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JUST RURAL TRANSITION

Newsletter | March 2021



Introduction

2021 is shaping up as a make-or-break year to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and put the global economy on track for a sustainable and equitable recovery from COVID-19. It is also a year in which the world will focus on food systems and their role in protecting nature, reducing emissions, promoting resilience and climate adaptation, and addressing food insecurity and health.

The Just Rural Transition is founded on the premise that we will only succeed if we find collective purpose, and put people—particularly the most vulnerable—at the heart of the agenda. This year, we are working with our JRT community to build an action-oriented evidence base, mobilise stakeholders, and catalyse partnerships to support this transformation agenda.

We are delighted to be supporting the UK's COP26 Presidency Nature Campaign's focus on Sustainable Agriculture and a Just Rural Transition. We are also gearing up to support the UN Food Systems Summit as a key opportunity to build consensus and drive action around these issues.

This quarterly update will provide updates and insights on the three focal elements of the campaign—policy action, investment partnerships, and agricultural innovation. A new [landing page](#) has been created to share further updates, and JRT community members are encouraged to join our next Community Dialogue on 29 April to ask questions, offer feedback and connect with others to build collective purpose and ensure 2021 delivers the break-throughs we need for people, planet and our future prosperity.

The JRT Community Dialogue will be held on 29 April at 09:00-10:30 EDT/ 15:00-16:30 CET.

Register [here](#).

Policy Action



There is growing interest in repurposing public support for agriculture to meet the triple challenge of food and nutrition security, climate, and biodiversity.

A number of governments have started to design and implement agricultural policy reform to better direct public support towards improved soil and water quality, climate mitigation, and biodiversity protection. Many more governments are interested to learn more and need technical support to scope options, design and implement new approaches. Inclusive and integrated approaches are more likely to be successful and elicit political buy-in, therefore inclusive consultation processes play a key role.

As part of the COP26 Nature Campaign focus on Sustainable Agriculture and Just Rural Transition, the UK Government, in partnership with the World Bank, is inviting governments to participate in policy dialogues in 2021 to share experience, identify opportunities and build support to move forward on repurposing policies and public support.

To support this, the JRT has been working with many of its knowledge partners to take stock of the existing knowledge and evidence base to prepare clear and concise policy briefs and case studies to start to unpack “what works” when it comes to repurposing agricultural policy. Through JRT-convened evidence workshops and working groups, we are mapping existing work and identifying areas for collaboration. We will continue to develop our JRT knowledge hub so that these resources can be easily accessed by the JRT Community.

Want to get involved? If you have case studies or knowledge products – either existing or in development – that demonstrate how policy reform and repurposing public support can accelerate the shift to sustainable agriculture and a just rural transition, please contact pac@merid.org.

Through March and April, the JRT Secretariat, in collaboration with the World Farmers’ Organisation, is organising a series of regional consultations with organisations representing food producers. It is vital that the perspectives and insights of those on the front-line of agricultural production are included in global and national processes relate to policy reform and repurposing. This initial series of consultations will provide learnings for broader engagement and communications through the year.

To kick this series off, we brought together a number of farmers’ organisations and government representatives at CFS 47 for a Side Event, [“Listen Up: Engaging Farmers in the Process of Repurposing Agricultural Policy.”](#) in collaboration with the World Bank and World Farmers’ Organisation.

Investment Partnerships



Finance is a critical lever for a Just Rural Transition. Through Investments Partnerships we aim to raise the level of ambition on the global policy stage and translate this into action on the ground.

The JRT is currently developing two regional projects, focussed on scaling investment where it is needed the most, with ambitions to identify more partnership opportunities over the coming months.

Sustainable Rice Landscapes. Half the world's population, some 3.5 billion people, eat rice as their main staple food, and its production by 144 million smallholder farmers supporting the livelihoods of over 1 billion people. At the same time rice crops use 30-40% of the world's irrigation water and contributes as much greenhouse gases as aviation, due to huge amounts of methane released during its production. Transforming rice landscapes to more sustainable forms of production is critical to addressing the world's food security, livelihoods and environmental challenges.

