



KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Call for country case studies

Green jobs for youth in a Just Food Systems Transition in Africa

Global food systems are under immense strain. The climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and global political instability are all contributing to rising hunger and malnutrition worldwide. Most agricultural workers live in poverty, with poor job security, no social protection and often dangerous working conditions. Food systems in Africa are deeply vulnerable to climate change impacts and climate change poses severe threats to farmers across the continent. At the same time, food systems are responsible for around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions and loss of biodiversity and this figure is predicted to rise. There is as such an urgent need to transition to food systems that are more resilient, equitable and environmentally sustainable. However, as so many livelihoods depend on food systems, changes need to be made with great care to ensure the transition itself is fair and inclusive.

In this context, the concept of a 'just food systems transition' is gaining traction in development programmes and policies as a way to address these multiplex challenges. However, there is still no consensus for whom this justice should be realised, and how it should be enacted. Government policy provides little direction on what kind of outcomes a just transition in our food system should engender, or indeed what constitutes a transition that can be classified as 'just' by the breadth of constituencies affected, especially for vulnerable communities. Consequently, there is a clear need for a holistic perspective on food systems transformation that takes into account the various implications of a low carbon transition in agriculture, specifically for youth and women as they both bear the brunt of inequalities and climate change impacts and are the ones driving a food systems transition. One that provides just transition pathways to build resilience in food systems in socially just ways and create much needed employment opportunities in the form of green jobs for Africa's youth.

Deadline for submission of research proposals: 6 January 2025

Rationale

This call for case study research is grounded in the broader mission of INCLUDE to promote evidence-based policymaking for inclusive development in Africa and aligns with our programmatic ambitions around facilitating inclusive and youth-centred just transitions in Africa, specified in the current [Concept Note](#). INCLUDE seeks to contribute to a development agenda that integrates broader dimensions of wellbeing, justice, and equity to counter social, economic, and environmental injustices by recognizing and addressing the multiple forms of inequality and exclusion that undermine equitable development.

Given that the discourse around the emerging opportunities of the food systems transformation, green economy and technological innovations is framed and influenced by dominant voices of agents that have profited from the status quo, necessitates a critical analysis of proposed economic, social and environmental adaptation processes. By focusing on justice as both an outcome and a process, this research aims to illuminate pathways that create equitable opportunities, enhance the voice and agency of young people, and ensure that food systems transitions are not only environmentally sustainable but also socially just.

Aim and key themes

This call aims to facilitate case study research to support a contextualised understanding of the drivers and barriers of a just food systems transition in Africa, including a political economy and youth employment perspective.

Main research question:

What are the **main drivers and (systemic) barriers** for youth employment in a just food systems transition?

Sub-questions:

1. How can a just food systems transition contribute to green jobs for youth in Africa?
 - a. What are different approaches to transforming food systems and how do they lead to green jobs and affect existing jobs in agrifood value chains?
 - b. What are the different types of green jobs created in agrifood value chains as a result of a food system transformation?
 - c. What are the barriers for young people to access green jobs?
 - d. What are examples of strategies to mitigate negative externalities such as job losses in the transition process?
2. How do national and international **institutional and regulatory frameworks** shape opportunities for young people in the food systems transformation?
 - a. What are opportunities and barriers within national policy frameworks in facilitating a just food systems transition that creates economic opportunities for young people?
 - b. How are international policy frameworks, such as the European Green deal, trade agreements such as the AfCTA and environmental regulations affecting global value chains, in particular for African MSMEs accessing regional and international markets?
3. How are the different **justice dimensions** captured in national efforts to transform the food system?
 - a. What strategies can be employed to bridge the rural-urban divide to ensure the benefits of a food systems transformation are distributed equitably among different segments of society?
 - b. Which strategies can create a level playing field for MSMEs against dominating agricultural industries and large integrated farms?
 - c. How can young people and their different perspectives be meaningfully engaged in policy discussions and decision-making regarding food systems transformation?
 - d. How can the efforts and roles of different actors in developing value chains be coordinated in a way that supports autonomy and self-sufficiency of local MSMEs and cooperative societies?
4. How can food systems transition strategies in Africa take advantage of the **proliferation of digital technologies** to accelerate economic opportunities and safeguard the livelihoods of young people?

- a. How does the digital (skills and literacy) divide impact inclusive participation in Africa's green economy, particularly for marginalised, rural communities?
5. How do **gender disparities** impact access to opportunities in green agriculture?
 - a. What are the barriers that young women face when accessing green jobs in agrifood value chains?
 - b. What are strategies for promoting gender equality and young women's empowerment in the transition to a just food system?

Research approach

The main objective of the case study research is to support both a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of youth employment creation through just transitions in the agricultural sector, taking into account the social and political dynamics at international, national and local levels. To facilitate this, the case study research is envisioned to approach the topic of just food systems transition from three different angles:

1. **Using an inclusive development lens**; taking into account existing inequalities both in outcomes and transition processes; with specific attention to concerns around intergenerational and gender justice.
2. **Political economy perspective**; examining power dynamics and more importantly, power asymmetries in the food system and the relation between social, economic and political outcomes.
3. **A food systems perspective**; taking into account the complex web of actors and processes involved in the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

In addition, recognising the multidimensional nature of justice in food system transitions, the case study is supported by the analytical framework presented in the foundation paper that describes four dimensions of justice; 1). Distributive, 2) Procedural, 3) Recognition, 4). Restorative. It is expected that research teams will use this framework in the analysis of the case study. Additional information will be shared during the research kick-off meeting.

