AU vision note on food corridors and to the prioritization of production basins.
- Soil evidence for agronomic and fertilizer decision support, delivered in three stages: (i) an inventory of existing fertilizer recommendation and agronomic decision support systems used in Africa and the soil data each requires; (ii) harmonized soil data layers and services made available to at least two such systems in pilot Member States; and (iii) a review of how the soil evidence has been used, with recommendations for scaling.
- Data-sharing agreements or protocols in place with participating Member States.
- A sustainability and financing plan for the SHIS.

VIII. Submission of applications

Interested candidates should submit their applications through This Link by **5:00PM (Kigali time) on November 20, 2026.** The selected consultant will be based at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the assignment.

IX. Additional Considerations

- This is a long-term consultancy contracted and managed by AKADEMIYA2063. The consultant will be embedded at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and receive technical direction from the designated AUC supervisor.
- The final scope of services, deliverables, consultancy fees and payment terms will be agreed with AKADEMIYA2063 and set out in the consultancy contract.
- The consultancy is for a period of two years, in line with the project duration and funding period. Continued engagement during this period is subject to satisfactory performance and the terms of the consultancy contract.
- Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.
- AKADEMIYA2063 is committed to equal opportunity in the selection of consultants. Qualified women are strongly encouraged to apply.