

Munich, Germany. April 25, 2022

Call for Applications: Master Thesis

Industry Emergence: Renewable Energy in Kenya

CONTEXT

Energy access in Africa

Energy access is a significant issue in 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.

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

Industry emergence refers to the birth and growth of new industries. The new industries challenge the status quo and bring new organizations that utilize novel technologies or new ways of doing business. This research investigates the renewable energy industry emergence in Kenya, where energy access remains a challenge. Kenya is one of the booming entrepreneurship hubs in sub-Saharan Africa. It offers an insightful field for empirical research to test theories that are traditionally developed with data from European or US contexts.

Your contribution

Employing qualitative methods in your master thesis, you will focus on the mechanisms that led to the emergence of the renewable energy industry in Kenya at the meso-level (institutions and organizations). You will use theoretical lenses from the established literature stream on industry emergence and entrepreneurship (*see: core readings*). 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 decision-makers striving to shape the future of energy access in Africa.

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Your responsibilities

This Master Thesis will be at the Chair of Corporate Sustainability under the TUM SEED Center research focus. It will be conducted in tandem with (1) one fellow student from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). Your responsibilities are:

- Engage with the literature on industry emergence, entrepreneurship, and renewable energies;
- Develop your research proposal using qualitative research methods;
- Collect readily available data and be willing to travel to Nairobi (Kenya) for qualitative data collection in fall 2022 (you will be accompanied);
- Engage in discussions and data collection with the students and scholars at our partner university (JKUAT);

The perks and advantages

Master thesis, teamwork, international experience, exciting topic? Yes, you tick all the boxes. Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz and Mohammed Bendaanane, with whom you can have bi-weekly stand-up meetings and a mid-term presentation for feedback on your thesis research. You will be working in a team of 2 students.

Other perks include:

- Mobility Grant: fully-funded research trip to Nairobi, Kenya, and a stay at JKUAT;
- Develop your interpersonal and team works skills;
- Develop your critical thinking and analytical abilities through rigorous research;
- International experience at one of the leading African universities;
- A life-changing experience in Kenya with many fun activities.

Core readings

Aldrich, H. E., & Fiol, C. M. (1994). Fools Rush in? The Institutional Context of Industry Creation. *The Academy of Management Review*, 19(4), 645–670.

Sine, W. D., & Lee, B. H. (2009). Tilting at Windmills? The Environmental Movement and the Emergence of the US Wind Energy Sector. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 54(1), 123–155.

Sine, W. D., Haveman, H. A., & Tolbert, P. S. (2005). Risky Business? Entrepreneurship in the New Independent-Power Sector. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(2), 200–232.

How to Apply?

Sounds interesting? Drop us an e-mail with your CV, Transcripts, a short Letter of Motivation, and a Short Research Proposal based on the core readings, by **May 31, 2022, to Mohammed Bendaanane: mohammed.bendaanane@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.

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