Munich, Germany. June 24, 2022

Call for Applications: Master Thesis

Governance of Renewable Energy in Sub-Sahara Africa

CONTEXT

Energy access in Africa

Energy access is a significant issue in Sub-Sahara Africa. As of 2019, three-quarters of the world's population with no access to electricity was in sub-Saharan Africa, representing 565+ million people. The vast majority of them live in rural areas that are often remote and isolated. This isolation makes energy provision difficult using national grids. Expanding those grids on long distances is economically unviable. To enhance electricity access, the usage of decentralized energy is a promising solution, even if its implementation creates major economic, social and political challenges.

The potential of decentralization

With centralized energy systems, rural populations in sub-Saharan Africa are tributary to the economic feasibility of linking their villages to national grids. The farther the rural communities are from the large-scale grids, the longer it would take to provide them with electricity. Based on this understanding, decentralized energy systems such as mini-grids are a viable alternative. These systems do not rely on a centralized energy source and are often powered by renewables such as wind, solar, bio, or a combination of those. Thus, decentralization has excellent potential to provide energy access to rural communities in Africa.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Your research topic

In order to set up decentralized energy structures in developing countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, adequate political support and legal regulation are required in addition to economic incentives and social initiatives. In your research you will compare energy governance structures of different sub-Saharan countries (preferably Ghana, Kenya, Namibia or Uganda), focusing on the national as well as the subnational level.

Your contribution

Employing quantitative and/ or qualitative methods in your master thesis, you will focus on political governance structures in African countries analyzing supporting and hindering factors for the emergence of decentralized energy systems. You will develop your own research design. The results of your thesis will be not only of high academic quality but also of excellent usefulness and practical implications for political decision-makers striving to shape the future of energy access in Africa.

TUM SEED Center is funded by:

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst German Academic Exchange Service
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Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Your responsibilities

Your Master Thesis will be at the Professorship for Policy Analysis at the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology. Your responsibilities are:

- Engage with the literature on energy governance in developing countries
- Develop your research proposal using qualitative and/or quantitative research methods;
- Collect readily available data and be willing to travel to Africa for data collection in fall 2022 (you will be accompanied);
- Engage in discussions and data collection with the students and scholars at partner universities in Africa

The perks and advantages

Master thesis, international experience, exciting topic? Yes, you tick all the boxes. Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Stefan Wurster, with whom you can have bi-weekly stand-up meetings and a mid-term presentation for feedback on your thesis research, this can become reality.

Other perks include:

- Mobility Grant: fully-funded research trip to Africa;
- Develop your critical thinking and analytical abilities through rigorous research;
- A life-changing experience in Africa

How to Apply?

Sounds interesting? Drop an e-mail with your CV, Transcripts, a short Letter of Motivation, and a Short Research Proposal, by **July 31, 2022, to Prof. Dr. Stefan Wurster**: stefan.wurster@hfp.tum.de. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

About the TUM SEED Center

The TUM SEED Center (www.seed.tum.de) aims to offer higher education at the intersection of sustainable energies and entrepreneurship and conduct research to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

TUM SEED Center is funded by: