



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI): Agriculture and Food Systems, with a Circular Economy Dimension Window

Just Energy Transition (JET) Funding Platform – JET Project Management Unit, The Presidency

The Just Energy Transition (JET) Funding Platform (the “FP”) invites Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for community-led agriculture and food-system projects – with an integrated waste-to-value (circular economy) dimension – that build sustainable livelihoods and jobs in communities affected by South Africa’s Just Energy Transition, across South Africa, with coal-affected Mpumalanga the priority.

Note: The JET Funding Platform does not itself hold or disburse grants. It matches selected projects with grant funders. **Selection into later stages does not guarantee funding.**

Eligibility (read first): Applicants must be an appropriately registered legal entity (for example a registered NPO or non-profit company, cooperative, company or other SMME, or a community trust) and must be tax compliant with SARS (a valid Tax Compliance Status). This is checked first, before any assessment. Applicants that are not appropriately registered and tax compliant are ineligible and their applications will not be assessed.

1. Background & Rationale

Window 4 focuses on agriculture and food systems, with a circular economy dimension expressed within agriculture (principally waste-to-value pathways such as composting and biogas). It builds on the clear demand for agricultural projects seen across the Platform’s earlier windows, converting that demand into a structured, comparable process with criteria and support designed specifically for agriculture. The window helps coal-affected communities in Mpumalanga move from dependence on coal toward diversified, locally owned agricultural livelihoods, prioritising accessible entry points for former mine workers, women and youth. It funds the whole journey – from production through processing, aggregation and market access – not infrastructure alone. Window 4 is limited to grant funding.

2. Geographic Focus

Window 4 adopts a national lens: projects from anywhere in South Africa are eligible and a national footprint is completely acceptable. Mpumalanga’s coal-affected communities are the priority, not a restriction.

2.1. **Primary preference:** Coal-affected communities in Mpumalanga, within reach of the Eskom decommissioning sites and the coal value chain.



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

- 2.2. **National:** projects from anywhere in South Africa are eligible and welcome and will be assessed on merit; coal-affected Mpumalanga remains the priority.

3. Objectives

- 3.1. Create robust, lasting income and employment for coal-affected communities – including former mine workers – through agricultural production, processing, aggregation and related enterprise.
- 3.2. Embed circular, waste-to-value pathways (composting, biogas, organic-waste reuse, land rehabilitation) within funded agricultural projects.
- 3.3. Develop the whole agricultural value chain, enabling farmers and local enterprises to capture more of the value they create.
- 3.4. Enable individual small-scale farmers and community-owned models alike to participate and benefit, with defined roles for women, youth and former mine workers.

4. Priority Areas

4.1. Agricultural production and value chains

- 4.1.1. Smallholder and cooperative crop production on available agricultural smallholding, communal or rehabilitated mine land.
- 4.1.2. Agro-processing and value addition (milling, drying, packaging, cold storage).
- 4.1.3. Community food hubs and market infrastructure (aggregation, grading, bulk sales to institutional buyers).
- 4.1.4. Regenerative agriculture and land rehabilitation on degraded land adjacent to mine sites.
- 4.1.5. Climate-smart and controlled-environment agriculture, including hydroponics.
- 4.1.6. Agricultural skills and enterprise development linked directly to active production enterprises, including business, financial-literacy and cash-flow management support.

4.2. Circular economy / waste-to-value

- 4.2.1. Community-scale composting and biogas that convert crop, food-processing and organic waste into compost, fertiliser, heat or electricity for agricultural use – the window's primary circular pathway, integrated within agricultural projects.

5. Who Can Apply?

All applicants must be appropriately registered legal entities and tax compliant with SARS.

This is a mandatory, first-phase eligibility requirement: entities that are not appropriately registered, or that cannot show a valid SARS Tax Compliance Status, are ineligible and will not be assessed.



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

- 5.1. Community-based organisations, cooperatives, non-governmental organisations, small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), and community trusts or similar community-controlled legal vehicles.
- 5.2. Where communal land is involved, a single managing entity must be identified to hold and manage the project on the community's behalf. Cooperatives and community-owned models remain fully eligible.
- 5.3. Applicants must demonstrate a relevant track record – or a credible delivery partner – in agriculture, food systems or community enterprise.
- 5.4. Experience in Mpumalanga is desirable.

