



**UNU**  
**INRA**

# AFTER CARBON BACKGROUND



**United Nations  
University**

Institute for Natural Resources  
in Africa

# THE PROBLEM FACING AFRICA'S TRANSITION TO A POST-CARBON ECONOMY

The transition to a post-carbon economy offers Africa a unique opportunity to redefine its position on the world stage.

Africa has the potential to leapfrog other nations and to lead on the development of critical climate solutions, tailored to the needs of each country. But right now, Africa is underprepared for such a transition. Policy-makers in most African countries are consumed with boosting local economies to better support their citizens. They often lack the time, space, resources and skills needed to develop approaches that will future-proof their countries for a post-carbon future.

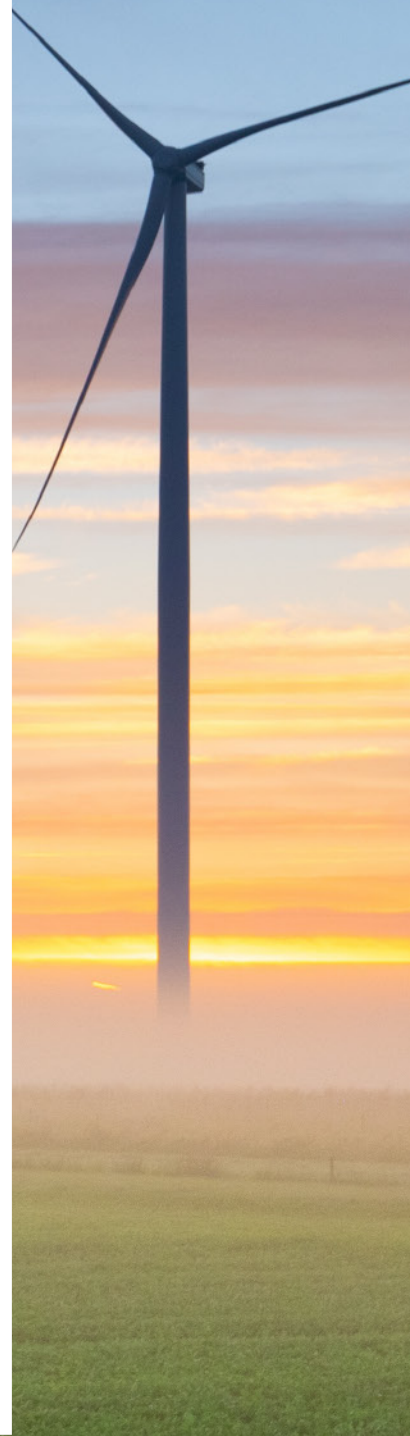
There is also a disconnect between science and policy. With limited resources for data collection, analysis and storage, and a lack of financial investment for research institutions that are lagging behind, the short and long-term research needed to influence national policies has been left behind.

If we are to take advantage of Africa's position, it is essential that we provide African institutions with best-in-class science on the solutions available to them. We must also showcase how these solutions will impact their people. Opportunities in key sectors offer significant opportunities for job creation, which could be a power catalyst spurring economic stability.

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

AFTER Carbon is a Policy to Research Hub, a matchmaking service bringing together scientists, entrepreneurs, policy-makers and civil-society groups, within a transdisciplinary research program.

Our program is the first of its kind to adopt a 'how to' continent-wide approach. Being African-led will allow us to consider contextual challenges that the continent must focus on – sourcing local problems and pooling experience from around the world to find the best solutions.





## PROGRESS TO DATE

To gauge the needs and potential effectiveness of the program, UNU-INRA has hosted two in-depth round-table discussions which brought together climate experts, policy-makers, development partners, academia, CSOs and private-sector stakeholders. Discussion considered the ways in which AFTER Carbon could be implemented to facilitate inclusive and just transitions for the continent. Our conversations covered three main areas:

- The need for AFTER Carbon and how the program will help Africa achieve a post-carbon economy
- How AFTER Carbon will help Africa tackle the global climate crisis
- Considerations and potential barriers facing the transition

## PROMOTION AT COP27

With a clear narrative and identity established from these sessions, Dr Denton began on-the-ground promotion of the program at COP28. Conversations with the New York Times and Reuters saw Dr Denton communicate the many advantages Africa has that can help accelerate its transition and how its opportunity to forge ahead is reliant on foresight and means to seize the opportunity.

These meetings increased critical awareness of how projects like AFTER Carbon are helping to plot a new trajectory for Africa by providing a critical bridge between science and policy.

# WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE GOALS FOR AFTER CARBON?

We know that this policy-to-research disconnect is prevalent across three sectors: energy, agriculture, and cities. For instance, when it comes to energy resources, African policy-makers are not fully aware of the changes in the global hydrocarbon arena. Yet, the implications of Africa's hydrocarbon assets being stranded due to a rapid energy transition are far too important to allow uninformed responses.

By reframing the narrative to situate 'net zero' and give it a development focus, AFTER Carbon will be able to reconfigure, recalibrate, and localize the pillars of a post-carbon future for the continent – starting with energy, agriculture, and cities. Having already identified the most pressing challenges across these priority sectors, we are now seeking to build bespoke working groups formed of experts who are able to vigorously discuss the challenges and produce potential solutions based on best-practice examples and scientific data.

These AFTER Carbon solutions will then be analyzed, tested in real world scenarios, and altered where required to ensure our recommendations are fit for purpose. These will then be presented to decision-makers, helping them respond to both new and existing climate commitments – such as the Paris Agreement – and enforcing effective policy change for the continent.



# LOOKING AHEAD

It is AFTER Carbon's long-term goal that, by becoming the 'go to' policy-to-research hub for the continent, we can ease the burden on individual governments and ensure the continent's policy environment is primed for a thriving, green economy.

From being a catalyst for African countries to becoming leaders on the global stage to supercharging economic development and the creation of green jobs, and driving profit through sustainable technology – this is just the beginning for AFTER Carbon. And our aspirations don't stop at the region's borders.

By connecting the dots and becoming a knowledge hub, we can paint a whole picture. Our ambition is to see AFTER Carbon build an encyclopedia of expertise that can be drawn upon to solve challenges across the world, thus creating global solutions for nations to draw upon on the road to Net Zero and a safe and manageable future for humanity.



We know, We connect, We contest

Learn more about our  
Projects and Publications



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