

Request for research proposals

Navigating climate change challenges in developing countries – Economic complexities and opportunities

Background

UNU-WIDER is collaborating with **a leading journal in environmental, resource, and energy economics**, and aims to showcase rigorous, policy-relevant research on climate-related challenges in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

We invite original research articles to be considered for a journal special issue titled *Navigating climate change challenges in developing countries – Economic complexities and opportunities*. This special issue is part of a broader initiative to deepen our understanding of how climate change intersects with development, particularly in economically and institutionally constrained settings.

Selected papers will first be published in the WIDER Working Paper series and presented at a dedicated research workshop ahead of journal submission.

We welcome both empirical and theoretical contributions that examine how climate change interacts with the economic, institutional, and social dimensions of development in low and middle-income countries.

Research Objectives

The special issue seeks to advance knowledge in five core thematic areas:

1. Climate Change and Resource Constraints

How do limited resources in LMICs constrain adaptation and mitigation strategies? What are the implications for resilience across sectors such as agriculture, industry, and energy?

2. Institutional Challenges in Climate Policy

What roles do weaker administrative capacities play in environmental and emission regulation, enforcement of environmental policies, and managing climate-related risks?

3. Opportunities in Energy Transition

How can LMICs leverage minimal legacy infrastructure to leapfrog toward clean energy systems? What economic and institutional conditions support such transitions?

4. **Economic and Social Disparities in Climate Impacts**

How does climate change deepen inequalities? What policy solutions are viable in different socioeconomic contexts?

5. **Innovative Approaches to Climate Challenges**

What new frameworks, methodologies, or interdisciplinary insights can help address climate challenges in the unique contexts of LMICs?

Submissions addressing these questions or closely related topics are encouraged.

Offer and expectations

UNU-WIDER invites full-length draft research articles aligned with the themes above. Accepted contributions will be published in the WIDER Working Paper series and included in the journal special issue. Contributors will be invited to present their research at a workshop designed to enhance the coherence and quality of the final journal submissions.

Timeline

Paper submission deadline: 30 September 2025

Decision on submissions: 31 October 2025

Workshop date: Second quarter of 2026 (costs covered by UNU-WIDER)

Journal submission deadline: 31 August 2026

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on:

1. **Relevance** to the special issue themes
2. **Strength** of theoretical or empirical contribution
3. **Clarity and feasibility** of the research proposal

We particularly encourage applications from early-career scholars, women, and researchers based in developing countries. Ideal applicants will hold, or be close to completing, a PhD in economics, environmental studies, development studies, or a related field.

Submission details

Proposals may be submitted by individuals or research teams. Each submission must include:

- An **up-to-date CV** for each author
- A **research article submission** including outlining the research question, methodology, data sources, and analysis

Submissions must be made via the [online application forms](#) available on the announcement webpage. Applicants should select the appropriate form based on whether they are applying as an individual, group, or institution.

For questions, please contact researchproposal6@wider.unu.edu by 15 August 2025. Responses to frequently asked questions will be posted on the [RFRP announcement page](#).

Submission deadline is 30 September 2025, 23:59 UTC+3.

Contracting and copyright

Researchers or their institutions will sign formal agreements with UNU-WIDER. Copyright for accepted working papers will initially be held by UNU-WIDER to support coordinated publication efforts. Copyright may be transferred back to authors after publication, with due acknowledgment of UNU-WIDER.

Guest editors

- **Patricia Justino** (UNU-WIDER)
- **Edson Severnini** (Boston College, UNU-WIDER, NBER, IZA)