Working with FAO and the Sustainable Rice Platform, through the Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative, we are working to catalyse investment partnerships to finance the transformation required.

Want to get involved? Join our discussions on 1st April at Rice Week, where we will be

sharing the initial findings of a pre-feasibility study laying out possible structures for rice finance vehicles, seeking feedback to shape the final report and identifying partners interested to work together to take the proposed finance structures forward. Registration and further details [here](#).

We are also focusing on the **Great Green Wall**. With its ambitious dual aim of restoring 100 million hectares of land and creating 10 million green jobs across the entire width of Africa, from Senegal in the West to Djibouti in the East, the Great Green Wall offers vast potential for both environmental and social impact. As we enter the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, momentum for private sector investment is garnering speed, bolstered by growing political support, including more than \$14bn of new funding pledged by public donors in early 2021. Our Great Green Wall project aims to capitalise on this growing momentum to drive finance to the region to strengthen rural livelihoods, whether through agri-SME finance, high value crops or building new markets. On 23 March, we scoped areas of focus for this project through our session on Investing in the Great Green Wall for Equitable Livelihoods, as part of an on-going [IUCN-led conference](#).

Innovation



Agriculture innovation is a key enabler for a just transition to sustainable agriculture. As part of the Nature Campaign, [Transforming Agricultural Innovation for People, Nature and Climate](#) seeks to transform innovation in agriculture, driven by pledges from climate

champions.

Co-chaired by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), it forms a core pillar of the UK government's sustainable agriculture campaign. In the build-up to COP26, the CCAFS-FCDO campaign is ploughing a crucial channel through which we can galvanise action from everyone—governments, business, researchers, farmers organisations and civil society—for a people-centred approach to agricultural innovation.

Want to get involved? Commitments can take a few forms:

- Increased investment in agricultural innovation or new solutions for UN Global Goals.
- New research and development programmes for climate-resilient technologies and practices with positive impact on nature.
- Sharing business models or public-private partnerships that support resilience under a changing climate.
- Building consensus around new approaches to agricultural innovation backed by rigorous evidence.
- Sharing stories online to build awareness of transformation need and how it can be achieved.

Climate champions are invited to [get in touch](#).

What's Coming Up

The JRT aims to promote inclusive, integrated, and people-centered approaches resulting in sustainable, resilient land use, positive stewardship of nature, healthy diets, and vibrant rural economies. **Critical to achieving this vision is integrating equitable land tenure security within the broader food system transformation agenda.**

We are excited to announce that we are commissioning a policy brief on the role of land tenure security within food systems transformation, in collaboration with our Working Group on Land Tenure, Social Equity, and Inclusion.

Want to get involved? If you would like to be a part of our working group, join our peer review process, submit evidence or case studies, or explore potential for collaboration, please contact hkhalil@merid.org.

New Endorsers

Our community of purpose continues to grow! We would like to welcome the [newest members](#) of the JRT community below.

- Adaptation of African Agriculture Initiative Foundation
- Christian Aid
- Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network
- Food Foundation
- Green Africa Youth Organization
- IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature
- Planetary Health Alliance
- Swedish International Agriculture Network Initiative
- World Farmers' Organisation

The JRT Vision Statement remains open for endorsement by governments and other key stakeholders as a way of supporting the COP26 Nature Campaign focus on Sustainable Agriculture and a Just Rural Transition. Endorsers will join the growing JRT community of purpose to promote learning, build momentum, and forge new partnerships to accelerate just rural transitions around the world.

To get involved, please submit an application [here](#) or contact the JRT Secretariat for more information at jrt@merid.org.

Stay Connected

Twitter

Follow the Just Rural Transition on Twitter [@JRTransition](#).

Contributions to the Newsletter

Please contact the JRT Secretariat at jrt@merid.org if you have feedback or ideas for content that can feature in the next JRT newsletter. This could include upcoming webinars and events, new initiatives and work, relevant blogposts and research or other important information of interest to the growing JRT community.





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