

Research Internship Proposal - EU GREEN 2025

Decent Work in the Age of Digital Platforms:

Analyzing Microwork in the Global South

Link with the Sustainable Development Goal(s) and the EU GREEN vision

This internship project directly addresses **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**, with important connections to **SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities**, **SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**, and **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**.

Digital labor platforms and microwork ecosystems have grown exponentially in the past decade, providing opportunities for income generation while simultaneously raising concerns around precarious work conditions, algorithmic management, and lack of social protections. These concerns are especially pronounced in the **Global South**, where digital microwork has emerged as both a livelihood opportunity and a source of vulnerability.

This project aligns with the **EU GREEN vision** of fostering sustainability and inclusiveness across research and education by exploring how digital platforms can evolve toward **fairer, more transparent, and more equitable work practices**. It will build international knowledge on how platform infrastructures can be aligned with the SDGs, contributing to the broader mission of **reducing inequalities and supporting decent work worldwide**.

Topic of the internship

The internship will focus on **microwork platforms operating in the Global South**. Microwork involves the performance of small, often repetitive digital tasks such as data labeling, content moderation, transcription, or survey participation. While these activities fuel the development of artificial intelligence and digital services worldwide, the workers performing them often face:

- **Low pay and unstable income**
- **Opaque algorithmic management systems**
- **Limited access to labor rights and protections**
- **Cross-border payment barriers**

The project aims to generate a structured analysis of these issues by auditing existing microwork platforms, documenting the types of microtasks performed, offered pays, and reviewing available research and policy reports on algorithmic management practices. The overarching research question is:

How can microwork platforms in the Global South be better understood and regulated to ensure alignment with SDG 8 on Decent Work, while reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and strengthening institutional frameworks (SDG 16)?

Missions of the student

The student will be fully integrated into the research process under the supervision of **Dr. Myriam Raymond (Université d'Angers, GRANEM, G DiPLab)**. The internship will combine **academic research training** with **hands-on project work**.

Key missions will include:

1. **Platform Audit (Desk-based Research)**
 - Mapping microwork platforms active in the Global South (e.g., Africa, MENA, South Asia, Latin America).
 - Identifying types of microtasks (e.g., data labeling, surveys, moderation) and their prevalence.
 - Documenting business models, recruitment practices, and cross-border payment systems.
2. **Literature Review and White Paper Analysis**
 - Conducting a systematic review of peer-reviewed academic literature on microwork and algorithmic management.
 - Analyzing reports and white papers from international organizations (ILO, OECD, World Bank, NGOs, and unions).
 - Identifying evidence of algorithmic biases, wage discrimination, and structural inequalities on microwork platforms.
3. **Algorithmic Management and Bias Assessment**
 - Synthesizing existing knowledge on how algorithmic control shapes workers' access to tasks, performance evaluation, and pay.
 - Highlighting the most recurrent risks of discrimination and invisibility of workers in Global South contexts.
4. **Exploratory Platform Experimentation**
 - Supporting the design of simple experimental approaches (e.g., creating worker profiles to observe task allocation differences).
 - Contributing to the preparation of a methodological protocol for future empirical work.
5. **Research Outputs and Training**
 - Drafting a structured research report that summarizes findings.
 - Preparing a short policy brief with recommendations on how microwork platforms can better align with the principles of decent work.
 - Gaining training in academic writing, research ethics, and comparative analysis methods, with feedback from the supervisor and partner networks (DiPLab, EU GREEN affiliates).

The student will thus develop strong **analytical skills**, improve their **academic writing in English**, and gain hands-on experience in **applied digital labor research** with international relevance.

Conditions of the internship

- Location: Université d'Angers (France), within the research environment of GRANEM (EA 7456).
- Supervision: Dr. Myriam Raymond will provide close supervision, including weekly mentoring sessions and integration into ongoing research projects on digital platforms and AI.
- Duration: 6 months.
- Compensation According to French Internship Regulations and prevailing pays: