

# INSPIRE Research Grant:

## *A brief on the legal and policy environment of communal owned land – prospects for land justice and commercial development.*

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Satisfactory resolution of the land question remains one of South Africa's great unfinished pieces of work in its post-Apartheid journey. This is especially so in communally owned areas – often overlapping with former Bantustans/ 'homelands'. These lands are governed by complex policy arrangements, with title held by the state (and communal property associations); significant authority exercised by Traditional leadership structures; and aspects of administration exercised by local authorities.

This context can, and tends to, reduce the perceived viability of communal lands as sites for significant commercial development (which, undertaken well, could enable economic benefit for residents and traditional owners of these lands). This sense of both potential and of limitation is so too for renewable energy developers who seek to work on communal owned land, while seeking to enable delivery of the benefits of the REIPPP Programme (Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement) to residents.

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) aims to advance the field of social performance in South Africa's renewable energy sector, with the wider goal of becoming a leading platform across the African continent and internationally. Our mission is to build leadership capacity in Africa for a more integrated renewable energy ecosystem that ensures equitably shared socio-economic benefits.

### **INSPIRE is seeking proposals from researchers who work at the intersection of policy, land and commerce in communally owned land to develop a brief that:**

- i. Informs - concisely, accessibly and accurately - on the legal and policy landscape in which communal owned land is governed
- ii. Focuses additionally on provisions and processes for commercial development
- iii. Offers a perspective on the implications of these provisions for furthering both land justice and commercial enterprise in communal owned land, with reference to grounded examples.

The final output (brief) should be between five and seven pages long and can be clearly referenced and linked, so as to guide the reader to more elaborate and detailed sources.

While the brief should speak to SA's general legal and policy framework, it is understood that how these matters play out in practice can be textured and particular to specific place and history. Where possible this should be pointed out where the legal and policy landscape provides for such nuance and, where possible, reference to grounded examples made (point iii, above).

INSPIRE envisages a desk-based piece of research, drawing on secondary sources, and would best suit someone with existing expertise in the field.

**Grant value:** R45 000

**Qualifications and Skills:**

- A Master's or PhD (*completed or in progress*) in a relevant field such as Law, Development Studies, Public Policy, Land Studies, or any other related field.
- Demonstrated knowledge of South Africa's land governance systems, particularly communal land tenure, traditional leadership, and land reform policy frameworks.
- Strong research skills, with the ability to gather, analyse, and synthesise legal, policy, and academic sources into clear insights.
- Excellent writing skills, including the ability to produce concise, accessible policy briefs for non-academic audiences.
- Understanding of, or interest in renewable energy and commercial development in communal contexts, including familiarity with the REIPPPP.
- Ability to critically engage with issues of land justice, social impact, and sustainable development.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage a short-term, deadline-driven research project independently.

**Application Process:**

To apply, please submit the following documents to [info@inspire-excellence.net](mailto:info@inspire-excellence.net) by **Monday, 20 April 2026:**

1. **Updated CV** highlighting relevant education, research experience, and key skills.
2. **Proposal** (1–2 pages) responding to the brief, including your proposed approach, key themes, structure, and indicative sources or case examples where relevant.

**Note:** Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

Women, Black South Africans, and individuals from historically excluded groups are strongly encouraged to apply.