

21 - 23 November 2025

Copenhagen , Denmark

# **Energy Transition and Infrastructural Equity: a Review of South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership and Its Impact on Inequality and Poverty**

**Takudzwa Musekiwa , Noeleen Murray-Cooke , Tafadzwa Mushonga**

*Center For The Advancement Of Scholarship, University Of Pretoria, South Africa*

## **Abstract**

South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) mobilises an initial USD 8.5 billion package to decarbonise its power sector while explicitly targeting poverty alleviation and inequality reduction in coal-dependent regions. This article synthesises primary policy documents such as the JETP Investment Plan and implementation guidelines, intergovernmental and NGO assessments notably the IHRB "Shaping a 'Just' Business Role" report, and GIS based spatial analyses of electrification and decommissioning in Mpumalanga's Ermelo coal belt. Each source is analysed against three justice dimensions namely distributive, procedural, and restorative. To identify both achievements and implementation gaps in the JETP's pro poor design.

Our analysis shows that, although the JETP framework articulates clear targets for job creation, household subsidies, and stakeholder engagement, fund disbursement has lagged only a fraction of pledged finance has reached ground level projects as of mid 2024 due to complex multi lender governance and overlapping conditionalities. GIS mappings reveal spatial mismatches between renewable infrastructure roll out and the communities most in need of reliable energy access and economic opportunity. We find that while distributive and procedural justice measures are moderately addressed through job creation targets and stakeholder roundtables, restorative justice structured reparations for environmental and health harms in decommissioned coal plant locales remains largely absent.

To bridge these gaps, we propose an Infrastructural Equity framework that; maps socioeconomic and energy access inequities via GIS analyses. Aligns financing instruments with targeted poverty reduction indicators and community needs. Institutionalises binding participation and grievance redress



mechanisms rooted in human rights due diligence. Mandates transparent, outcome oriented monitoring through quarterly public reporting and independent audits. Implementing this framework will help ensure that South Africa's energy transition not only achieves its climate and decarbonisation goals but also delivers equitable, tangible benefits for its most vulnerable populations.

**Keywords:** Energy Transition, Climate Change, Just Energy, Climate Poverty