Food Systems Research Methods Lead

Application Deadline: 30th April 2026

Job Advertisement

We are looking for an experienced research methods specialist to help advance our growing portfolio of work supporting global programs working towards fixing our world's broken food systems to create a more sustainable and equitable future. You will lead our efforts to support to action-oriented research that integrates social and biophysical perspectives, values engagement and process, and is designed to support decision-making and change in food systems.

Stats4SD is a non-profit organisation, based in the UK, committed to supporting sustainable development around the world using data and analysis to inform policies and actions. We work with initiatives such as the Global Collaboration for Resilient Food Systems (CRFS) programme funded by the McKnight Foundation, the Transformative Partnership Platform for Agroecology, the Agroecology Fund, the Agroecology Coalition, and the Institute for Agroecology at the University of Vermont. Working across these and other partnerships requires research approaches that are methodologically rigorous, participatory, and able to integrate social and biophysical perspectives across very different contexts. Our goal is to support agroecological and food systems transformations world-wide through clear, evidence-based action research. To this end, we engage with partners at all levels; our projects range from transdisciplinary internationally funded programs to small research projects operating in a single location.

We are especially interested in someone who can combine research experience with a commitment to making evidence usable for decision-making, influence and action. Our work does not stop at supporting the production of academic knowledge: we focus on supporting research that informs and catalyses change for farming communities, food systems, and the environment.

The selected candidate will report directly to the lead of the CRFS Research Methods Support Project at Stats4SD.

What will you do?

In this role you will:

- Coordinate our transdisciplinary food systems work and research methods support for CRFS-funded researchers and other partners, ensuring consistency and methodological rigour in the services we deliver.
- Integrate and guide methodological expertise across the team, working closely with statisticians, data engineers, and other research methods specialists to shape robust, coherent, and context-appropriate research designs.

- Liaise with our agroecology partners at strategic and operational level to identify areas where Stats4SD can be most impactful.
- Provide intellectual leadership on research methods, working directly with partners to design, challenge, and refine quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches in complex agroecological food systems research.
- Coordinate systematisation that captures insights from our work across projects and regions, contributing to the development of tools and approaches, and to the dissemination of experiences for wider uptake.
- Contribute to policy influence by supporting our partners' work on translating evidence into compelling messages that support decision makers in allocating resources for agroecological transformation.

The job will involve travelling to Africa, South America and occasionally to other parts of the world.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for someone with the following characteristics:

- Passion for transitioning food systems towards sustainable models
- Eagerness to learn, adapt and innovate
- Experience in designing and conducting research that connects evidence with practice and policy
- Sees travelling and working with partners in across international contexts as an exciting part of their job.
- Postgraduate-level training (MSc or equivalent experience as a minimum) in a relevant field, combined with a strong grounding in quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Experience working across disciplinary boundaries in sustainable food systems research.
- Has a working understanding of agroecological principles and food production systems, sufficient to engage credibly with farmers, researchers, and programme partners.
- Fluency in English, sufficient to work effectively in international, multi-partner research and policy contexts.
- Strong writing skills in English, including the ability to synthesise evidence and communicate it clearly for research, practice, and policy audiences.

We recognise that excellent candidates may meet these criteria through a range of academic, professional, and practice-based pathways, so please apply if you feel you have relevant experience even if it is not within traditional 'academic' roles.

Any of the following characteristics would be beneficial:

- Demonstrated ability to work across epistemologies, integrating scientific, experiential, and practitioner knowledge.
- Demonstrable experience in applying research to support change on the ground (e.g. policy influence, improved practice, or community impact)
- Substantial professional experience working in international development, agricultural research, or agroecology-focused contexts, recognising that this may include non-linear or practice-based career paths.
- A track record of contributing to publications (academic or otherwise)

- High-level working competency in Spanish or French.

You must have the right to work in the UK. Stats4SD will not be able to help you to obtain a UK work permit.

What we offer

- A fixed term position for 2 years with the possibility for change into a permanent contract.
- Salary in the range of £40,000- to £50,000 per annum + statutory benefits, depending on skills and fit for the role.
- A flexible, inclusive working environment.
- 26 days of paid holiday per year plus UK bank holidays.
- Up to £2000 (taxable) to cover costs to relocate to Reading.

How to apply

Send a copy of your CV at job@stats4sd.org. Please include a letter telling us how you think you can contribute to our work and why you would like to join our team.

The deadline for applications is 30th April, 2026, and we will contact shortlisted applicants in May 2026.

If you have questions or would like to have a chat with us about the job before applying, please get in touch via the email above.

About Stats4SD

Stats4SD is a non-profit organisation that supports the design and implementation of research for sustainable development. We specialise in creating effective designs for complex projects that combine quantitative and qualitative methods, participatory approaches and innovative data systems. By working with partners to co-create knowledge, we strive for research processes that generate evidence that is rigorous, relevant and usable, and that it leads to real change for communities, food systems and the environment.

Research methods support is central to Stats4SD's role, and this position will play a key part in shaping how we work with researchers and partners to strengthen methodological thinking and practice across programmes and regions.

For more information visit our website: stats4sd.org