6. Exclusions

Individuals; political parties; pure research or feasibility-only requests; projects whose only realistic financing route is a loan, equity or concessional debt; and projects for which livestock or small-ruminant farming is the standalone primary purpose (such activity is supported only where it is incidental and waste-generating within a wider agricultural project).

7. Grant Request Provisions

- 7.1. Funding range: Indicatively R500,000 – R20 million per project, consistent with the upper band used in earlier windows.
- 7.2. **Grant duration:** Up to 36 months, recognising that agriculture typically needs a multi-year runway (subject to funder requirements and project nature).
- 7.3. Co-funding: Encouraged but not mandatory; may take the form of blended grants from more than one grant-maker, corporate social investment (CSI), or SED and social-spend grants rather than concessional or commercial debt. Please indicate the source, amount and status.
- 7.4. **Disbursement:** Milestone-based, aligned with deliverables and reporting (subject to funder terms).

Note: Window 4 is limited to grant funding.

8. Process & Timeline

This window follows a tiered selection process designed to minimise applicant burden while surfacing implementation-ready initiatives. Only the highest-scoring Expressions of Interest, up to a maximum of 35, will be invited to submit a full application to be assessed and scored.

- 8.1. EOI submission via the Funding Platform portal.
- 8.2. Eligibility screening and quick assessment against the gating requirements.
- 8.3. Adjudication Committee shortlists the highest-scoring EOIs, up to a maximum of 35.



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

- 8.4. The shortlisted applicants (up to 35) are invited to submit a full application (guidance to be provided).
- 8.5. Project Selection Committee scores full applications against the JET FP criteria.
- 8.6. Applicants invited to a virtual meeting with the JET FP team and Project Selection Committee.
- 8.7. JET FP and Selection Committee meet with the Project Review Committee for decision-making.
- 8.8. Feedback communicated to projects. Selected projects proceed to matching with grant funders; others are declined.

Please note: Up to thirty-five (35) applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

9. Indicative Timeline

- 9.1. EOI Launch: end September/early October 2026
- 9.2. EOI Close: end October/early November 2026
- 9.3. Shortlisting (up to 35): end-November 2026
- 9.4. Scoring and virtual engagements: December 2026/January 2027
- 9.5. Decisions & Matching: Q1 2027

10. Selection Criteria

Window 4 uses a two-stage evaluation so that applicants know exactly how they will be assessed. Every scored sub-criterion is marked on a five-point scale: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good. Before any scoring, applications are checked for completeness and against the gating requirements below; an application that is incomplete or fails a gating requirement is not scored.

10.1. Eligibility and gating requirements (pass or fail)

To be scored, an application must first demonstrate that the applicant is an appropriately registered legal entity and is tax compliant with SARS (a valid Tax Compliance Status); applicants that are not registered and tax compliant are ineligible and will not be assessed.

The application must also demonstrate: documented land access and tenure; a commitment to appropriate soil, water and food-safety measures before cultivation on any potentially affected land; a credible market linkage or offtake; genuine community benefit and participation, with defined roles for women, youth and former mine workers; and a grant-appropriate financing profile (not reliant on loans, equity or concessional debt).

10.2. Stage 1 – Evaluation of the EOI (scored out of 50)

At this stage we assess the relevance and design of your project, without requiring full documentation. Only EOIs scoring at least 30 out of 50 are eligible for shortlisting, and the highest-



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

scoring EOIs, up to a maximum of 35, are invited to submit a full application. This is a firm ceiling: where fewer strong EOIs are received, fewer may be invited, but the number invited will not exceed 35.