Central to this call for case study research is the active and meaningful engagement of youth throughout the research process. Recognizing young people as key stakeholders in the transition to just food systems, it is imperative that their perspectives, needs, and aspirations are integral to the research design, data collection, and analysis. The meaningful engagement of youth not only enriches the research outcomes but also ensures that the solutions proposed are relevant and actionable for those most affected by these transitions. Meaningful engagement means not just consulting youth as research participants, but involve them in the research proposal development and the research process as well.

Furthermore, a gender-responsive research approach is essential to address the unique barriers and opportunities faced by young women in agrifood value chains. The research must critically examine gender disparities and strive to promote gender equality, ensuring that the pathways to green jobs are accessible and beneficial to all, regardless of gender. By

adopting these approaches, the research will contribute to more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable food systems transitions in Africa.

Format of country case study papers

The country case study papers should not exceed 40 manuscript pages including references (APA style, 6th Edition). The font should be Calibri, size 11 point, line height 1.15, and standard margins. Papers should include an analysis that corresponds with the different justice dimensions (following a framework to be provided by INCLUDE, see Foundation paper INCLUDE Research Programme - Green jobs for youth in a Just Food Systems Transition in Africa) and be accompanied by a two-page summary with key points, main policy recommendations and future research directions. Papers will be written based on a case study research methodology which includes a literature review, desk study (based on policy documents, reports, media reports, etc.), key informant interviews and focus group discussions and/or surveys with relevant actors in facilitating just food systems transitions. Most notably this includes young men and women, private sector associations, cooperative unions and government representatives. After completion and language editing, the different country case study papers will be used to conduct a synthesis. Therefore the main questions raised earlier should form a central part of any proposal and should be a guiding framework.

Funding scope and duration

The budget available per paper is a maximum of EUR 30,000 (including VAT). The research process should not exceed six months, including all activities and production of the final paper.

Format of proposal

Proposals¹ for the case study should provide a sufficiently detailed summary with a preliminary outline of the proposed paper on the identified topics, clearly indicating sound knowledge of the matter and the direction the authors plan to undertake. It is possible for (a group of) authors to conduct more than one country case study. The proposal should contain the following information:

- Name and affiliation of author(s)
- An abstract (max 250 words)
- A short note on the proposed methodological approach
- A bibliography of preliminary identified sources²
- Authors are encouraged to propose additional questions or refine questions (within the scope of the call), for example, adding context-specific questions.
- Annexes:
 - Budget
 - Short two-page CV and list of major publications of the author(s)
 - General statement by the applicant that he or she endorses and follows the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which is aimed at strengthening data protection for all individuals within the European Union (see www.eugdpr.org). In the Netherlands, the regulation is implemented as the Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming (AVG).

Submission and selection process

Proposals must be submitted in English, or in French, via email to Joscha Betke joscha@includeplatform.net by **6 January 2025 09:00 CET**. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

¹ African authors/institutions (with local presence) must be in the lead.

² Both national and international sources can be consulted.

If you have any questions regarding the call for proposals and your submission, kindly send them in English or French to joscha@includeplatform.net by 9 December 2024 09:00 CET.

Criteria for evaluation of proposals include:

- Clear research focus, including attention to inclusive development and political economy dynamics
- Clear methodological approach regarding the case study approach
- Youth and gender considerations
- Food systems policy relevance
- Qualifications and relevant experience of the author(s)

Successful applicants will be notified by the INCLUDE Secretariat and invited to a kick-off meeting to lay out the analytical framework and answer any remaining questions. Thereafter, applicants are invited to submit the paper along the lines of the proposal within six months.

Timeline of the call

Launch date of the call	14 November 2024
Submission of questions	9 December 2024
Deadline for submission of proposals	6 January 2025
Notification of the selection of proposals	3 February 2025
Start of the research	10 February 2025

All country case study papers in this series will be published under Creative Commons Attribution-International (CC BY), version 4.0. The authors will assist INCLUDE to disseminate their research by sharing outcomes on the INCLUDE website, social media, and events such as a webinar.

Permission for use and disclosure of information

By way of applying to this call for papers, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process, both within INCLUDE and externally. The applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the applicant/lead researcher in any announcement of the selection of proposals or other INCLUDE-supported activities. Moreover, the applicant consents to publishing the country case study on the INCLUDE website. After publication on the INCLUDE website, authors are allowed to publish the country case study elsewhere under the condition that they refer to INCLUDE as the funder and add that the country case study was previously published on the INCLUDE website.

Contact

For specific questions about this call for proposals please contact:

Joscha Betke
Knowledge manager, INCLUDE
joscha@includeplatform.net