

Point Sud 2026 Workshop Call for Papers

Green and Digital Futures: Rethinking the Twin Transition in Africa in the Era of Multiple Crisis

College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

18-22 May, 2026

Convenors

Dr. Evans Awuni (*Political Economist, Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt Germany*)
 Prof. Dr. Achim Kemmerling (*Public Policy and International Development, University of Erfurt, Germany*)
 Dr. Davina Osei (*Assistant Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Leiden University College, Netherlands*)
 Prof. Elvis K. Avenyo (*Associate Professor of Development Economics, SARChI Industrial Development, University of Johannesburg, South Africa*)
 Dr. Solomon Owusu (*Assistant Professor of Global Economic Policy, Boston University Pardee School, USA*)
 Dr. Peter Nareeba (*Lecturer, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University, Uganda*)
 Dr. Victor Osei (*Director, Governance and Development Advisory, Netherlands*)

Context and objectives

Across Africa, the green transition and the digital transformation are advancing under conditions of compounded crisis, climate shocks, fiscal pressure, conflict spillovers, and intensified geopolitical tension. Yet “twin transition” narratives often travel as technocratic win-win scripts, while obscuring distributional conflict, institutional constraints, and transnational power asymmetries. Contemporary scholarship increasingly treats the twin transition as politically constructed, unevenly governed, and frequently inequality-producing, rather than as an automatic pathway to inclusive sustainability¹.

This workshop therefore focuses on two interlinked tensions that are especially salient in African political economies. First, decarbonisation strategies reconfigure development pathways through industrial policy choices, land and resource governance, energy pricing, and new dependencies tied to critical minerals and global value chains (Boafo et al., 2024)². Second, digitalisation can widen socio-economic and spatial inequalities through data extraction, surveillance infrastructures, platform-mediated labour, and exclusionary identification and service-delivery systems, raising urgent questions about rights, sovereignty, and governance capacity (Couldry and Mejias, 2018)³. As these processes are being institutionalised through investment pipelines, regulatory templates, and “best practice” reform packages, there is an urgent need to interrogate what the twin transition produces on the ground, for whom, and under what political and institutional conditions.

The workshop thus aims to interrogate the twin transition as a contested socio-political restructuring by grounding debates in African evidence, institutional realities, and epistemologies. It has three objectives: first, to advance conceptual and comparative understanding of how green and digital

¹ See e.g., Nelli, L., Virgillito, M. E., & Vivarelli, M. (2026). A twin transition or a flagship policy? Emergent constellations and dominant blocks in green and digital technologies. *Energy Policy*, 209, 114954. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2025.114954>

² Boafo, J., Obodai, J., Stemn, E., & Nkrumah, P. N. (2024). The race for critical minerals in Africa: A blessing or another resource curse? *Resources Policy*, 93, 105046. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2024.105046>

³ Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2018). Data Colonialism: Rethinking Big Data’s Relation to the Contemporary Subject. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 336–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418796632>

transitions overlap, diverge, and generate distributional trade-offs across African contexts; second, to build a cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue among scholars, policymakers, technologists, and grassroots innovators around four interlinked strands, namely infrastructural inequalities in digitalisation and climate action, digital tools transforming agriculture and energy systems, the politics of data and algorithmic governance, and the role of community agency, local knowledge systems, and inclusive institutions in shaping equitable transition pathways; and third, to translate these debates into collaborative, policy-relevant outputs that can inform both scholarship and practice.

Hosted by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Makerere University in Kampala, the workshop will run as a five-day, in-person programme and will be conducted in English and French (with simultaneous interpretation in plenary sessions). It convenes participants across regions, career stages, and sectors for keynote dialogues, thematic panels, methods and skills sessions, and collaborative working groups, alongside curated field engagements in and around Kampala that connect scholarly debate to ongoing initiatives at the intersection of digital innovation and climate change.

Workshop themes

Applicants should anchor their submission in one primary panel (papers may also speak to more than one). **Submissions are strongly encouraged to engage with the interaction between green and digital transformations**, for example by analysing their joint implications.

Panel 1: Twin transition governance and the political economy of development

How are African states, cities, and regional institutions governing and financing twin transition agendas amid debt constraints, donor and private finance, and shifting geopolitical alignments? How do industrial policy, standards, procurement, and regulation shape distributional outcomes, state capacity, and policy autonomy?

Panel 2: The future of work and social protection in the twin transition

How is the twin transition reshaping labour markets, livelihoods, and job quality across formal and informal sectors? We welcome work on platform labour and algorithmic management, green jobs and industrial upgrading, skills formation and training regimes, and the politics and feasibility of social protection and “just transition” policies under challenging context.

Panel 3: Digital infrastructures, data, and algorithmic governance

This panel examines digital infrastructures and governance systems, including connectivity and affordability, digital divides (skills, language, gender, rural disadvantage, disability), and the politics of digital public infrastructure. Submissions are welcome on digital ID, e-government and welfare tech, administrative burden and exclusion, data justice and sovereignty, and AI or data-intensive systems in climate and development policy, including bias, accountability, and regulation.

Panel 4: Green transitions, livelihoods, and socio-ecological futures

We invite contributions on the “green” dimensions of the twin transition, including energy access and electrification (mini-grids, pay-as-you-go solar, grid expansion), climate-smart agriculture and agritech, land and resource governance, climate adaptation and resilience, and circular economy challenges (including e-waste and repair economies). Papers may examine who gains and who loses, and how socio-ecological trade-offs are negotiated across communities, sectors, and territories.

How to apply

Submit your application as a single PDF containing three components. First, include **an abstract of no more than 500 words** (in English or French) that states the research question and core argument, outlines the data and method (or conceptual approach), specifies the empirical focus (e.g., country, region, or case), indicates the most relevant workshop panel(s), and notes the stage of the paper (e.g., idea, ongoing analysis, draft manuscript, or published). Second, include **a short motivation for participation** that also explains briefly how the contribution speaks to the twin transition (green and digital), even if one dimension is primary. Third, include **a CV of no more than two pages** with your affiliation, disciplinary background, research interests, and relevant outputs. Please note that applications from **Lusophone Africa are strongly encouraged**, but participants should be able to present and engage in either English or French. Send the single PDF to evans.awuni@uni-erfurt.de (Cc elvisa@uj.ac.za) with the subject line “Point Sud 2026 Green and Digital Futures Submission”.

Please direct enquiries to: evans.awuni@uni-erfurt.de

Selection and participation

Applications will be assessed for thematic fit, originality, and contribution to comparative and interdisciplinary dialogue. The conveners will also seek balance across region, discipline, gender, and career stage. Participants are expected to attend the full workshop programme.

Funding, travel, and language

The workshop is supported under the DFG Programme Point Sud. In line with Programme Point Sud funding rules, **travel and accommodation costs for accepted participants will be covered**. The workshop is bilingual (English-French). Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in plenary sessions.

Key dates

- **Submission deadline:** 10 February 2026
- **Full papers expected:** by 30 April 2026
- **Workshop:** 18-22 May 2026