Stage 1 – EOI Evaluation	Max
A. Relevance of the project	20
A.1 Consistency with the Window 4 theme and objectives: how well the project fits the agriculture-and-circular-economy theme, the window objectives (Section 4) and the eligible focus areas (Section 5), within the grant-only scope. Projects that enable smallholders to participate beyond primary production and to capture more value along the chain are viewed favourably.	5
A.2 Relevance to coal-affected communities and the just transition: how clearly the project responds to these needs and its geographic fit (Section 6), including synergy with other JET, provincial-agriculture and LED initiatives and avoidance of duplication. Coal-affected communities in Mpumalanga are prioritised, but projects anywhere in South Africa are eligible and assessed on merit.	5
A.3 Target groups and beneficiaries (gender lens): how clearly and strategically beneficiaries are defined, with meaningful roles and benefit for women, youth and former mine workers, not only as passive beneficiaries.	5
A.4 Added value and scalability: innovation, circular / waste-to-value integration, best practice, and the potential to expand, increase farmer participation and replicate across coal-affected districts and municipalities.	5
B. Design and viability of the project	30
B.1 Intervention logic (score ×2): does the EOI set out a credible pathway from inputs and activities to outputs and to livelihood and circular outcomes and impacts? This sub-criterion is scored out of 5 and doubled for importance.	10
B.2 Land access and site viability: credible, documented land access or tenure, and suitability of land and water, including safety on mine-affected land.	5
B.3 Market linkage and route beyond the grant: a credible buyer, offtake, aggregation partner or market-linkage plan – including firm off-take agreements or strategic partnerships with retailers, processors, exporters or other value-chain actors – and a pathway toward operating beyond grant funding.	5
B.4 Risks, assumptions and readiness: realistic assumptions, key risks and mitigations, and either implementation-readiness or a credible, well-evidenced path to readiness.	5
B.5 Cross-cutting issues: circular economy, environmental and climate integration, gender equality and inclusion.	5
Maximum total score	50

10.3. Stage 2 – Evaluation of the full application (scored out of 130)

Shortlisted applicants submit a full application, evaluated out of 130 across seven sections using the same five-point scale, covering both your capacity to deliver and the quality of the project.

Stage 2 – Full application evaluation	Max
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Does the applicant (and any delivery partner) have sufficient experience of project management?	5
1.2 Does the applicant (and any delivery partner) have sufficient technical expertise, especially in agriculture, food systems and circular / waste-to-value approaches?	5



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

Stage 2 – Full application evaluation	Max
1.3 Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity (staff, equipment and the ability to handle the grant), including, where communal land is used, a credible single managing entity?	5
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient financial systems and governance to receive and account for grant funding?	5
2. Relevance of the project	20
2.1 Consistency with the Window 4 theme, objectives and grant-only scope.	5
2.2 Relevance to coal-affected communities and the just transition; geographic fit (Mpumalanga prioritised, national projects eligible); synergy with JET, provincial-agriculture and LED initiatives; and avoidance of duplication.	5
2.3 Target groups and beneficiaries (gender lens): clearly defined, with defined roles and benefit for women, youth and former mine workers.	5
2.4 Added value: innovation, circular / waste-to-value integration and best practice.	5
3. Design of the project	15
3.1 Intervention logic across the value chain: a clear sequence from inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes and impacts.	5
3.2 Results framework and indicators (MEL): indicators that are relevant, credible and easy to monitor, with baselines, targets, data sources and gender-disaggregation; where baselines are not available, this is justified and budgeted.	5
3.3 Context analysis: needs, stakeholders, land and market context robustly analysed and embedded in the design.	5
4. Implementation approach	20
4.1 Action plan: clear and feasible, with activities clustered by output and a realistic timeline of up to 36 months.	5
4.2 Monitoring, reporting, evaluation and safeguards: an effective monitoring and reporting system, and adequate soil, water and food-safety measures on mine-affected land.	5
4.3 Delivery model and partners: credible technical or mentorship partner, managing entity and other partners, with roles and the status of commitments.	5
4.4 Business and financial-management support: the project provides business, financial-literacy and cash-flow management support (not only technical training), recognising the lumpy, seasonal cash flows smallholder farmers face between seasons.	5
5. Sustainability of the project	15
5.1 Long-lasting benefits: sustainable livelihoods, income and employment likely to continue beyond the grant.	5
5.2 Multiplier effects and scalability: scope to expand over time, increase farmer participation, create additional jobs, replicate across coal-affected districts and municipalities, and share learning, achieving economic impact beyond a single community.	5
5.3 Sustainability and risk: financial (route to market and operating beyond the grant), institutional (governance and community ownership) and environmental (circular / waste-to-value and land rehabilitation) sustainability, supported by sound risk analysis and mitigations.	5
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness	15
6.1 Efficiency: is the relationship between the budget and the expected results reasonable and good value for money?	5
6.2 Budget (score ×2): are the activities and eligible costs appropriately reflected, covering the whole support journey (not only capital), realistic and grant-appropriate? Scored out of 5 and doubled for importance.	10



