HACKATHON 2026

EPRA
Energy & Petroleum Regulatory Authority

Advancing Energy Affordability and Security in Sustainable Development

UNDP

timbuktoo
from here to Africa's future

ABOUT THE HACKATHON

The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) invites applications from young innovators, students, researchers, and technology practitioners to participate in the **EPRA Hackathon 2026,** hosted as part of the **7th Regional Research & Innovation Conference (RIC).**

As the energy sector becomes increasingly dynamic and interconnected, regulators require new approaches to complement traditional research and policy tools. This hackathon provides a platform to leverage on the creativity, dynamism, and technological expertise among the youth to explore innovative, data-driven solutions to current regulatory and development challenges.

The hackathon is designed as a hands-on, problem-solving lab, where participants will work in teams to develop prototypes, analytical tools, and insights that can inform regulatory decisions, energy planning, and sustainable development outcomes.

The hackathon aims to:
- Stimulate innovation in energy and petroleum regulation
- Build practical skills in data analytics, AI, and digital tools
- Strengthen collaboration between regulators, academia, and innovators
- Generate actionable insights and prototypes for real-world application

HACKATHON CHALLENGES

Participants will work on problem-led, regulator-relevant challenges grounded in the decision-making contexts of energy regulators from the region ensuring solutions are practical, policy-responsive, and adaptable to diverse regulatory environments.

Challenge 1: Optimal Tariff Design for Energy Affordability & Equity

Theme: *Energy Access and Affordability*

Decision Challenge: *Rethinking Residential Electricity Tariffs for Fairness and Sustainability*

Decision Problem

Kenya's current residential electricity tariff structure classifies households largely based on past electricity consumption. While simple to administer, this consumption-only approach fails to capture the true diversity of household circumstances and energy needs.

As a result:
- Low-income or vulnerable households may be misclassified and face unaffordable tariffs
- Higher-income households may benefit disproportionately from subsidies
- Utilities struggle to balance affordability with cost recovery
- Regulators lack tools to design tariffs that are both equitable and financially sustainable

Challenge Question

> ***How might regulators and utilities redesign residential electricity tariffs using multiple data variables (beyond consumption) to improve equity, protect vulnerable consumers, and ensure sustainable cost recovery?***

Challenge 2: Reducing Transport Emissions through Data-Driven Carbon Accounting

Theme: Climate Action & Sustainable Mobility

Decision Challenge: *Turning Transport Data into Actionable Emission Reduction Choices*

Decision Problem

Transport is one of Kenya's fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions, driven by:
- Increasing vehicle ownership
- Heavy dependence on fossil fuels
- Limited public transport alternatives
- Poor visibility into fuel use and institutional transport emissions

Although many organizations and public institutions recognize the need to reduce their carbon footprint, decision-makers often lack practical, data-driven tools that convert transport activity into clear, measurable emission-reduction actions.

Without reliable accounting systems, it becomes difficult to:
- Track emissions consistently
- Compare reduction strategies
- Justify investments in cleaner transport
- Report progress toward climate commitments

Challenge Question

> ***How can data-driven carbon accounting tools help institutions measure, track, and reduce transport-related emissions?***

Data Considerations

Participants will work with:
- Public datasets and open data sources
- Simulated or sample datasets
- Standardized assumptions and proxies

WHO CAN APPLY

The hackathon is open to:

- Students from universities and TVET institutions
- Early-career researchers
- Software developers, data scientists, and AI practitioners
- Startups and innovation teams
- Members of innovation hubs and tech communities

Team Requirements

- Teams of up to 5 members
- Multidisciplinary teams are encouraged (e.g. technical + policy/research)
- Individual applicants may apply and be matched into teams

WHY PARTICIPATE

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Work on real-world regulatory challenges
- Showcase their skills at a national and regional platform
- Build practical experience in AI, data analytics, and problem-solving
- Engage directly with EPRA sector experts, mentors, and industry stakeholders
- Contribute to shaping future energy policy and innovation
- Gain visibility and recognition at the EPRA Regional RIC 2026

Selected teams may also:

- Receive awards and recognition
- Be considered for further collaboration or support opportunities

KEY DATES

Milestone	Date
Call for Applications Opens	27th February 2026
Information Session	10th March 2026
Application Deadline	20th March 2026
Shortlisting & Notification	10th April 2026
Pre-Hackathon Briefing	15th April 2026
Hackathon Dates	20–23 April 2026

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed using the following criteria

- Relevance to challenge areas (25%)
- Innovation and creativity (20%)
- Societal impact and scalability (20%)
- Technical feasibility (15%)
- Use of data and analytical approach (10%)
- Impact potential on energy affordability and security (10%)

HACKATHON FORMAT

The hackathon will be conducted in-person and integrated into the conference programme.

Structure

Day 1	• Opening & challenge briefing • Team formation • Ideation & initial development
Day 2	• Solution development • Mentorship & technical support • Prototype refinement
Day 3	• Pitch presentations • Judging & evaluation
Final Day	Awards ceremony

RULES & PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

- Participants must submit an application before the deadline
- All solutions must align with at least one hackathon challenge
- Teams must adhere to ethical standards and data use guidelines
- Solutions should be prototypes or proof-of-concept, not necessarily fully developed products
- Participants must submit a short write-up (problem, approach, insights, relevance)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) TERMS

- Participants retain ownership of their ideas and solutions
- By participating, teams grant EPRA a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to:
  - Review and evaluate submissions
  - Use insights for research and policy development
  - Reference solutions in reports or conference outputs
- Any future development or collaboration will be subject to separate agreements

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Winning teams will be recognized during the EPRA Research Conference. Awards may include:

- Best Overall Solution
- Best Regulatory Insight
- Best Use of Data
- Most Feasible & Scalable Solution

Additional recognition opportunities may include:

- Presentation opportunities within EPRA
- Inclusion in conference communiqués
- Consideration for further collaboration

POST-HACKATHON OPPORTUNITIES

EPRA may explore opportunities to:

- Engage selected teams for further refinement of solutions
- Facilitate collaboration with researchers and institutions
- Integrate insights into regulatory and research processes

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should submit:

- Team details (or individual application)
- Brief description of skills and experience
- Short proposal outlining:
    - Selected challenge
    - Proposed approach
    - Expected output

Applications should be submitted via:

EMAIL:
research@epra.go.ke

DEADLINE:
20th March 2026 | 23:59hrs

CONTACT INFORMATION

For inquiries, please contact:

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