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

Stage 2 – Full application evaluation	Max
7. Value chain, commercial sustainability and market linkage	25
7.1 Value-chain participation: the extent to which the project enables smallholder farmers and local enterprises to participate beyond primary production – into aggregation, processing, packaging, logistics, marketing and enterprise ownership – and to capture a greater share of value along the chain.	5
7.2 Commercial sustainability and implementation economics: business viability (a very clear business model) and the underlying operating model, including production assumptions and yields, the revenue model and expected margins, operating costs and working-capital requirements, market competitiveness, and post-grant operating sustainability, with a credible pathway to financial self-sufficiency beyond grant support.	5
7.3 Growth and scalability: potential to expand over time, increase farmer participation, create additional jobs and replicate across coal-affected districts and municipalities, achieving economic impact beyond a single community.	5
7.4 Market access and private-sector partnerships (score ×2): firm off-take agreements and strategic partnerships with retailers, processors, exporters or other agricultural value-chain actors, so that projects are market-led rather than grant-led. Scored out of 5 and doubled for importance.	10
Maximum total score	130

Rejection and threshold rules: if Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) scores below 12, or if any sub-criterion under Section 1 scores 1, the application is rejected. Applications are then ranked by total score, and the highest-ranked projects are provisionally selected and taken forward for further consideration. Projects that pass the full-application stage are subject to further assessment by the Project Selection Committee (PSC) and final approval by the Project Review Committee (PRC) before being taken forward for matching to grant funders. Selection does not guarantee funding.

11. EOI Submission Requirements

- 11.1. Project title and brief summary.
- 11.2. Objective and problem statement the project will address.
- 11.3. How the intervention creates jobs / livelihood outcomes and integrates a circular / waste-to-value dimension.
- 11.4. Description of intervention and core activities across the value chain.
- 11.5. Target geography (municipality / area) anywhere in South Africa. If in coal-affected Mpumalanga, indicate proximity to Eskom decommissioning sites. Projects located elsewhere in the country are eligible.
- 11.6. Land access and tenure status (ownership, lease, communal allocation or written arrangement).
- 11.7. Market linkage or offtake: named buyer, aggregation partner, or a credible market-linkage plan.



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

- 11.8. Where relevant, your approach or commitment to soil, water and food-safety measures before cultivating on any potentially affected land (this is a commitment, not a precondition).
- 11.9. Expected results with indicative numbers and timeframes (jobs / placements, incomes, organic waste diverted, hectares rehabilitated).
- 11.10. Implementation model, managing entity and key partners (roles, status of commitments).
- 11.11. Organisational capacity and relevant track record.
- 11.12. Current stage of readiness (for example concept, pilot completed, or operational), including land access, market linkage, governance and safety arrangements.
- 11.13. Existing or potential co-funding (source, amount, status).
- 11.14. Sustainability and scale / replication pathway.
- 11.15. Budget.

Please note: Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

12. Submission Instructions

- 12.1. Submit your EOI via the Funding Platform Portal: <https://jetfundingplatform.org.za/login>
- 12.2. Queries: use the JET PMU Help Desk email address: helpdesk@jetfundingplatform.org.za

13. Compliance & Due Diligence

All applicants must be appropriately registered and tax compliant to be eligible; this is checked at the EOI stage, and applications that are not registered and tax compliant are not assessed. Shortlisted applicants (up to 35) will in addition undergo fuller Know-Your-Customer (KYC) and due-diligence checks, including governance, tax and other compliance checks. Participation in this process does not constitute an offer of funding.

14. Contact

For questions or clarifications: JET Funding Platform Team | Email: helpdesk@jetfundingplatform.org.za

Please note: The JET Funding Platform reserves the right to amend timelines and requirements. Selection into later stages does not guarantee funding. Matching depends on alignment with funders' mandates.